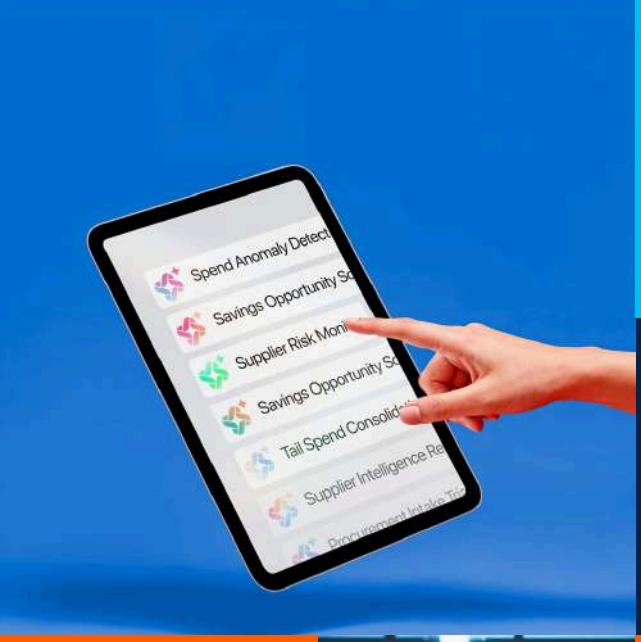



# **Artificial Intelligence Readiness** in Procurement 2026

## The Benchmark Report

Based on a global survey of procurement professionals across 6 continents.

PT | Procurement Tactics

Suplari

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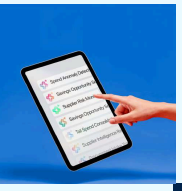


CHAPTER 1

# Introduction & Executive Summary

The complete picture

**This report quantifies the gap between individual AI adoption and organizational readiness, identifies the structural patterns holding procurement back, and provides a concrete roadmap for what to fix first.**

If you lead a procurement team in 2026, here is your reality: nearly half your team uses AI every single working day. They draft RFQs, analyze spend, and review contracts with AI tools. Yet most organizations have not built the infrastructure to support this shift.

Governance frameworks are largely absent. Integration with procurement systems remains limited. Data readiness is low.

The result: a widening gap between the capabilities team members need and the organizational readiness required to deploy AI effectively.

This report is built on survey data from 121 procurement professionals across six continents, more than 30 industries, and organizations ranging from organizations ranging from under 500 to 50,000+ employees.

### What we mean by AI readiness

How ready a procurement organization is to deploy AI at scale, not just use it individually.

Scored 1 to 5 across eight dimensions: Data Foundation, System Integration, Operational Efficiency, Insight Actionability, P&L Impact Visibility, Operating Model, AI Maturity, and Strategic Priority.

The overall score is the unweighted average.

> **“47% of procurement professionals use AI every day, yet 83% operate without an enforced AI policy.** Meanwhile, teams spend 10.6 hours per week on tasks they believe AI could automate. The majority of procurement teams are in the early phase of AI adoption.”

## Early Phase

Procurement teams are in the early phase of adopting AI in their daily operations. Data is consolidating, first integrations exist, AI exploration has begun. We scored procurement organizations on 8 AI readiness dimensions, from data quality to system integration. The industry average is 2.1 out of 5, below the threshold for effective AI deployment.

## 47% use AI every day

Procurement professionals use AI tools like ChatGPT or Copilot every day. But only 8% work in an organization that has formally embedded AI into its operations. The rest operate without governance, integration, or structured support.

## 83% have no AI policy

Most procurement teams have no enforced AI governance policy while already using AI to process contracts, supplier data, and spend information. Sensitive procurement data flows through tools without guardrails.

## 10.6 Hours can be saved

The average procurement professional estimates that 10.6 hours per week are spent on tasks AI could automate. That is over 25% of a working week and the biggest untapped efficiency gain in the function.

# Six findings that shape the 2026 procurement AI agenda

**01** **The cost-pressure trap is real.**

The procurement teams focused on cost savings (38%) scored lowest on readiness (1.8/5). Breaking out requires reframing procurement from a cost center to a capability builder.

**02** **Individual AI adoption does not produce organizational readiness.**

Daily users score barely higher than non-users on readiness. The gap between personal tool usage and organizational deployment is the most consistent pattern in this dataset."

**03** **AI readiness is a universal challenge.**

No geography, company size, or seniority level is clearly leading. The organizations that invest in data, governance, and training in 2026 will define who leads procurement in the years ahead.

**04** **Governance is the biggest liability.**

83% of teams lack an enforced AI policy while actively using AI with sensitive supplier and contract data. This is not a future risk. It is an active compliance exposure that procurement leaders must close as soon as possible.

**05** **Data quality is the bottleneck, not technology.**

Data Foundation scores 2.1 and System Integration 2.2, both in the bottom half of the eight dimensions. No AI tool will deliver reliable procurement insights on fragmented, inconsistent spend and supplier data. Fixing the data layer is the highest-ROI investment before any AI deployment.

**06** **Early movers will compound their advantage.**

Organizations that reach readiness level 3.0+ by end of 2026 will have months of clean data, trained teams, and governance frameworks when enterprise-grade procurement AI tools mature. Laggards will still be cleaning data while leaders are already optimizing.

# 2026 is the year to act

Clean data, build governance, train your people. Everything else follows.

WHAT'S NEXT?

## Take the Full AI Readiness Assessment

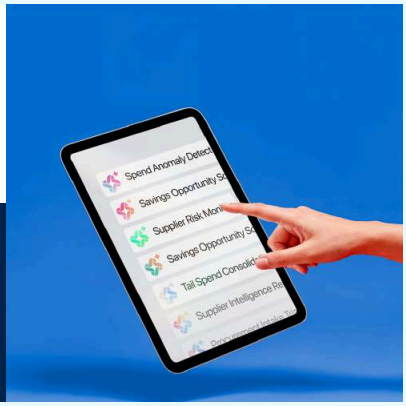
This report gives you the industry benchmark. Now find out where your organization stands.

- Suplari's full assessment provides a personalized spider graph, dimension-by-dimension scoring, and a prioritized action plan.
- Consider upskilling your procurement team to close the capability gap

# About the Authors

Suplari

Suplari is a procurement intelligence platform that transforms procurement data into actionable insight.



The platform ingests and normalizes spend, contract, and supplier data from ERP and procurement systems to create a single source of truth. Suplari deploys procurement-specific AI agents that automate 60 to 80 percent of routine procurement work, from spend classification and contract analysis to supplier risk monitoring. Founded by Jeff Gerber, the company helps procurement teams move from manual operations to data-driven, AI-augmented decision-making.

PT | Procurement Tactics

Procurement Tactics is a procurement education institute that trains procurement teams.

They help modern procurement teams achieve direct impact with practical, personalized online training. Their methodology combines academic rigor with hands-on applicability, covering supplier negotiation, cost analysis, category management, and digital procurement transformation. Procurement Tactics works with mid-size and enterprise organizations to build procurement capability, drive measurable savings, and accelerate professional development.

CHAPTER 2

# The AI Adoption Snapshot

How procurement teams use AI today: tools, frequency, governance, obstacles

THIS CHAPTER GIVES YOU THE ANSWER TO

**How are procurement teams using AI today, and what are they gaining from it? What AI adoption barriers are they facing?**

Before assessing readiness, we need to understand the current state. How deeply has AI already penetrated procurement operations? Which tools dominate? What governance exists, or doesn't? And what do professionals themselves identify as the barriers holding them back?

The answers paint a picture of rapid, individual-led adoption running far ahead of organizational preparedness. Four areas tell the story: usage frequency, tool selection, governance, and obstacles.

## 47% of procurement professionals use AI every working day.

The distribution is bimodal: professionals either use AI daily or barely at all.

- 47% use AI five days a week, every working day
- 58% use AI at least four days per week
- Only 10% doesn't use AI at all

> **"58% of procurement professionals use AI at least four days per week.** The question is no longer whether your team is using AI; it's whether your organization has caught up."

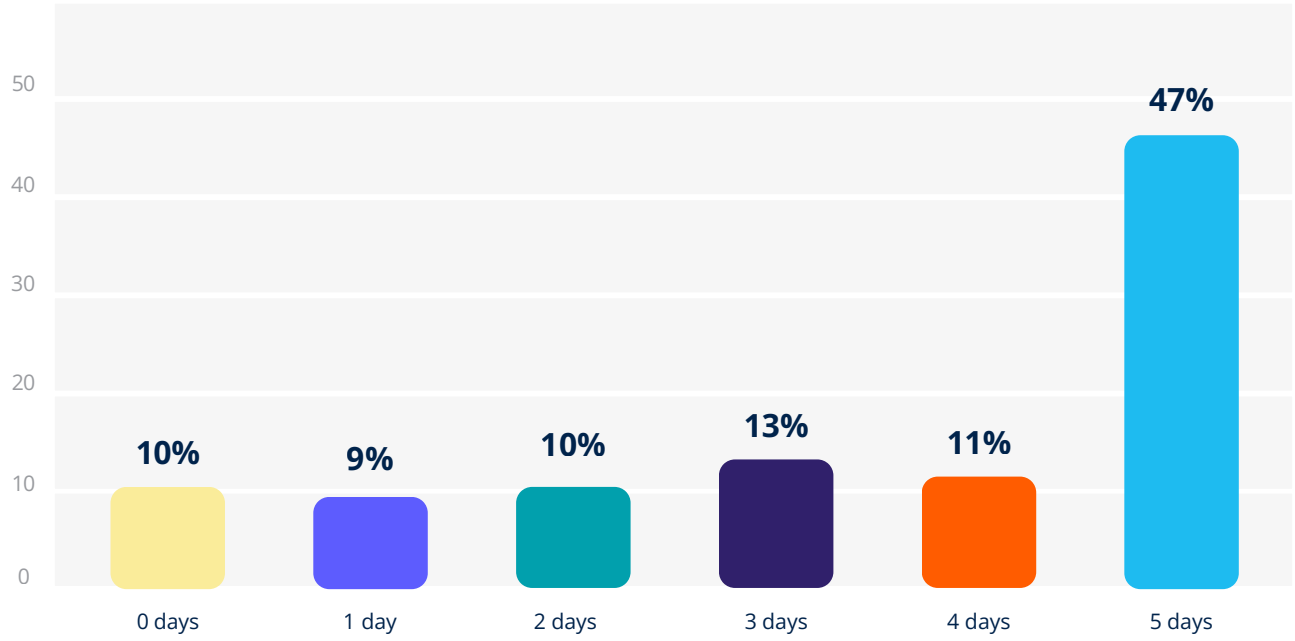


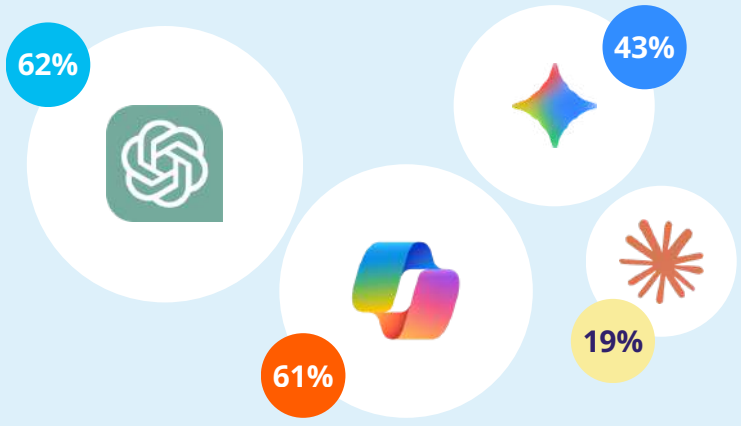

*Figure 1: AI usage frequency: days per week*

Once professionals start using AI, daily usage becomes the norm. The implication for leadership: assume your team is already using AI, whether you see it or not.

## 62% of Procurement Teams Use ChatGPT and/or Copilot, but Only 8% Use AI Integrated in Their Procurement Platform

**Four general-purpose tools dominate procurement AI usage:**

- **ChatGPT / GPT-4**: 62%
- **Microsoft Copilot:** 61%
- **Google Gemini**: 36%
- **Anthropic Claude:** 19%



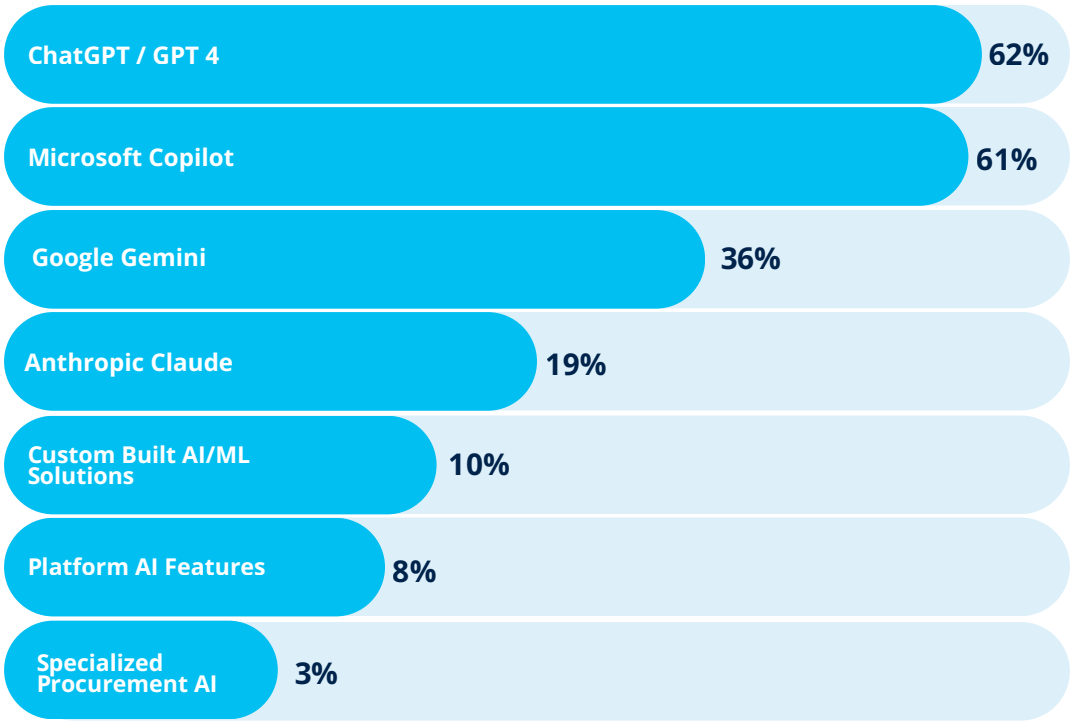



*Figure 2: AI tools used in procurement, ranked by adoption*

The 62% vs 8% gap defines the current state: high AI activity, zero integration with procurement systems.

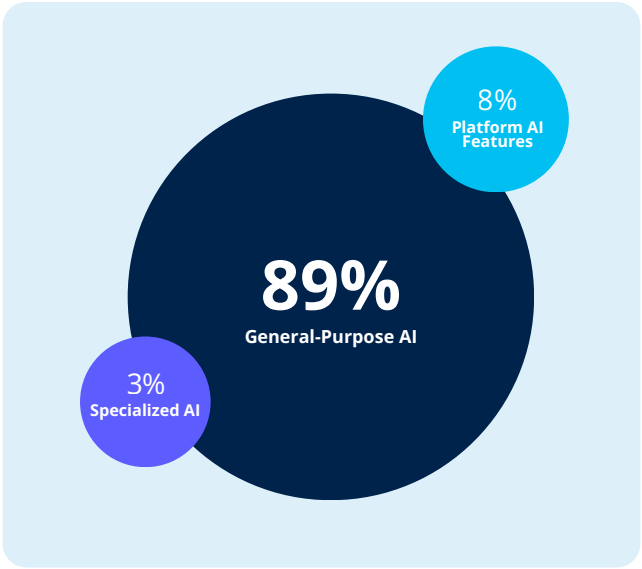



*Figure 3: AI Tool type distribution*

Nearly 90% of AI usage is general-purpose. Not because better tools don't exist, but because most organizations haven't connected AI to their procurement data infrastructure. The investment gap is organizational, not technological.

## 83% of Procurement Organizations Have No Enforced AI Governance Policy

Only 17% of procurement organizations have an enforced AI governance policy. In a function that handles confidential pricing, competitive bids, and contract terms, that means the vast majority are sharing sensitive data with consumer AI platforms without organizational guardrails. This is a material compliance risk, and the fastest area to act. Governance does not require budget. It requires a decision.

**The governance gap at a glance:**

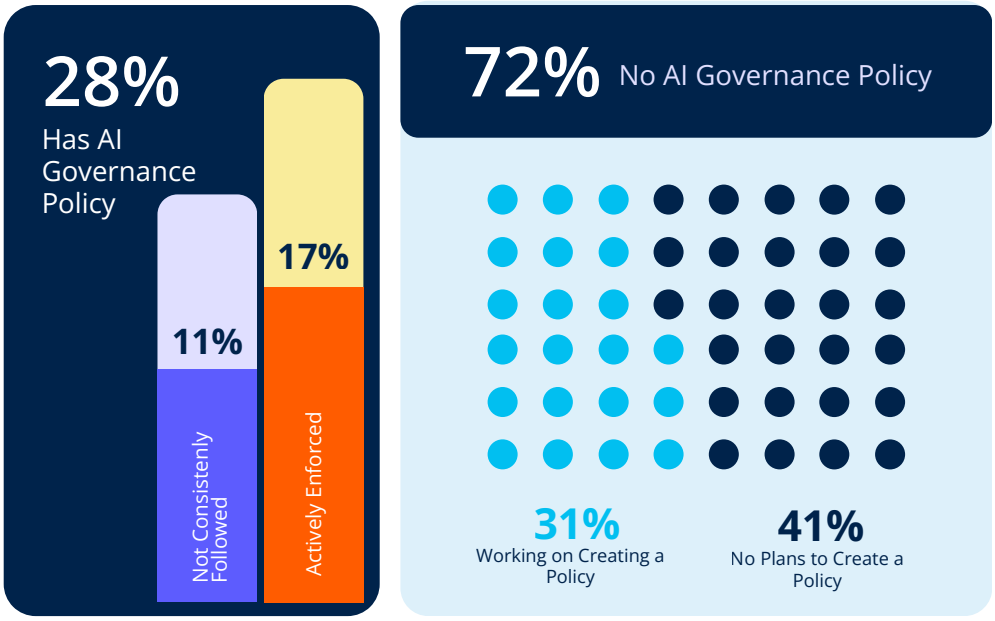



*Figure 4: AI governance policy status*

## Knowledge Gaps Are the #1 Barrier to AI Adoption in Procurement, Not Budget nor Technology

**Knowledge and skills gaps (41%) are the single biggest barrier,** followed by IT and policy restrictions (21%), budget constraints (12%), and organizational resistance (10%)

**The top barriers, ranked:**

01 **Knowledge & Skills : 41%**
The #1 barrier by a wide margin. Teams lack training, awareness, and practical know-how to apply AI to procurement workflows.

02 **IT & Policy : 21%**
Corporate IT restrictions, lack of formal AI policy, data security concerns, and blocked access to tools.

03 **Budget & Cost : 12%**
Licensing costs, lack of budget allocation, and difficulty building a business case.

04 **Organizational Resistance : 10%**
Change management challenges, reluctance from management, and cultural inertia.

**The top barriers, ranked (continued):**

**05** **System Integration : 4%**
Difficulty connecting AI tools with existing ERP, P2P, and contract management systems.

**06** **Data Quality : 4%**
Fragmented data, lack of confidence in data integrity, and missing master data foundations.

**07** **AI Limitations : 4%**
Hallucinations, lack of context understanding, and tools not meeting practical needs.

**08** **Time & Bandwidth : 4%**
No dedicated capacity to test, learn, and implement AI in existing workflows.

First, the biggest barrier is knowledge and skills. 41% of procurement professionals say they lack the training and practical know-how to apply AI to their workflows. This is not a technology problem. It is a training problem, and the easiest and most cost-effective to fix.

Second, IT and policy restrictions rank second at 21%, ahead of budget constraints (12%). That is surprising: teams are more concerned about sharing sensitive procurement data with AI tools than about cost or access.

Third, the barriers are broadly distributed. Organizational resistance (10%), system integration, data quality, AI limitations, and time constraints (each 4%) all contribute. There is no single fix. Training delivers the highest return, but IT restrictions, budget limits, and organizational resistance together account for 43% of the problem. Scaling AI requires parallel investment in skills, governance, data, and change management.

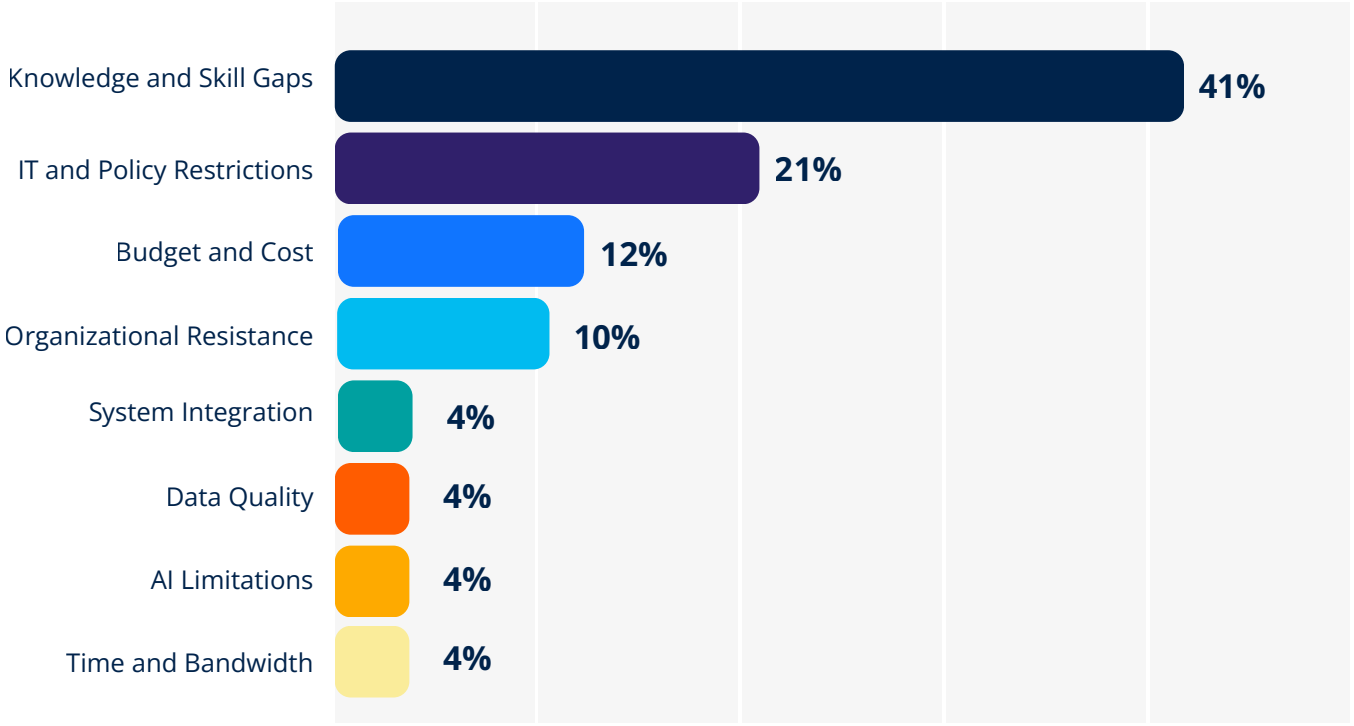



*Figure 5: Biggest obstacles to AI adoption, ranked*

**10.6 hours per week are at stake. But reclaiming them requires more than tools. It requires readiness. The average procurement professional thinks they can outsource 10.6 hours per week to AI. That is more than a full working day, every week, waiting to be reclaimed.**

Four signals describe the current state. Adoption is high but bimodal: 47% use AI every working day, 10% never. General-purpose tools dominate (62% ChatGPT, 61% Copilot), and only 11% use AI connected to their procurement data.

Governance has not kept pace: 83% operate without an enforced policy. And the biggest barrier is not technology or budget but knowledge: 41% lack the practical skills to apply AI to their workflows.

CHAPTER 3

# The AI Readiness Assessment

Suplari's 8-dimension framework reveals where the industry stands

THIS CHAPTER GIVES YOU THE ANSWER TO

**How ready are procurement teams to move from individual AI use to organizational deployment?**

We established that procurement teams are using AI frequently. But using AI as an individual tool is fundamentally different from deploying it at an organizational scale. The first requires a login; the second requires data infrastructure, governance, integrated systems, and trained teams.

This chapter shows how procurement organizations score across the eight readiness dimensions. The industry average sits at 2.1 out of 5, between Foundational and Developing. Not a single dimension reached the 2.5 threshold for effective AI deployment.

## How the Scoring Works

Each organization receives an AI Readiness Score from 1.0 to 5.0 based on eight dimensions. The score represents where your organization sits on a five-level maturity scale:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Foundational**<br>Minimal capability. Data is fragmented across spreadsheets, processes are manual, AI is not in use. << Industry average sits here |
| 2 | **Developing**<br>Early progress. Data is consolidating, first integrations exist, AI exploration has begun. << Industry average sits here |
| 3 | **Established**<br>Solid foundation. Systems are connected, workflows are structured, AI pilots are running. |
| 4 | **Advanced**<br>High capability. Data is governed, processes are proactive, AI is deployed in key areas. |
| 5 | **Leading**<br>Best-in-class. Intelligent data ecosystems, AI-driven operations, continuous optimization. |

The highlighted rows show where the industry average (2.1) currently sits: between Foundational and Developing. Not a single dimension scored above 2.5. The color gradient from light to dark is used throughout this report to indicate maturity levels in tables and charts.

## Most Procurement Teams Use AI. Almost None Have the Data, Systems, or Governance to Do It Well

### AI Readiness Score by Dimension

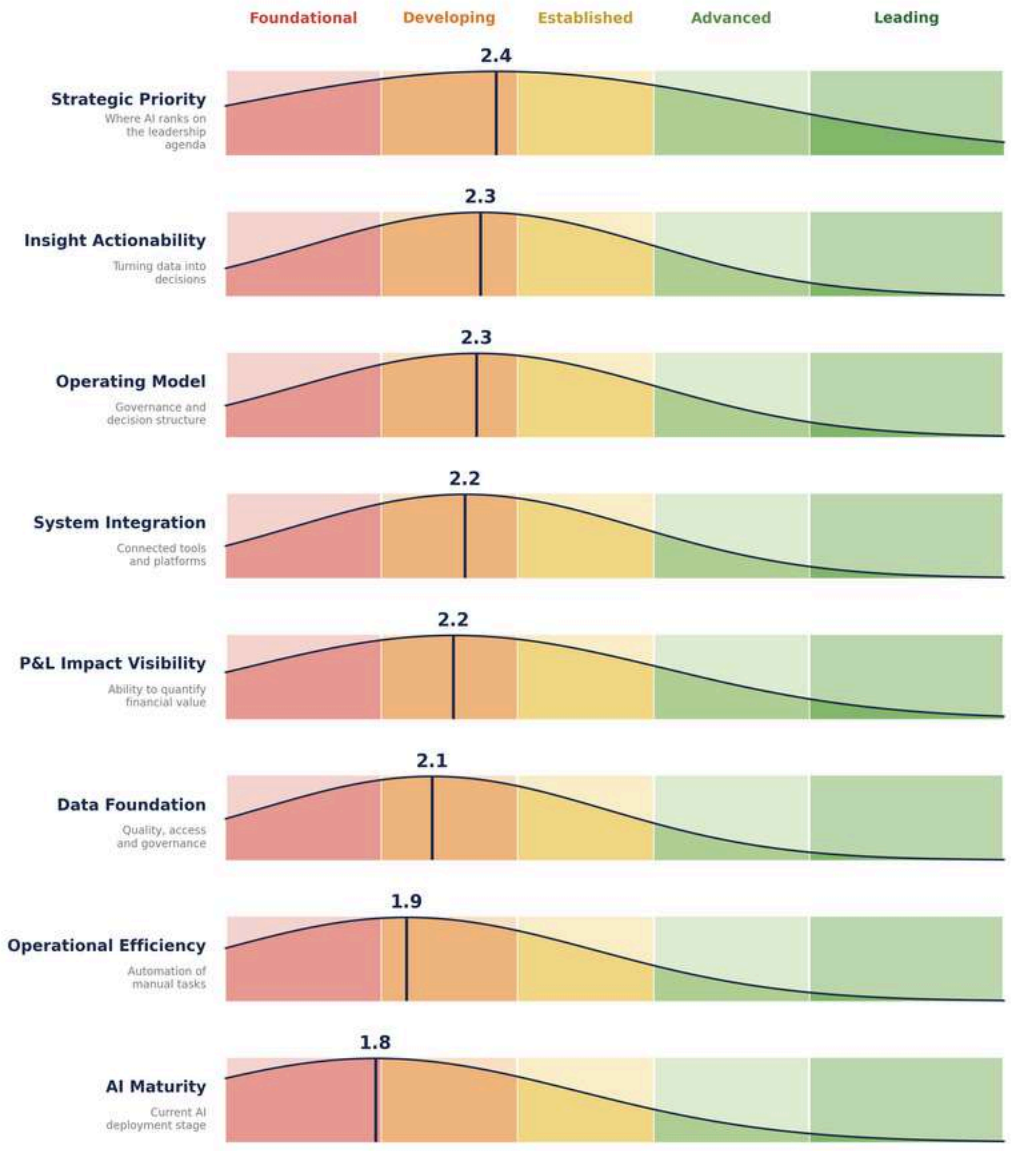



*Figure 6: AI readiness score by dimension*

> **Not a single dimension scored above 2.5.** The industry is firmly in the early stages of organizational AI readiness

**The pattern splits into two groups:**

**Intent dimensions (higher scores)**

Strategic Priority (2.4), Operating Model (2.3), Insight Actionability (2.3), P&L Impact (2.2)

**Capability dimensions (lower scores):**

System Integration (2.2), Data Foundation (2.1), Operational Efficiency (1.9), AI Maturity (1.8)

Organizations know what they want but haven't built what they need. This Intent-Capability Gap is the defining characteristic of AI readiness in procurement today.

## How to Read the Spider Chart

Each axis represents one of the 8 readiness dimensions, scored on a 1 to 5 scale. A score of 1 represents the lowest maturity (fragmented data, fully manual processes, no AI use). A score of 5 represents the highest (intelligent data ecosystems, AI-driven operations, fully embedded AI). The further from the center, the higher the score. A balanced shape indicates even readiness across dimensions; an uneven shape reveals gaps.

The industry average of 2.1 sits between "Foundational" and "Developing", placing procurement firmly in the early stages of AI readiness. Dimensions shown: Strategic Priority, Operating Model, Insight Actionability, P&L Impact Visibility, System Integration, Operational Efficiency, Data Foundation, AI Maturity.

Some spider charts are adjusted to make them more readible.

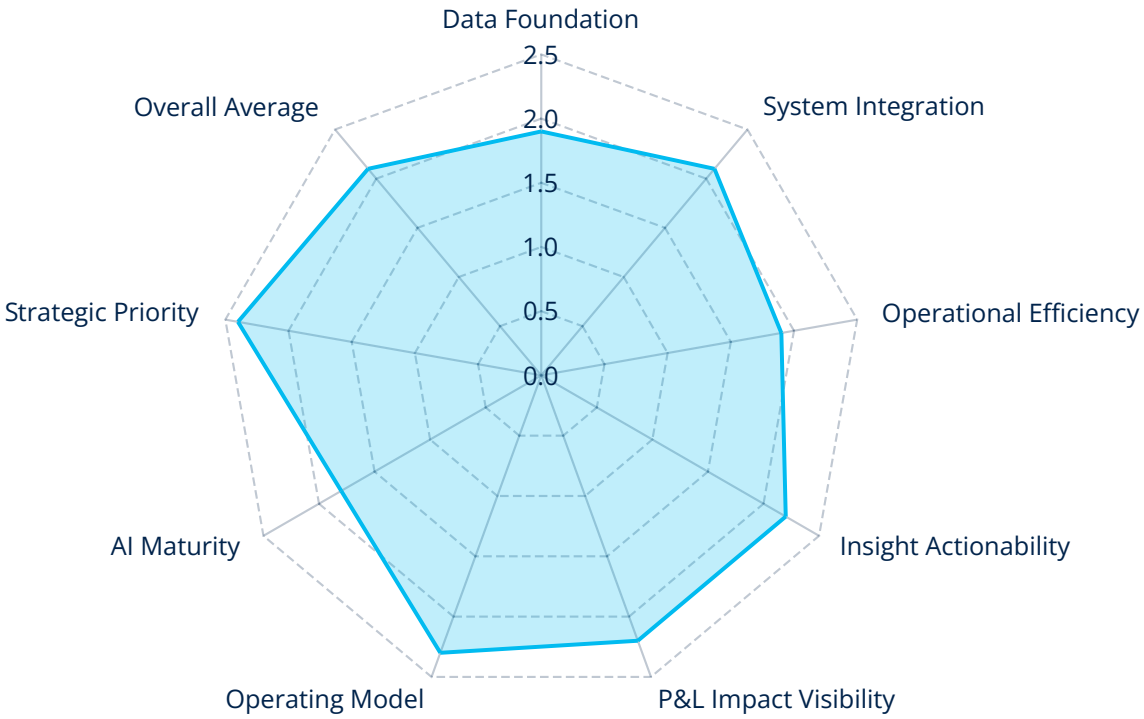



*Figure 7: Overall AI Readiness Spider Graph*

**Key observations:**

- The shape skews toward strategic intent (2.4, 2.3) and collapses on foundations (1.9, 1.8)
- The overall shape is compressed and uneven, indicating systemic under-investment
- Ambition without infrastructure is the universal pattern across the industry

The 2.1 industry average is a useful starting point, but it masks significant variation. A CPO at a 50,000-employee enterprise faces different challenges than a procurement manager at a 500-person company. A European team operates in a different context than one in Asia-Pacific.

This chapter segments the data by company size, role, region, and AI usage frequency. Find the peer group closest to your organization and compare your readiness profile against theirs. The spider charts reveal where each segment leads and lags, helping you prioritize based on your specific context.

BY COMPANY SIZE

## Larger Organizations Score Higher on AI Readiness, but Size Alone is no Guarantee of AI Maturity

| Company Size | Share | AI Readiness Score |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 500 | 38% | 2.0 |
| 500 - 2,500 | 25% | 2.1 |
| 2,500 - 10,000 | 15% | 2.1 |
| 10,000 - 50,000 | 14% | 2.2 |
| 50,000 + | 8% | 2.6 |

**AI Maturity is the weakest dimension in every size category except the largest.** Size provides resources but does not solve the readiness challenge.

Even at scale, Strategic Priority pulls outward while operational dimensions lag. The intent-capability gap persists.

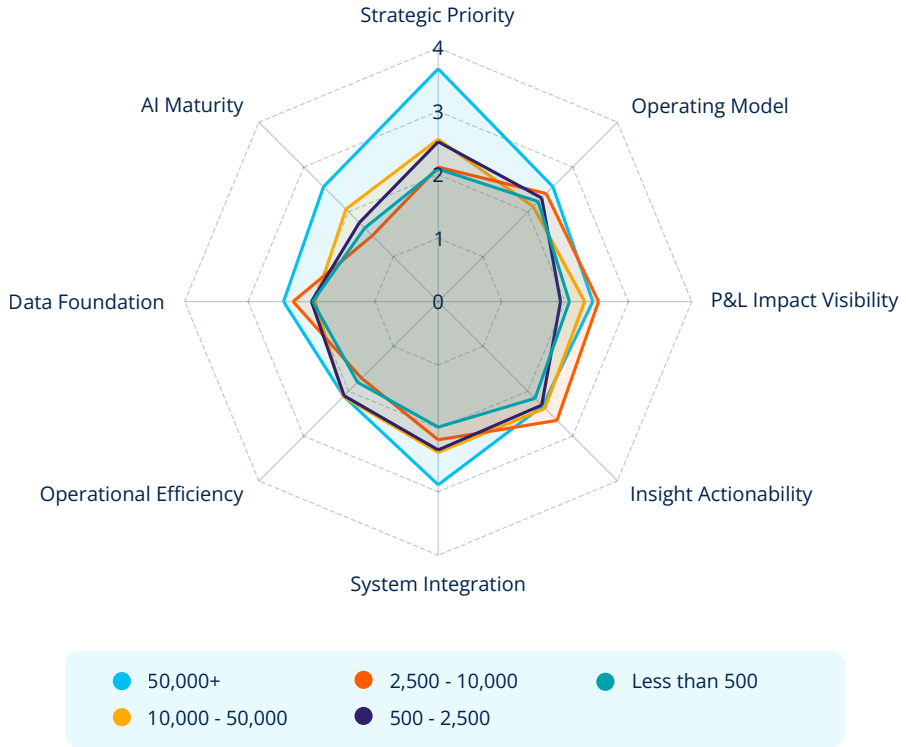



*Figure 8: AI Readiness by company size: spider overlay*

BY ROLE & SENIORITY

# C-Level and Directors Report Higher AI Readiness Than Buyers and Analysts

| Role | Share | AI Readiness Score |
|---|---|---|
| C - Level | 5% | 2.4 |
| Category Manager / Senior Buyer | 16% | 2.2 |
| VP Procurement | 5% | 2.1 |
| Procurement Manager | 36% | 2.0 |
| Analyst / Specialist | 18% | 1.9 |

**C-level scores 2.4 vs Analyst/Specialist at 1.9.** Either leaders overestimate readiness, or investments haven't reached the frontline. Validate assumptions with your frontline teams.

Leadership scores higher on strategic dimensions. The gap narrows on operational realities.

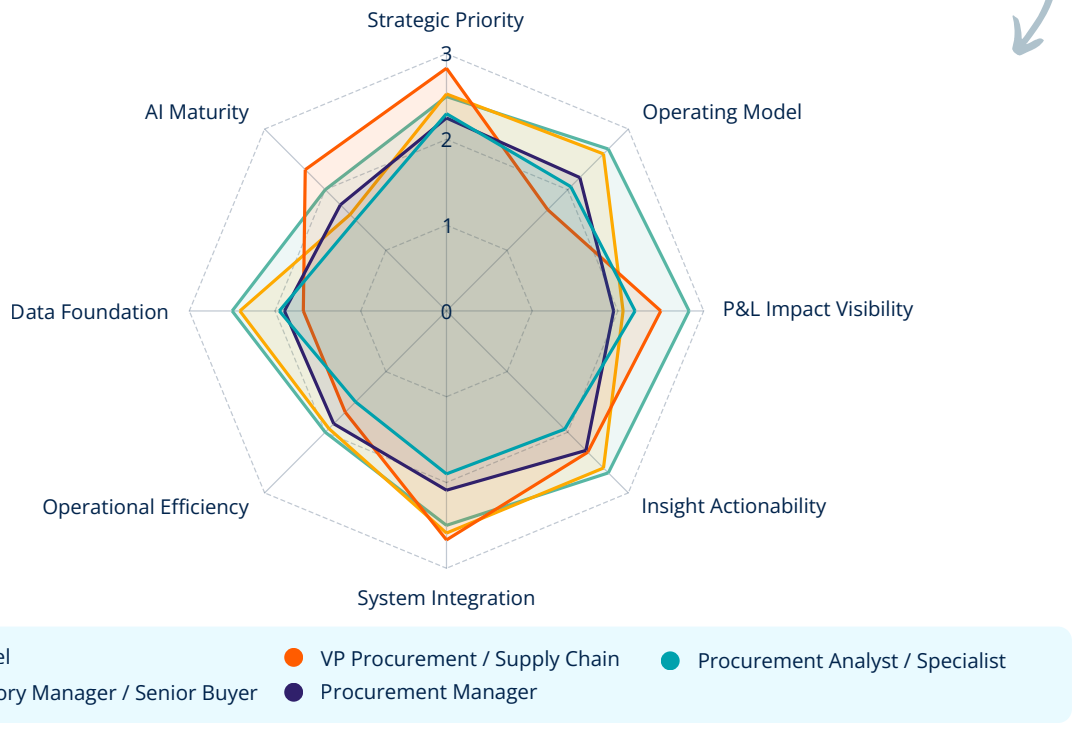



*Figure 9: AI Readiness by role: spider overlay*

BY REGION

# AI Readiness Is a Global Challenge

| Region | Share | AI Readiness Score |
|---|---|---|
| Europe | 29% | 2.2 |
| Asia - Pacific | 16% | 2.2 |
| North America | 17% | 2.1 |
| Latin America | 6% | 2.1 |
| Middle East & Africa | 25% | 2.0 |

**Only 0.26 points separate the highest and lowest region.** No geography has a head start. Competitive advantage comes from execution speed, not location.

Europe leads on Data Foundation and Strategic Priority; Asia-Pacific leads on Insight Actionability and Operating Model

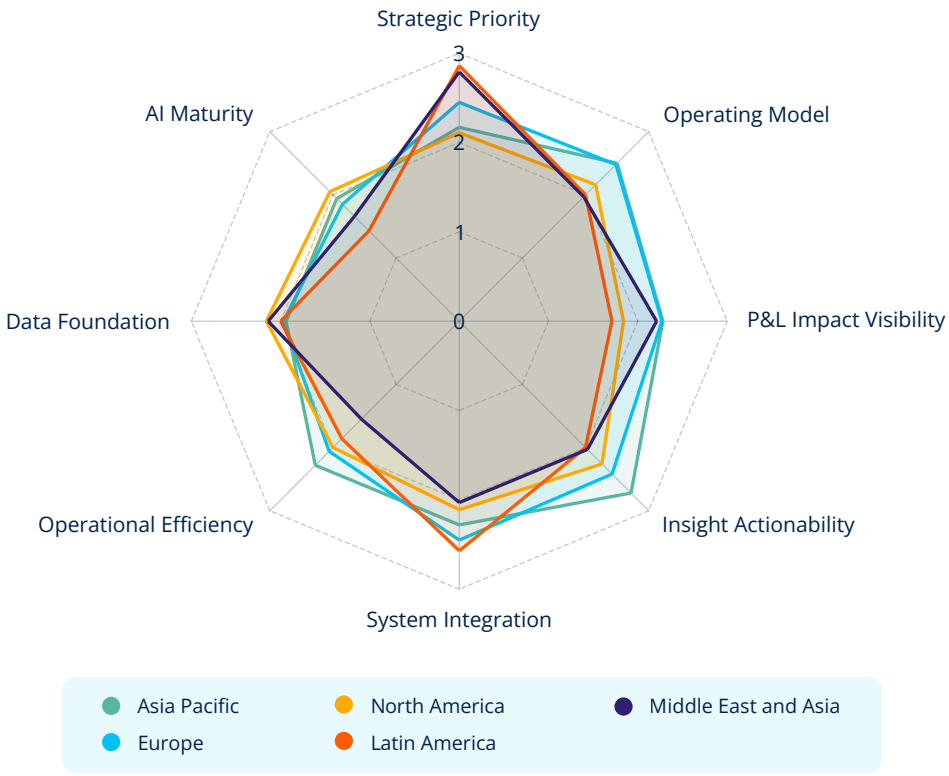



*Figure 10: AI Readiness by region: spider overlay*

THE FREQUENCY PARADOX

# Daily AI Use by Procurement Professionals Alone Does Not Drive Organizational Readiness

If more AI usage led to more organizational readiness, daily users would score significantly higher. They don't. This is what we call the Frequency Paradox.

KEY TERM

## Frequency Paradox

The counterintuitive finding that how often your team uses AI has almost no correlation with how ready your organization is to deploy it at scale. More usage does not produce more readiness.

Daily AI users (5 days/week) score 2.2, no higher than peers who use AI far less often. The expected upward curve from more usage to more readiness simply does not exist. Organizational AI maturity requires deliberate investment in infrastructure and governance, not just more individual tool adoption.

The Frequency Paradox is the first sign that readiness is not driven by usage alone. Chapter 4 examines two further patterns, then maps all three onto six recognizable organizational archetypes.

> **"Using AI five days a week without organizational readiness is like driving fast without a map.** You're moving, but you may not be getting anywhere."

CHAPTER 4

# The AI Readiness Paradox

When ambition meets reality, and reality wins

THIS CHAPTER GIVES YOU THE ANSWER TO

**Which organizational patterns separate the AI-ready from the not AI ready? Which six recognizable archetypes fit your organization?**

Every organization in this survey has an AI ambition. Some want cost savings, others want AI-enabled scale. But ambition and readiness are not the same thing.

In fact, the data reveals a consistent and counterintuitive pattern: the organizations with the boldest AI goals often have the weakest operational foundations to support them. This chapter examines three interconnected findings.

First, the Aspiration Gap: the measurable distance between what organizations say they want and what they have built to get there.

Second, the AI Readiness Paradox: the finding that personal AI usage does not translate into organizational maturity.

And finally, six Procurement Archetypes that show how these patterns combine into recognizable organizational profiles.

**Organizations with the boldest AI goals have the weakest foundations to deliver them.**

KEY TERM

### Aspiration Gap

The measurable difference between an organization's stated strategic priority and its actual operational readiness across the other seven dimensions. A large gap signals that strategy and execution are misaligned.

# Early Phase

We cross-referenced each respondent's strategic priority with their actual readiness across the other seven dimensions. Where do procurement organizations stand? The majority (64%) remain focused on cost reduction and basic digitization. Only 20% have advanced to data-driven or AI-enabled strategies.

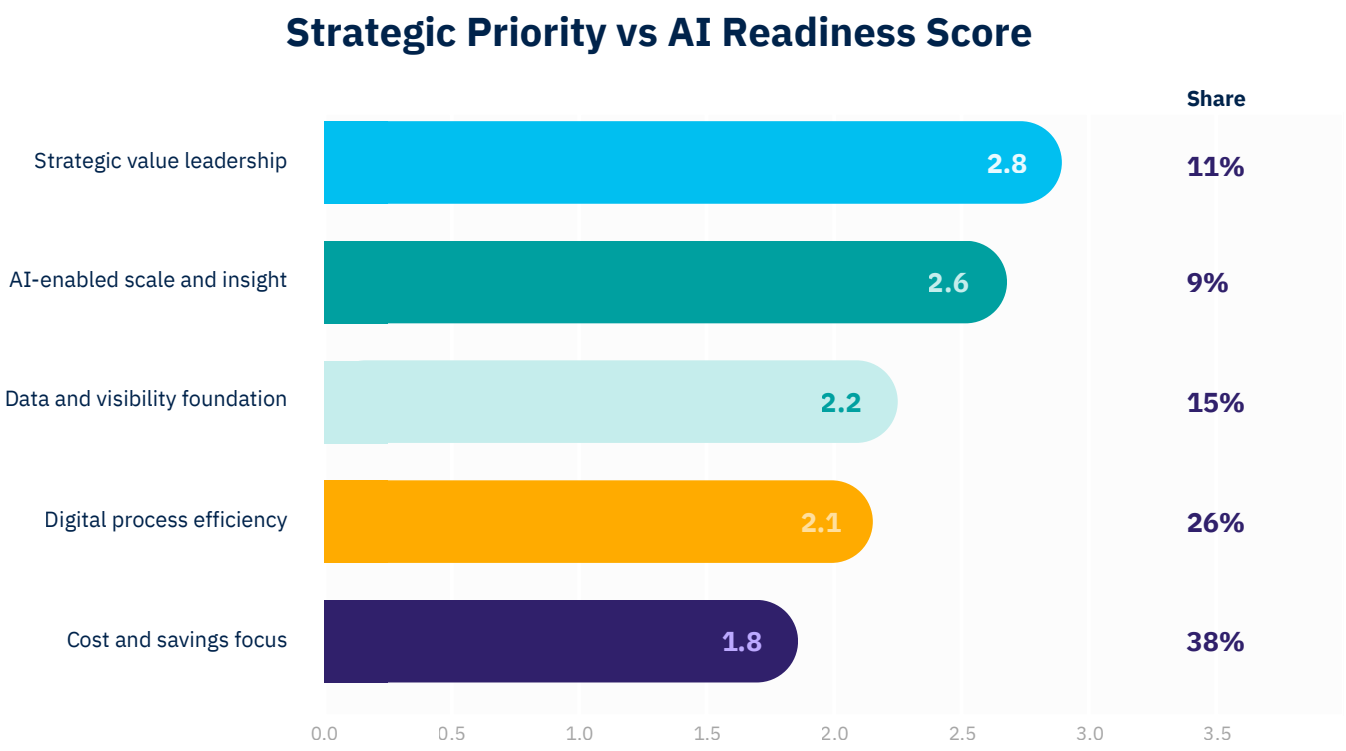



*Figure 11 : Strategic Priority vs Readiness*

Key findings from the aspiration gap analysis:

- More ambition correlates with higher readiness, but even the most ambitious group scores only 2.8, just above the scale midpoint
- The largest group (38%, cost-focused) scores lowest at 1.8
- Cost pressure creates a reinforcing trap: no investment in foundations → continued manual work → continued cost pressure
- 64% of organizations are still in the two lowest maturity clusters.

KEY TERM

## The Cost-Pressure Trap

A reinforcing cycle where cost-focused organizations cannot invest in data and governance because of short-term savings pressure, which keeps them dependent on manual processes, which reinforces the cost pressure. Breaking out requires reframing AI readiness as a capability investment, not a cost-reduction project.

**Everyone wants AI-enabled scale, but most organizations haven't even fixed their data foundation. The aspiration-reality gap is the industry's central challenge.**

## Daily AI users score no higher on organizational readiness than non-users

The Aspiration Gap shows that ambition does not equal readiness. But there is a second, equally important finding: individual AI usage does not produce organizational readiness either.

KEY TERM

### AI Readiness Paradox

The counterintuitive finding that teams with the highest AI usage don't have the highest organizational readiness. Using AI five days a week and being ready to deploy AI at scale are fundamentally different challenges that require different strategies.

> **"The teams that need AI the most are the least prepared to use it. That's the AI Readiness Paradox."**

Readiness improves with ambition, but never closes the gap. No priority group achieves the 3.0+ scores needed for successful AI deployment.

## Strategic Priority vs AI Readiness Score

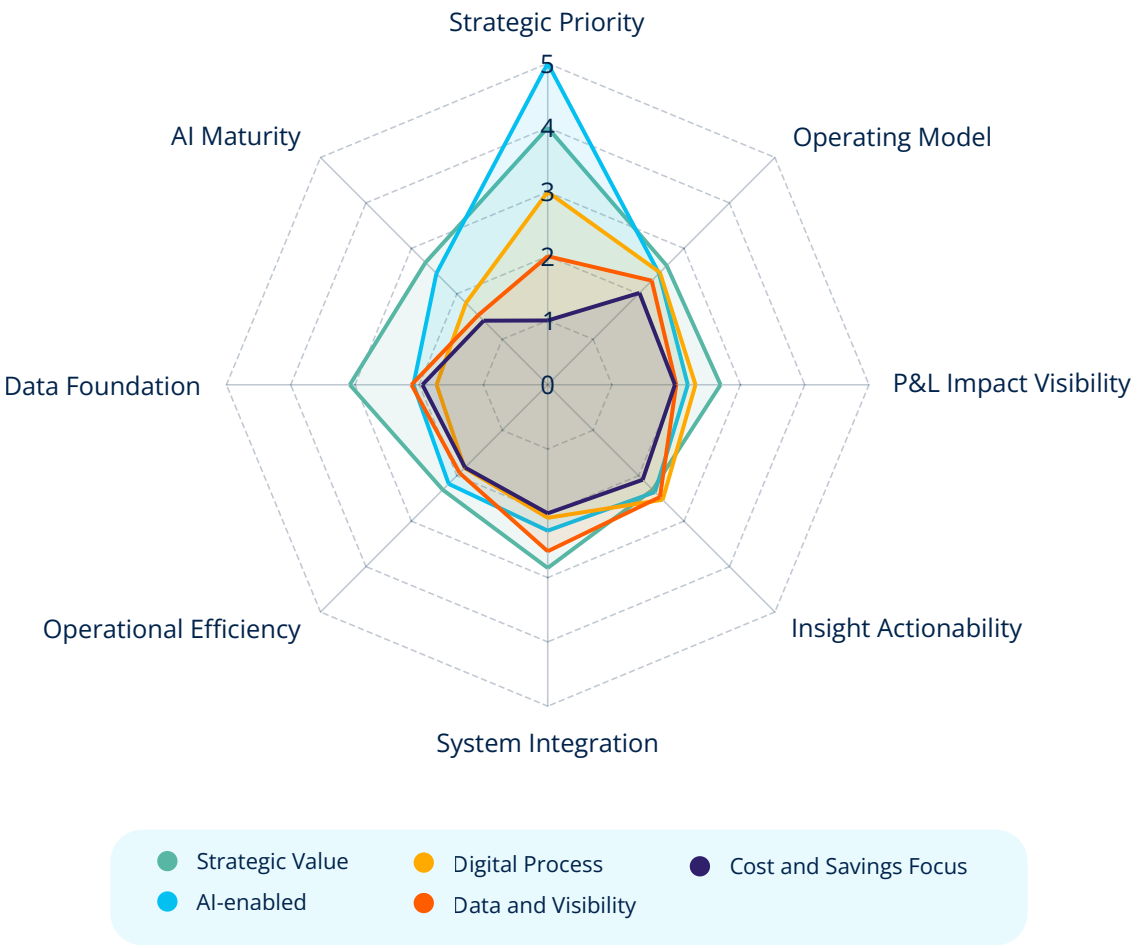



*Figure 12 : Strategic Priority vs AI Readiness*

The cost-focused group (38%) shows a compressed profile near 1.8. The AI-enabled group (10%) expands but still falls short. The critical insight: even the most forward-looking organizations need significant foundational investment before AI delivers at scale.

# Six Procurement Archetypes

The Aspiration Gap and the AI Readiness Paradox are industry-wide patterns. But how do they manifest in specific organizations? By clustering survey responses on usage patterns, readiness scores, and strategic priorities, six distinct profiles emerge.

KEY TERM

## Procurement Archetypes

Recurring organizational profiles that combine AI usage patterns, readiness scores, and strategic priorities. Each archetype represents a common combination found in the survey data. Use them to identify where your organization stands and what to prioritize next.

**Read through all six archetypes. Identify the one closest to your organization. Use the priority action listed as your starting point for the recommendations in Chapter 5.**

**ARCHETYPE 1**

## The Strategic Leader

**PROFILE**

- Above-average readiness across most dimensions (3.5/5 overall)
- Proactive or data-driven operating model (3.7).
- AI in deploying, embedded, or AI-driven stage (3.8).
- Can demonstrate P&L impact to finance (3.7).
- Found across all company sizes, with 67% in organizations of 10,000+ employees.
- Mix of roles including analysts, managers, and C-level.

**KEY OPPORTUNITY**

First-mover advantage. These organizations will gain compounding returns from AI investment while competitors are still building foundations. But even leaders have gaps: Data Foundation averages just 2.2: still "consolidating."

**PRIORITY ACTION**

Scale what works. Expand successful AI deployments across categories. Close the Data Foundation gap. Build the ROI evidence that justifies continued investment and protects budget during downturns.

ARCHETYPE 2

## The Steady Incrementalist

**PROFILE**

- Scores between 2 and 3 across all eight dimensions.
- No dramatic gaps, no dramatic strengths.
- Overall readiness: 3.3/5
- Typically Category Managers and Procurement Managers in mid-size organizations.
- They've made real progress: systems are partially connected, some automation exists, pilots are running, but nothing has broken through to scale.

**KEY RISK**

Invisible progress. Because this archetype lacks a dramatic story (no crisis, no bold vision), it risks losing executive attention and budget. The middle is where most organizations actually sit, but it's also where transformation stalls.

**PRIORITY ACTION**

Pick one dimension and push it from 3 to 4. Don't try to advance everything simultaneously. Identify the single dimension where improvement would create the most visible business impact and concentrate resources there.

ARCHETYPE 3

## The Infrastructure Investor

**PROFILE**

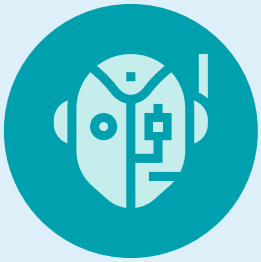
- Above-average Data Foundation (3.1) and System Integration (3.6), the two highest infrastructure scores of any archetype
- AI Maturity is just 1.3 (still exploring)
- These organizations have invested in ERP, P2P, and data platforms. The plumbing works. They just haven't turned on the AI
- Found across all company sizes, with concentration in mid-market.
- Overall readiness: 2.4/5

**KEY RISK**

Wasted infrastructure investment. Competitors who deploy AI on similar foundations will gain efficiency advantages. Every quarter of delay is a quarter where the ROI on those infrastructure investments sits at zero.

**PRIORITY ACTION**

Move from infrastructure to deployment. Select two to three high-impact AI use cases (spend analytics, contract analysis, supplier risk) and run structured 90-day pilots. The foundation is already there. This archetype has the shortest path from current state to AI value.



ARCHETYPE 4

## The Copilot Power User

**PROFILE**

- Uses AI four to five days per week, primarily ChatGPT and Copilot
- Has fragmented data (1.4), no governance policy, and a mostly reactive operating model
- Individually productive but organizationally stuck
- Found across all company sizes (43% under 500 employees)
- Most common roles: Procurement Managers (43%) and Category Managers (20%)
- Overall readiness: 1.9/5

**KEY RISK**

Compliance exposure. 100% of this archetype have no enforced AI policy. Confidential procurement data like supplier pricing, contract terms, negotiation strategies is being shared with consumer AI platforms without organizational oversight. This is the single largest governance risk in the dataset.

**PRIORITY ACTION**

Establish AI governance immediately. Channel individual enthusiasm into structured, organizationally sanctioned AI workflows. These people are your early adopters. Give them guardrails, not restrictions.



ARCHETYPE 5

## All Talk, No Foundation

**PROFILE**

- Strategic Priority dimension at 4.7/5, the highest of any archetype, paired with critically low capability (1.6/5 average across Data Foundation, System Integration, Operational Efficiency and AI Maturity).
- Wants digital transformation or AI-enabled scale but runs on fragmented data and siloed systems
- Found across all company sizes: 37% under 500 employees, but also 9% at 50,000+.
- Overall readiness: 2.2/5

**KEY RISK**

Credibility erosion. Leadership expects AI-driven outcomes from an organization that has not built the prerequisites. Every failed pilot reinforces the narrative that procurement cannot deliver on transformation promises. This archetype is also the most likely to invest in AI tools that underperform due to poor data quality.

**PRIORITY ACTION**

Pause the ambition. Invest 6 months in data consolidation and system integration before expanding the AI agenda. Reframe the conversation: "We need to build the foundation first to deliver on the AI vision."

ARCHETYPE 6

# Stuck at the Bottom

**PROFILE**

- The lowest-readiness archetype.
- Every dimension scores between 1.0 and 1.7. AI Maturity and Strategic Priority both at 1.0: AI is not on the agenda and procurement is in pure cost-and-savings mode.
- 74% focus exclusively on cost savings as their strategic priority.
- 93% have no AI policy or no plans to create one.
- 56% are small organizations under 500 employees.
- Overall readiness: 1.4/5.

**KEY RISK**

Strategic irrelevance. As competitors adopt AI, these organizations will fall further behind. Without intervention, procurement remains a cost center with no path to value creation. The danger is not that they fail at AI, it's that they never start.

**PRIORITY ACTION**

Reframe procurement's role. Don't start with AI. Build the business case for data visibility first. Show leadership how procurement impacts margins. Create one small win that demonstrates value beyond cost savings.

## Procurement AI Archetypes - All 6 (Rule-based)

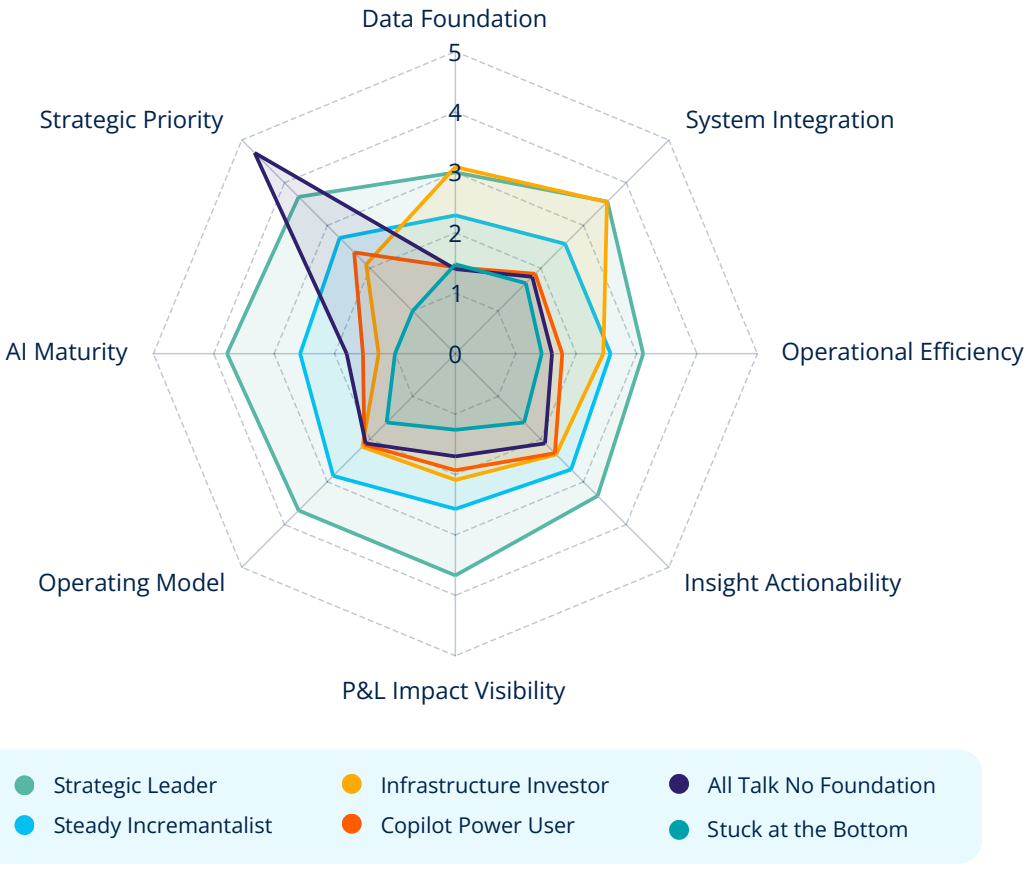



*Figure 13 : Procurement Archetypes*

CHAPTER 5

# Recommendations & Next Steps

From assessment to action: a practical roadmap for 2026

THIS CHAPTER GIVES YOU THE ANSWER TO

**What next steps should your organization take with AI adoption?**

The previous chapters diagnosed the problem: organizations are stuck between individual AI adoption and organizational readiness, trapped by data gaps, missing governance, and the reinforcing cycle of cost pressure. This chapter provides the treatment plan.

The roadmap is structured in three phases, each building on the last. The timelines are calibrated to where most organizations actually stand (score 2.2), not where they think they are. Skipping phases will not work. The data makes clear that organizations without data foundations and governance cannot successfully deploy AI, regardless of ambition.

The recommendations below draw on the survey findings presented throughout this report. All percentages refer to the surveyed procurement professionals unless stated otherwise.

**"2026 is the year to act. The organizations that fix their AI foundations now will define who leads procurement in the years ahead."**

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

## Phase 1: Fix the Foundation (Month 1&2)

Data, governance, and skills. These are the non-negotiable prerequisites. Skip them, and every AI initiative will underdeliver.

01

### START WITH DATA NOT TOOLS

The lowest-scoring dimensions are Data Foundation (1.9) and AI Maturity (1.8). Reverse the typical order: consolidate spend data, clean supplier master data, and establish data quality standards before investing in AI tools. Use Suplari to automate spend data unification

02

### ESTABLISH AI GOVERNANCE NOW

83% lack an enforced policy while 47% use AI daily. This is not sustainable. Create clear guidelines: what data can be shared with which tools, how outputs must be validated, who is accountable for compliance. Suplari's AI Readiness Assessment benchmarks governance maturity.

03

### INVEST IN TRAINING, NOT JUST TECHNOLOGY

Knowledge gaps are the biggest barrier to AI adoption in procurement (41%). Structured AI training focused on practical procurement skills helps teams work faster and creates more consistent processes.

## Phase 2: Build the Capabilities (Month 3 & 5)

With data, governance, and skills in place, connect your systems and build the processes that enable AI to operate at organizational scale.

04

### INTEGRATE YOUR SYSTEMS

71% have siloed or limited integrations. Map critical data flows between ERP, P2P platform, contract management, and analytics tools. Prioritize API-based connections that enable real-time data access.

05

### SHIFT FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE PROCUREMENT

59% are reactive. Build systematic processes for market monitoring, contract expiry management, and supplier performance tracking. Use the time freed by automation to invest in forward-looking activities.

06

### CLOSE THE INSIGHT-TO-ACTION GAP

62% report ad-hoc follow-up on insights. Define structured workflows: who receives each type of insight, what action it triggers, what the deadline is, and how execution is tracked.

## Phase 3: Scale the Impact (Month 6)

Scale what works. This phase is only achievable after Phases 1 and 2. Organizations that skip ahead will fail.

07

### MOVE FROM INDIVIDUAL AI USE TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEPLOYMENT

Bridge the gap between personal AI usage (47% daily) and organizational maturity (53% exploring). Build team-level AI processes: shared prompt libraries, standardized workflows, validated templates, and pilot programs.

08

### PROVE AI'S VALUE TO UNLOCK PROCUREMENT'S FULL POTENTIAL

64% struggle to demonstrate P&L impact. Align with finance on methodology; build dashboards connecting procurement activities to financial outcomes. The AI business case becomes easy when procurement's current value is already proven.

# APPENDIX

## **Artificial Intelligence Readiness** in Procurement 2026

Suplari

PT | Procurement Tactics

APPENDIX A

# The AI Readiness Deep Analysis

What each dimension reveals about your organization

Chapter 3 presented the overall AI Readiness Score of 2.1/5 and showed how eight dimensions combine into a single picture. But the real insight is in the details: why does each dimension score what it scores, what does that mean operationally, and what should you do about it?

**This chapter breaks down each of the eight dimensions with score distributions, the key statistic that defines the dimension, and the strategic implication for procurement leaders.**

Each dimension follows the same structure: **headline finding, supporting data, and what it means for your organization.**

## 1. DATA FOUNDATION

SCORE 2.1

**76% have fragmented or merely consolidating data**

39% operate with fragmented data across spreadsheets and disconnected systems. 37% are consolidating but lack a unified view. Only 6% have governed data with defined quality standards.

**Strategic implication:** This is the single most important dimension to fix. AI outputs are only as reliable as the data they're built on. At 2.1, most procurement teams cannot trust their data enough for AI to generate actionable results.

## 2. SYSTEM INTEGRATION

SCORE 2.2

**71% have siloed or only limited system integrations**

28% report completely siloed systems. 43% have limited integrations. 21% have connected systems. 0% report a unified ecosystem.

**Strategic implication:** When systems don't communicate, AI can only work with whatever data a user manually copies into a prompt. This is exactly what 62% of teams are doing with ChatGPT today. Integration is the bridge between AI experimentation and AI deployment.

## 3. OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

SCORE 1.9

**74% spend 40%+ of their time on manual data work**

41% report that over 60% of their time is consumed by manual tasks. 33% spend 40–60% on manual work. Only 6% have less than 20% manual workload.

**Strategic implication:** This is self-reinforcing: teams buried in manual work have no capacity to implement the automation that would free them. Breaking this cycle requires deliberate investment in the highest-impact automations first.

## 4. INSIGHT ACTIONABILITY

SCORE 2.3

**62% report ad-hoc or no follow-up on procurement insights**

21% say insights rarely lead to action. 41% follow up ad-hoc. 29% have structured processes. Only 10% have systematic workflows.

**Strategic implication:** AI will generate more insights, faster. Without structured follow-up workflows, that creates more noise, not more value. The fix is organizational, not technological: define who owns each insight, what action it triggers, and how execution is tracked.

## 5. P&L IMPACT VISIBILITY

SCORE 2.2

**64% have limited or debated P&L visibility**

34% say financial impact is difficult to quantify. 30% report savings but face pushback from finance. 26% have agreed metrics with periodic reporting; only 10% have integrated value tracking or real-time visibility

**Strategic implication:** If procurement cannot demonstrate its current value, AI investment becomes impossible to justify. CFOs approve budgets based on demonstrated ROI. Aligning with finance on impact methodology is a prerequisite for any AI business case.

## 6. OPERATING MODEL

SCORE 2.3

**59% are reactive or mostly reactive**

24% are fully reactive. 35% mostly reactive. 32% are emerging proactive. 9% data-driven. 1% AI-augmented

**Strategic implication:** Reactive teams lack the bandwidth to operate proactively. This dimension improves naturally as Data Foundation and System Integration scores rise, making it a lagging rather than leading indicator of progress.

## 7. AI MATURITY

SCORE 2.3

**53% still exploring, 81% haven't moved beyond experimenting**

53% are exploring. 28% are experimenting with pilots. 11% are deploying. 4% have embedded AI. 4% are AI-driven.

**Strategic implication:** The lowest score in the framework. The jump from experimenting to deploying is where most organizations stall, because it requires the organizational infrastructure (data, governance, integration) that most haven't built. Personal AI usage without organizational deployment means no shared workflows and no audit trails.

### 8. STRATEGIC PRIORITY

SCORE 2.4

**38% remain cost-focused, only 10% prioritize AI-enabled scale**

38% focus on cost and savings. 26% on digital process efficiency. 15% on data/visibility. 11% on strategic value. 10% on AI-enabled scale.

**Strategic implication:** The highest-scoring dimension, yet still below the scale midpoint. The 38% cost-focused group scores lowest on readiness (1.8), confirming that a narrow savings focus prevents the foundational investments needed for AI.

Organizations that reframe procurement from cost center to capability builder will unlock AI investment.

## 53% of Procurement Organizations Are Still Exploring AI. Only 8% Have Moved Past Pilots.

The distribution reveals a funnel: many explore, fewer experiment, almost none deploy. The data tells us exactly where organizations get stuck.

Over half the industry sits at the earliest stage. The transition from experimenting to deploying is the critical inflection point, and it requires organizational infrastructure that most teams have not built.

Organizations that want to break through this funnel must invest in data foundation and system integration first. Without those two dimensions, the jump to deployment is structurally impossible.

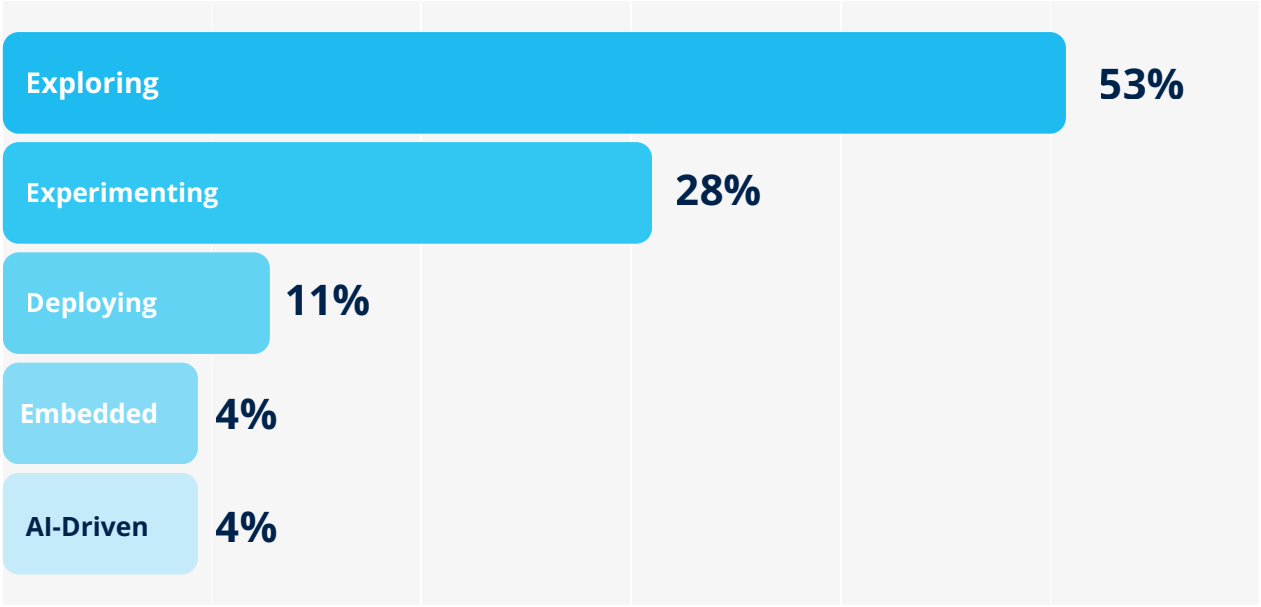



*Figure 14: Where organizations stand on the AI adoption journey*

Appendix A provided the detailed analysis. This chapter distills each dimension into a visual scorecard: the score, a progress bar showing where it falls on the 1–5 scale, the single most important finding, and the priority action.

## Use these cards as a quick reference when presenting to stakeholders or building your action plan.

### DATA FOUNDATION

2.1

**The prerequisite for everything else**

Fix data before investing in AI tools. Not a single respondent reported "intelligent" data. Consolidate, clean, and govern your procurement data first.

### SYSTEM INTEGRATION

2.2

**APIs exist, but connections don't**

Prioritize ERP-to-analytics and contract-to-risk integrations. AI can only analyze what it can access.

### OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

1.9

**The manual work trap is self-reinforcing**

Identify your single highest-volume manual task and automate it first. Even one automation frees capacity for the next.

### INSIGHT ACTIONABILITY

2.3

**More insights without workflows = more noise**

Build structured workflows: who owns each insight, what action it triggers, what the deadline is. Do this before adding AI-generated insights.

*Continued on next page*

## Use these cards as a quick reference when presenting to stakeholders or building your action plan (continued).

### P&L IMPACT VISIBILITY

2.2

**You cannot fund what you cannot prove**

Align with finance on impact methodology now. The AI business case unlocks itself when procurement's current value is demonstrated.

### OPERATING MODEL

2.3

**Reactive is a symptom, not a root cause**

Focus on Data Foundation and System Integration first. This dimension improves naturally as those two rise.

### AI MATURITY

1.8

**Personal adoption ≠ organizational deployment**

Move from individual ChatGPT use to shared AI workflows with validation and audit trails. Requires governance, training, and standardized processes.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY

2.4

**Reframe: cost center → capability builder**

The cost-focused majority (38%) scores lowest. Position procurement as a strategic capability to unlock AI investment.

APPENDIX B

# Methodology & Scoring

How we conducted the survey and calculated the scores

This chapter explains how the survey was designed, who responded, how the AI Readiness Score was calculated, and what the score ranges mean in practice. If you plan to cite these findings in a business case or board presentation, this section provides the methodological foundation.

## Survey Design and Distribution

The survey was conducted in March 2026 and distributed through Procurement Tactics' global network of more than 11,000 procurement executives. It consisted of 18 questions organised in three parts: AI Adoption (Q1–6), AI Readiness (Q7–14), and Demographics (Q15–18).

Every individual question was answered by a minimum of 121 procurement professionals. That sample size supports robust segmentation across geography, organisation size and seniority, and gives a systematic read on how enterprise procurement teams are adopting AI today — not on aspirations or vendor projections.

## Who Responded

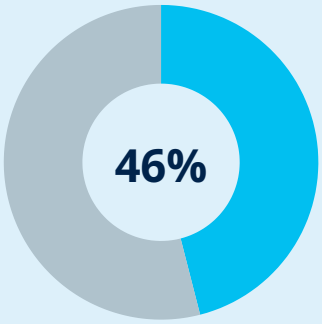
## GEOGRAPHY

Six continents represented. Europe 29%, Middle East & Africa 25%, North America 17%, Asia-Pacific 16%, United Kingdom 8%, Latin America 6%.

## SENIORITY

Nearly half (46%) of respondents hold director-level or strategic-buyer responsibility — 5% C-Level, 20% Director / CPO, 5% VP Procurement, and 16% Category Manager / Senior Buyer. The remainder are Procurement Managers (36%) and Analysts / Specialists (18%), giving the dataset both leadership perspective and frontline reality.

**Nearly half of respondents hold director-level or strategic-buyer responsibility**

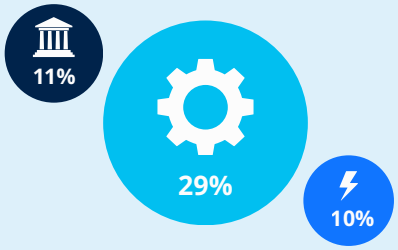



This provides the dataset with both strategic oversight and operational nuance.

## ORGANIZATION SIZE

From under 500 to over 50,000 employees. 22% of respondents work at organisations with more than 10,000 employees, ensuring strong enterprise representation. The full distribution: <500 employees (38%), 500–2,500 (25%), 2,500–10,000 (15%), 10,000–50,000 (14%), 50,000+ (8%).

**Largest industry segments represented**




## INDUSTRY

More than 30 industries represented. Largest segments: Manufacturing 29%, Government / Public Sector 11%, Energy / Utilities 10%.

## HOW TO READ THE DATA

Findings throughout this report reflect the current operating reality of enterprise procurement organisations in 2026. What teams have actually built, not what they aspire to build. Where a segment proved too small for meaningful interpretation, we have not drawn conclusions from it.

# Scoring Framework

| Score Range | Maturity Level | Practical Meaning |
|---|---|---|
| **1.0 - 1.5** | Foundational | Minimal capability. Organization is at the earliest stage |
| **1.5 - 2.5** | Developing | Early progress. Some improvement but systemic weaknesses remain. |
| **2.5 - 3.5** | Established | Solid foundation. Organization has core capabilities in place. |
| **3.5 - 4.5** | Advanced | High capability. Organization actively deploys AI |
| **4.5 - 5.0** | Leading | Best-in-class. AI is embedded and driving continuous value. |

The overall score is the unweighted average of all eight dimensions. We chose not to weight them because relative importance varies by organization and strategic context. The unweighted average provides a fair baseline that you can interpret through your own priorities.

**CONTACT US**

## Want to learn more?

Suplari and Procurement Tactics are committed to equipping procurement professionals with the tools and knowledge to thrive in an AI-first world.

Have questions about the AI Readiness in Procurement 2026 Report or want to explore what AI readiness looks like for your organization? We'd love to hear from you.


suplari.com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# **Artificial Intelligence Readiness** in Procurement 2026

## The Benchmark Report

Based on a global survey of procurement professionals across 6 continents.