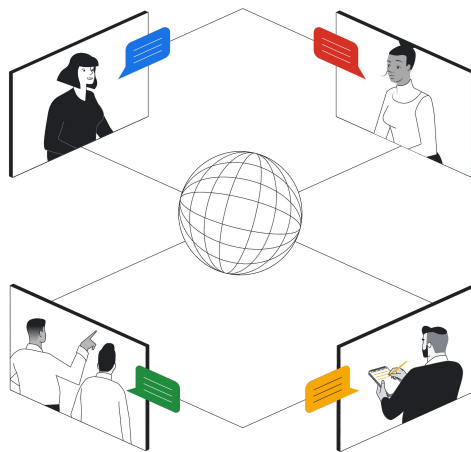# FT Strategies AI Lab
Supported by the Google News Initiative

2026

FT STRATEGIES | **Google** News Initiative

FT Strategies AI Lab 2026, supported by the Google News Initiative

A **sector-defining** programme supporting leading publishers from across EMEA to define their **long-term AI strategy**, map the **road to transformation**, and **embrace a viable, AI-powered future**

Programme Objectives

The FT Strategies AI Lab, supported by the Google News Initiative is a six-month strategic and hands-on programme designed to help leading publishers across EMEA **move beyond AI experimentation** and build a roadmap for sustainable transformation.

+ A comprehensive **AI-readiness audit** benchmarking current capabilities and identifying key gaps

+ A strategic roadmap outlining a **long term path** to scale and adopt AI across the business

+ Launching a **capstone project** that tests or scales elements of the long term AI Roadmap

+ A tailored **governance** and **change management** framework to ensure responsible and effective AI adoption

+ Ecosystem **visibility** and **peer learning opportunities**, including participation in regional symposiums, alumni mixers

AI Lab is split in three phases, starting in March 2026

Phase 1	DISCOVERY

8 Weeks

The Discovery phase is an eight-week diagnostic that assesses each publisher's AI readiness through surveys, interviews and data analysis, producing a map of capabilities and tailored recommendations to close gaps across content, technical and commercial dimensions.

Phase 2	PLANNING

4 Weeks

The Planning phase is a four-week process that translates the assessment findings into a prioritised AI roadmap, aligning initiatives by impact, investment and feasibility, while reviewing governance, change management and selecting the focus for the capstone project.
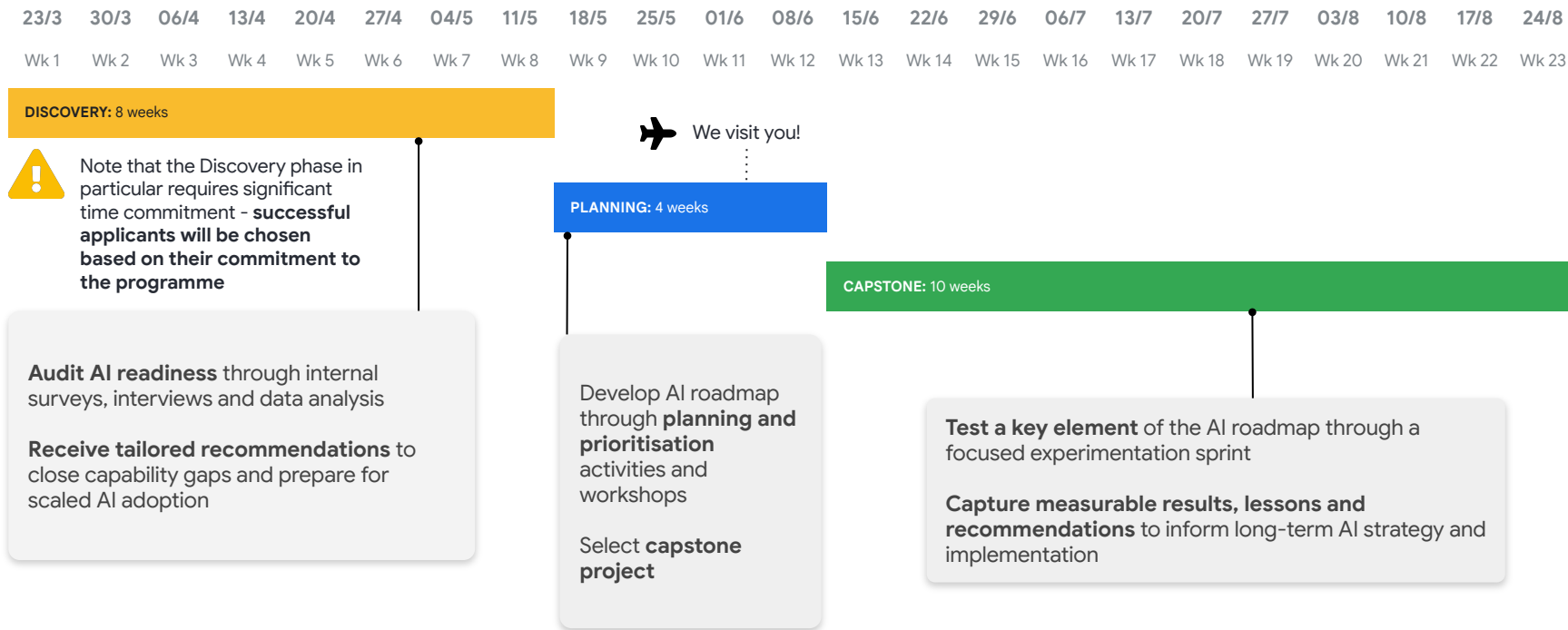
Phase 3	CAPSTONE

10 Weeks

The Capstone phase is an eleven-week experimentation sprint where publishers test an element of their AI roadmap, choosing one of three routes:

1. **Scaling** existing initiatives
2. **Redesigning** an operational process
3. **Testing** elements of an AI first business model

Over 23 weeks, we'll help you develop a practical, AI adoption plan that moves beyond isolated use cases

23/3	30/3	06/4	13/4	20/4	27/4	04/5	11/5	18/5	25/5	01/6	08/6	15/6	22/6	29/6	06/7	13/7	20/7	27/7	03/8	10/8	17/8	24/8
Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Wk 11	Wk 12	Wk 13	Wk 14	Wk 15	Wk 16	Wk 17	Wk 18	Wk 19	Wk 20	Wk 21	Wk 22	Wk 23

DISCOVERY: 8 weeks

⚠ Note that the Discovery phase in particular requires significant time commitment - **successful applicants will be chosen based on their commitment to the programme**

✈ We visit you!

PLANNING: 4 weeks

CAPSTONE: 10 weeks

Audit AI readiness through internal surveys, interviews and data analysis

Receive tailored recommendations to close capability gaps and prepare for scaled AI adoption

Develop AI roadmap through **planning and prioritisation** activities and workshops

Select **capstone project**

Test a key element of the AI roadmap through a focused experimentation sprint

Capture measurable results, lessons and recommendations to inform long-term AI strategy and implementation

Eligibility criteria

- Based in **EMEA** with an established digital product (>500k unique monthly visitors)

- Have **moved beyond initial AI experimentation** (i.e. 2-3 existing AI experiments run)

- Access to **staff, data and technology** to run AI experiments

- **Senior leadership** buy-in to support the programme, particularly during the planning and strategy modules
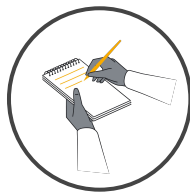
Time commitments

Executive sponsor support

Nominating a board-level sponsor to attend key summary sessions. The sponsor should be able to drive strategic change on completion of the programme

Cross-functional core team

Assigning 3-5 individuals to the core team, drawn from a wide range of departments, including editorial, commercial, and tech as a minimum

Weekly commitment for core team

Each week requires approximately 3 hours of dedicated time for the core team including weekly consulting sessions, cohort sessions with expert speakers and projects such as running hands-on experiments

The AI Lab programme is a collaboration between the Google News Initiative and FT Strategies

Google News Initiative

The **Google News Initiative** represents Google's largest-ever effort to help journalism thrive in the digital age. In collaboration with editors and journalists worldwide, the Google News Initiative (GNI) strives to foster a more sustainable, diverse, and innovative news landscape.

Through a comprehensive suite of programs, digital tools, training, and resources, the GNI empowers journalistic endeavors, enabling journalists to effectively discover, verify, and narrate compelling stories while upholding the highest standards of quality journalism.

FT STRATEGIES

FT Strategies is the specialist media and publishing consultancy from the Financial Times. FT Strategies' deep expertise enables its clients to future-proof their business, empower their teams, and fulfil their goals with our proven data, digital and change consulting expertise.

To apply for the programme, please fill in the [application form](#)

Thank you