# AI firms pioneering drug discovery, cheaper supercomputing and more get first backing through UK’s Sovereign AI

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- AI is the most important technology of our era. The UK must be an AI maker, not just an AI taker, to control how it defines the future of our economic prosperity and national security
- Sovereign AI is built to help promising AI companies so they start in Britain, scale fast and compete globally
- Government believes in Britain’s AI founders and is betting on them – with unique package of support on investment, visas, access to supercomputers and R&D funding.

British AI startups working in fields that could transform everyone’s lives for the better, and that will be critical to the UK’s national security, are set to receive support through the Sovereign AI Unit – a £500 million first-of-its-kind national effort to back Britain’s smartest founders and keep the future of AI built on British shores.

AI is the defining technology of our era. For Britain to forge its own destiny in the years ahead, the UK needs to have homegrown AI capacity and capabilities. That means backing the very best AI innovators, founders and entrepreneurs to bring their ideas to life in the UK, and grow them here to maximum success.

The UK already has the ingredients needed for success: top talent, stability, leading institutions, world-class universities, and a culture of entrepreneurialism. Sovereign AI is the government betting on Britain to succeed, so our country can shape the AI revolution. This is ultimately how we unlock this technology’s potential for building a stronger and more prosperous society.

Sovereign AI is designed to be different from any previous government-backed unit, acting like a venture capital fund with the muscle of the state behind it – moving fast, backing ambition and cutting through the red tape that so often holds brilliant ideas back. It will invest directly in the UK’s most promising AI startups, help them scale quickly, and give them the support they need to compete with the best in the world.

The first companies to receive support are working on technologies that could transform daily life – from tackling devastating diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, to building AI systems and computer chips that push the limits of what today’s technology can do. Today we are announcing that Sovereign AI’s first equity investment will be in the AI infrastructure startup Callosum, while 6 further startups will receive access to some of the UK’s foremost supercomputing capacity through the Unit.

The news announced this evening by the Technology Secretary shows how the government is taking an active role in shaping the UK’s technological future – backing bold ideas, creating high value jobs

and ensuring the economic rewards of AI stay here in Britain.

Unlike traditional government programmes, Sovereign AI is built to work at the pace of the AI industry – just like a top-tier VC firm.

Its support goes far beyond funding alone. Startups backed by Sovereign AI will gain access to support normally reserved for the biggest players in tech, including:

- World class compute: fully funded access to the UK's largest AI supercomputers, with up to 1 million GPU hours available per startup - providing the horsepower needed to help train state of the art AI models
- Fast-track global talent: every company receiving investment will get visas decisions within a working day, plus access to an initial 10 cost-free visas for the world's top R&D talent to come and work for them in the UK
- Hands on government support: help navigating access to data, early procurement opportunities, independent product validation and routes into new approaches to regulation

The goal is simple – help AI companies start in Britain, scale here and win globally – instead of seeing world-class ideas leave the UK as soon as they begin to succeed.

By backing them early, the UK is keeping expertise, decision making and economic value at home – and reducing reliance on a small number of foreign tech giants for critical AI that matter for our economic prosperity and national security.

Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said:

> We believe in Britain and we are betting on Britain. We are backing our brilliant innovators and entrepreneurs so we seize the benefits of AI to reshape Britain for the benefit of all.
>
> Sovereign AI is unlike anything government has ever done before. Its unique approach will help break down the barriers that have too often held back British enterprise and innovation. This is how we ensure Britain's economic prosperity and national security in the modern age.
>
> My message to British founders and innovators is clear - we will ensure you never have to choose between your ambition and your home, because Britain will give you both.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves said:

> We have the right economic plan – backing business so the technologies of the future are invented, built and deployed here in Britain.
>
> A thriving domestic AI sector is one of my 3 big choices for the economy, and by supporting strategic national champions we can ensure internationally competitive companies start, scale and stay here in Britain.

The first startup getting equity investment from the Sovereign AI Unit is Callosum – a company building a new class of AI infrastructure.

A further 6 startups will receive access to the AI Research Resource (AIRR) supercomputer network – with Sovereign AI getting a right of first refusal on future investments for a number of recipients. Putting some of the nation's foremost supercomputing capacity behind some of the country's most promising new companies tackles a critical hurdle: the need for vast amounts of specialist hardware like GPUs, to train advanced AI models, test ideas and run complex simulations. The companies are: Prima Mente, Cosine, Cursive, Doubleword, Twig Bio and Odyssey.

Sovereign AI is also currently in discussions with around 30 firms, over potential AIRR access.

And as part of Sovereign AI's £282 million offer to support cutting edge AI startups with R&D, the Unit is launching its first funding call to create new datasets and other assets that help firms move faster and build in the UK.

The news was announced at an event at British self-driving tech firm Wayve, which has grown out of cutting-edge AI research at the University of Cambridge, into one of Europe's most valuable tech firms.

Chair of the Sovereign AI Unit, James Wise, said:

> AI as a technology could be transformational for both our wealth and security. Britain has the foundations be a global AI leader in many fields, with a unique and enviable mix of talent, capital, and infrastructure which make this country the natural home for world-leading innovation. Now, through Sovereign AI, we can use the state's unique capabilities to double down on these strengths, backing Britain's founders to scale here in the UK and globally.

Alex Kendall, CEO of Wayve, said:

> As a business that has successfully grown and launched in the UK, we're thrilled to support the launch of the Sovereign AI Unit, which will help support emerging companies, attract talent, and ultimately ensure UK AI champions can compete on the global stage. We're excited to see the next generation of British AI companies benefit from the funding opportunities available and join us in supporting the UK's expanding AI ecosystem.

The Chancellor's Entrepreneurship Advisor, Alex DePledge, said:

> We don't have a talent problem in the UK—we have a scale problem. The next wave of AI winners will come from countries that don't just invent, but back their builders end-to-end. Sovereign AI is a shift in that direction: combining capital, compute and customers to give British founders a genuine platform to build globally competitive companies from day one.

Sovereign AI will work with the Government's Global Talent Taskforce to attract top researchers, while also ensuring the benefits of AI are felt across the whole country. In May, the unit will begin a tour of UK cities to ensure that people from all communities and walks of life feel the benefits that AI promises to deliver.

Danyal Akarca, Founder of Callosum, said:

> There’s a fundamental shift underway in how AI systems are built and run. The future of compute is heterogeneous, and making that complexity usable is the next frontier. The UK already understands where this is heading, and with its depth of talent across universities and labs like DeepMind, it is the natural place to build Callosum: the orchestration platform that allows models and chips to work together as one system.

Ravi Solanki, Co-Founder of Prima Mente, said:

> Our deep research collaborations with Oxford, Imperial and Edinburgh are a testament to the UK’s world-class strength in the life sciences. The combination with world-class compute infrastructure from the Sovereign AI Fund has made the UK the right place to work at the frontier of AI and the life sciences.

Meryem Arik, Co-founder and CEO of Doubleword, said:

> We’re proud to see the UK government step up with real conviction on AI. This is the most consequential technological shift of our generation, and the nations that invest strategically now will define what the next decade looks like. SovAI has shown exactly the kind of urgent, clear-eyed ambition the moment demands - and the UK is better positioned for it.

Yang Li, Co-founder of Cosine, said:

> For 2 years we’ve told defence primes we can do what no one else can: air-gapped, on-premise, trained on the legacy code that runs Britain’s most sensitive systems. The AIRR grant completes that mission - for the first time, the model itself trains on sovereign infrastructure, and Britain stops renting its AI future from abroad in the sectors where capability, security and national control cannot be outsourced.

Russ Tucker, CEO and Founder of Twig Bio, said:

> With Twig’s integrated automation and synthetic biology platform, we’ve built the AI-ready datasets to train CANOPY, and this sovereign compute allocation unlocks the next generation of biological model scaling. It allows us to move beyond incremental strain engineering and build a globally competitive capability in the UK to make biomanufacturing viable for a far broader range of ingredients.

Talfan Evans, Co-Founder of Cursive, said:

> After leaving DeepMind, we started Cursive to build a new infrastructure stack for generative AI, moving it from early experimentation into something embedded across

real software systems. That requires fundamentally new R&D, and the ability to test ideas at scale. Access to sovereign compute makes that possible, and means those breakthroughs can be developed and scaled from the UK.

# Notes to editors

## On the companies

**Callosum** is building a new class of AI infrastructure: systems-level software that makes diverse chip architectures work together, co-optimising workflows, models and silicon in real time, unlocking orders-of-magnitude improvements in performance and cost. As inference becomes the dominant constraint and the compute landscape fragments beyond traditional GPUs, this orchestration layer is set to become one of the defining platforms of the next generation of AI. Headquartered in London and founded by Cambridge PhDs Danyal Akarca and Jascha Achterberg, Callosum sits at the centre of a rapidly emerging UK advantage in novel compute. With a growing cluster of next-generation hardware companies and expanding sovereign infrastructure through the AI Research Resource, the UK has the foundations to lead in how AI systems are actually deployed and scaled. As the Sovereign AI Fund's first investment, Callosum sets that direction: backing the infrastructure that will shape how AI is computed globally, and anchoring it in the UK.

**Prima Mente** is using AI to decode the languages of biology - from DNA sequence to gene expression and epigenetic regulation - to better understand and tackle brain diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Through active research collaborations with Oxford, Imperial, and the University of Edinburgh, the company is building biological foundation models at the frontier of AI and life sciences. The UK has a distinctive strength in both fields, and this compute allocation helps anchor more of that cutting-edge work on UK infrastructure and within UK research networks.

**Doubleword** helps businesses with the infrastructure needed for AI inference: the process of running live data through a trained AI model. By providing optimised inference and model governance tooling, Doubleword enables organisations to adopt AI faster and more cost effectively, while allowing regulated and government users to run and audit models inside their own secure environments rather than depending on foreign cloud platforms.

**Cosine** is a British sovereign AI frontier lab developing advanced models and coding agents that top public benchmarks — purpose-built for defence, national security and regulated industries where foreign-built AI is off the table and assurance by design is non-negotiable. Its platform can runs entirely within a customer's own infrastructure, with no external dependencies, delivering frontier AI that is developed, deployed and operated under full UK control, making Britain an AI maker, not an AI taker.

**Cursive** is developing AI agents that learn and improve continuously from real-world use, building foundation models for behavioural prediction and long-horizon reasoning that allow agents to get better the more they are deployed. This is one of the most important frontiers in AI research, currently pursued by only a handful of labs globally. Founded by senior DeepMind alumni who helped build some of Google's most advanced AI systems, Cursive is exactly the kind of world-class AI research company the UK should be backing and scaling on national infrastructure.

**Odyssey** is developing world models that learn from and understand the world like people do, through sights, sounds, words, and not just one single type of information. This is a fundamentally different approach to AI with significant applications across defence, autonomous systems and simulation, and an emerging strategic capability where early sovereign investment matters. Founded

by British AI researchers Oliver Cameron and Jeff Hawke, the company maintains a significant UK team and research presence alongside its California operations.

**Twig Bio** is developing CANOPY, a foundation model for AI-driven strain design in engineering biology and biomanufacturing. The UK has genuine depth in synthetic biology, and CANOPY aims to translate that research strength into a production-grade AI capability for sustainable manufacturing and bio-ingredients, scaling from validated prototype to industrial application.

## On Sovereign AI

The Sovereign AI Fund has made its first major compute allocations through the AI Research Resource (AIRR).

Each allocation is a deliberate deployment of national compute into areas where the UK has real structural advantages and where access to large-scale infrastructure is the binding constraint on progress. The 6 recipients span biological foundation models, world simulation, sovereign inference infrastructure, agentic AI, engineering biology and AI for national security. They were selected through the Sovereign AI Fund's open and competitive call and assessed on the basis of strategic relevance, technical quality, scaling potential and material compute need.

Alongside the compute, the Fund has agreed Right of First Refusal (ROFR) investment options with a number of the recipients, creating a pathway from early support to follow-on funding and ensuring the public captures value from the deployment of national resources.

The Fund will continue to assess applications on a rolling basis and is set to allocate compute worth tens of millions of pounds to British startups over the course of the year.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ai-firms-pioneering-drug-discovery-cheaper-supercomputing-and-more-get-first-backing-through-uks-sovereign-ai