



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
& Technology

Lord Leong  
Lord in waiting (HM Household) Whip  
Department for Science, Innovation & Technology  
22-26 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2EG

[www.gov.uk/dsit](http://www.gov.uk/dsit)

Baroness Kidron  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

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Dear Baroness Kidron,

I am writing to address your question on the focus of the UK Sovereign AI Unit. The Sovereign AI Unit was established a year ago with a straightforward aim: to strengthen the UK's own AI capability and ensure that British businesses can compete and lead. Backed by £500 million, the Unit supports high-potential UK start-ups and scale-ups, helping them grow into national AI champions in strategically important sectors. Its mission is to build the UK's ability to access, influence and, where necessary, control the development and deployment of critical AI capabilities to protect national interests, strengthen resilience and unlock economic growth.

The Unit has already invested heavily in UK-based projects, including £8 million in the OpenBind consortium to accelerate drug discovery, and £5 million in the Encode AI for Science Fellowship to support the next generation of world-class talent in the UK.

At the same time, modern AI is built on a global supply chain that no country can fully replicate. For that reason, whilst the focus of the Sovereign AI Unit is firmly on high potential UK companies, our wider approach is pragmatic. We should be focussed on building resilience and strategic advantage where it matters most, rather than seeking total self-reliance.

The UK needs access to the most capable models to ensure that we do not lose out on the economic potential of AI. To be at the forefront of AI adoption means working with the companies that are leading the way. Thank you again for raising this important issue and remain ready to address any further questions. I will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Leong  
HM Household Whip