

Thoughtworks Global CIO Survey 2026: Who governs enterprise AI?

India: Central IT influence and high accountability

Executive summary

India stands out for the role central IT plays in AI decision-making and for comparatively high levels of personal accountability reported by CIOs. Central IT is the most frequently cited source of greatest influence over AI decisions, while Indian respondents also report high visibility into independently adopted AI tools. At the same time, CIOs report substantial accountability for privacy, security and workforce outcomes they cannot fully influence.

Key findings

Central IT has a comparatively strong role.

32% of Indian CIOs say central IT or technology leadership has the greatest influence over AI decisions, the highest figure among the 10 markets surveyed. Among respondents from enterprises with more than 1,000 employees, that rises to 59%.

Accountability is particularly pronounced around privacy and security.

43% say they are personally accountable for data privacy breaches they cannot fully influence and 42% say the same for security incidents involving AI systems. Among the large-enterprise subgroup, 65% cite data privacy breaches.

Preparedness is high, but governance pressure

remains visible. 98% describe their organization as at least somewhat prepared to govern AI across business functions, including 61% who say very prepared. Separately, 88% agree AI adoption is happening faster than governance structures can adapt. Those findings can coexist: one measures perceived readiness, the other the pace at which governance must keep adapting.

Upskilling features more prominently than in most

markets. 32% identify upskilling technology staff and 25% upskilling the wider workforce among actions taken or planned in response to changing technology leadership structures, compared with global averages of 24% and 15% respectively.

What this suggests

The India story is not simply one of stronger central IT influence. Even where central IT has comparatively high influence and visibility, CIOs still report accountability beyond their direct authority.

The local question is how that strong technology leadership position can be combined with clear responsibilities across the business and enough workforce capability to support enterprise-wide AI adoption.