

Nordic AI Meet 2026

P1: AI, Society, Governance, Education & Working Life

3. From Blueprints to Backlogs: How State Signals, Firm Strategies and Agile teams shape AI Governance in Estonia

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Abstract: Estonia's Digital Society Development Plan 2035 (DÜAK 2035) positions the state as both a regulator of artificial intelligence and an investor in the infrastructure, computing capacity, open data, and knowledge resources required for AI-driven innovation. However, how firms convert these public investments into strategic capabilities and engineering practices remains insufficiently understood. This dissertation examines the progression from public investment at the macro level, through firm strategy at the meso level, to engineering practice at the micro level.

At the macro level, Innovation Ecosystem Theory guides document and policy analysis of how DÜAK 2035 shapes relationships among public institutions, firms, universities, technology providers, data resources, and digital infrastructure. At the meso level, Resource Dependence Theory supports an investigation of how a product design and development company accesses and leverages ecosystem resources to reduce innovation risks and develop a commercially viable AI-enabled product. An analytical mapping framework will connect public resources and policy provisions to strategic decisions, product requirements, and engineering activities.

At the micro level, the study develops an AI-Assisted Requirements Engineering approach integrating IREB-standard requirements engineering with Kim Lauenroth's pioneering use of Claude as a collaborative partner. The approach will first be piloted in an EBS master's-level microdegree course beginning in October 2026. Semi-structured interviews will evaluate its usability, learning value, perceived requirements quality, and task efficiency while supporting the recruitment of a participating company.

The organisational intervention will use Action Research and draw evidence from requirements artefacts, Scrum ceremonies, interviews, and records of AI-assisted activities. It will also examine how teams address EU Artificial Intelligence Act requirements concerning technical documentation, auditability, transparency, and AI labelling. The study ultimately seeks to explain how public AI investment shapes innovation ecosystems, firm strategy, and responsible AI-assisted engineering practice.

Keywords: Innovation Ecosystem Theory, public AI investment, firm strategy, Resource Dependence Theory, AI-assisted requirements engineering, EU AI Act, Action Research, Estonia.