Experimental Governance Lab

Innovation meets regulation

Transforming how companies navigate
AI and data compliance

About us

GATE
big data for smart society

A pioneering interdisciplinary initiative that transforms how companies navigate the complex landscape of AI and data regulation.

Our mission

Engage companies as active co-creators of regulatory interpretations adapted to current technical, market, and regulatory realities.

We combine:

- Evidence-based regulatory learning
- Practical implementation solutions
- Testing environments for innovation
- International best practices

Why we exist

Traditional compliance models weren't built for the speed and complexity of modern AI systems.

THE CHALLENGE

Companies face overlapping regulations requiring expertise that spans law, ethics, engineering, and data science.

OUR SOLUTION

An ecosystem where legal experts, data scientists, engineers, and policymakers collaborate.

Making compliance practical, achievable, and innovation-friendly

Three complementary units

RegLab

Research-driven compliance solutions with interdisciplinary expertise across law, ethics, and technology.

Key services

Legal steering • Compliance benchmarking • Policy prototyping

Sandbox

Safe testing environment for cutting-edge innovation with real users and regulatory guidance.

Key services

Regulatory testing • Testing infrastructure • Data compliance

Knowledge Hub

Training, policy advice, and public outreach to build AI literacy across the ecosystem.

Key services

AI compliance training • AI literacy • Public outreach

🔬 RegLab

Research-driven compliance solutions

What we offer

High-demand services requiring interdisciplinary expertise across law, ethics, and technology for practical, actionable compliance guidance.

Core capabilities

- Interdisciplinary research on AI governance
- Policy and regulatory studies
- Compliance guidance tailored to your architecture
- Benchmarking and evaluation of AI systems

Key services

Legal & ethical steering
Expert guidance for R&D projects

Automated compliance workflows
Deploy AI and data compliance tools

Data supply chain due diligence
Comprehensive dataset compliance review

Policy prototyping workshops
Co-create regulations with authorities

🧪 Sandbox

Safe testing and experimentation for cutting-edge innovation

What we offer

A controlled environment where companies can test AI and big data solutions with real users, guided by experts and in collaboration with regulators.

Testing formats

- Thought experiments (workshops)
- Simulation airlock testing
- Real-world testing scenarios

Key services

- Regulatory testing of AI applications
- Sandbox as a service
- Infrastructure matchmaking
- Regulatory navigator

Connect with EU testing facilities

Access TEF AI Matters, TEF Health, and more across Europe

Knowledge Hub

Upskilling for the AI Era

Training programmes

Customised programs for executives, data scientists, ML engineers, and legal teams with AI knowledge agents.

What we offer

- AI compliance training programs
- Three-tier AI literacy curriculum
- Copyright training for AI developers
- Public outreach and white papers

Training topics

Data protection & ethics

Comprehensive coverage of laws and ethical AI practices

Technical evaluation

AI systems assessment from data protection and copyright standpoint

IP & licensing

Understanding data contracts and open source in AI

AI governance programmes

Building policies for SMEs and organisations

Who can use our services

Businesses & startups

- Developing AI applications
- Need compliance guidance
- Test before market launch
- Access testing infrastructure

Academic partners

- Applied research in AI
- Data management support
- Ethics and privacy review
- EU project collaboration

Regulators & policymakers

- Build supervisory capacity
- Evidence-based insights
- Training on technologies
- Policy prototyping

Educators & legal professionals

- Develop AI governance expertise
- Continuing education on AI Act
- Access research publications
- Networking with experts

Free application for basic sandbox services • First cohort Q1 2026

Case studies

Real-world applications of our approach

AI regulatory sandbox prototype

Prototyping Bulgaria's national AI regulatory sandbox. Launching Q1 2026 as a model for other countries.

Ongoing

Benchmarking the benchmarks

Evaluating trustworthiness of AI benchmarks for AI Act compliance. Publishing framework and interactive database by May 2026.

Ongoing

Legal clarity to combat misinformation (B-CLEAR)

Developing Bulgaria's first legal text readability index and RAG-based legal retrieval tool. Completion expected March 2026.

Ongoing

5 regulatory sandbox frameworks – 5 definitions

The EU sandbox landscape: common principles, different applications

"scheme"

NET ZERO INDUSTRY ACT
Regulation (EU) 2024/1735

Articles 33-34
Cleantech & decarbonisation

"controlled framework"

AI ACT
Regulation (EU) 2024/1689

Articles 57-63
AI systems & high-risk applications

"controlled environment"

INTEROPERABLE EUROPE ACT
Regulation (EU) 2024/903

Articles 11-12
Cross-border public service interoperability

"controlled testing environment"

CYBER RESILIENCE ACT
Regulation (EU) 2024/2847

Article 33
Products with digital elements
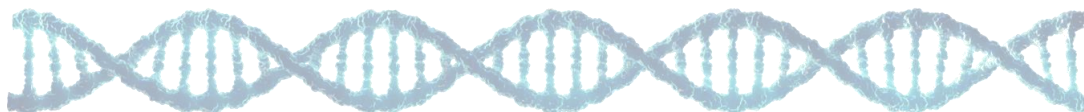
"regulatory framework"

PHARMACEUTICAL PACKAGE
Proposed regulation (agreement Dec 2025)

Proposed Articles 113-115
Innovative medicinal products

Common DNA: All frameworks facilitate innovation while maintaining regulatory oversight, but differ in governance, derogation powers, and learning objectives

NZIA sandbox framework

Definition (Article 3(22) NZIA)
A scheme enabling undertakings to test innovative net-zero technologies in a controlled real-world environment, under a specific plan developed and monitored by competent authorities

Eligible technologies
- Innovative net-zero technologies
- Decarbonisation potential
- Sufficiently advanced for testing

Key deadline
30 March 2025
Contact points mandatory

Recital 100 rationale:
"Innovation needs to be enabled through experimentation spaces as scientific outcomes need to be tested in a controlled real-world environment."

NZIA VALUE PROPOSITION
Regulatory flexibility → Controlled testing → Evidence base → Regulatory learning

PATHWAY TO STRATEGIC PROJECT STATUS
Sandbox testing → Technology validation → Net-zero tech status → Strategic project designation → Accelerated permitting (9-18 months vs. 2-7 years)

Derogation mechanisms & participant obligations

The critical incentive for participation

The participation problem
Companies bear costs/risks. Without regulatory relief, sandboxes become pure compliance burdens.

STRONGEST DEROGATIONS **Pharma Package**	WEAKEST DEROGATIONS **IEA**
LIGHTEST OBLIGATIONS **NZIA** (implementing acts pending)	HEAVIEST OBLIGATIONS **AI Act** Data protection, reporting, consent

Start with a market, not a regulatory issue!

Market-driven sandboxes have built-in demand. Regulation-driven sandboxes must create demand through incentives.

✓ MARKET-DRIVEN

Starting point:
Real market with innovative products

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Problem:
Lengthy approvals of new medicines or cleantech block market entry

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Solution:
Sandbox provides derogations

Examples:
PHARMA | NZIA
Medicines | Net-zero tech

⚠ REGULATION-DRIVEN

Starting point:
Regulatory field or compliance rules

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Problem:
No clearly defined market

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Result:
Must create participation incentives

Examples:
AI ACT | IEA | CRA
Compliance | Interop | Cyber

Get in touch

Core Team

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