IBM Introduces New Software to Address Growing Digital Sovereignty Imperative

Purpose-built to enable organizations to deploy their own secured, compliant and automated environments for AI-ready sovereign workloads

ARMONK, N.Y., Jan. 15, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE:IBM) today announced IBM Sovereign Core, the industry's first AI-ready sovereign-enabled software for enterprises, governments and service providers to build, deploy and manage AI-ready sovereign environments. Organizations around the world are facing a growing imperative to exercise control over their technology infrastructure. Driven by evolving regulatory requirements, and the need for auditable governance, enterprises and governments are seeking self-managed environments where they maintain complete operational authority, particularly as they deploy AI workloads that amplify sovereignty concerns.

Digital sovereignty goes beyond data residency. It encompasses who operates and controls the technology environment, how data is accessed and governed, where workloads execute, and under whose jurisdiction AI models run. Yet most organizations lack a destination to land, modernize, and re-host applications under sovereign control, including applications that will incorporate AI capabilities, and have continuous compliance reporting capabilities. "Gartner® predicts that more than 75% of all enterprises will have a digital sovereignty strategy by 2030, often sovereign cloud strategies[1]."

"Businesses are facing growing pressure to innovate while meeting tightening regulatory requirements and recognizing the importance of controlling how sensitive data and AI workloads are accessed and operated," said **Priya Srinivasan, General Manager, IBM Software Products**. "This shift is creating an urgent need for sovereign solutions that deliver AI-ready environments. With IBM Sovereign Core, we are helping clients move faster and with confidence— combining openness, compliance, and operational autonomy to meet the demands of the AI era, without the need to sacrifice sovereignty requirements."

Sovereignty as a Software Foundation

IBM Sovereign Core will help customers achieve verifiable sovereignty and full operational control. Sovereign Core is purpose-built software to build, deploy, and manage cloud-native and AI workloads under an organization's own authority, within chosen jurisdictions, built on Red Hat's open source foundation. Unlike approaches that layer sovereignty controls onto existing

architectures, Sovereign Core makes sovereignty an inherent property of the software itself. Organizations can gain:

- **Customer-operated control plane:** organizations maintain direct operational authority over software operations, deployment decisions, and system configurations without intermediation from a vendor not in region.
- **In-boundary identity and keys**: all authentication, authorization, encryption keys, and access management remain within jurisdiction boundaries under customer control.
- **Ongoing compliance enablement and generated evidence of continuous compliance:**comprehensive operational data, system telemetry, and audit trails are generated, stored, and managed within the sovereign boundary, including automated identity.
- **Governed AI inference:** AI model deployment and hosting, local GPU clusters, local inference execution and agent operations occur under local governance with traceability and oversight, without exporting data to external providers.
- **Ease of deployment:** delivering sovereignty at scale with consistency and flexibility allowing organizations to stand up isolated environments with built-in multitenancy capabilities within a matter of days of deployment; choice of hardware and infrastructure.

"The sovereign AI conversation has focused on data residency, but that's only part of the equation," said **Sanjeev Mohan, Principal, SanjMo**. "IBM Sovereign Core addresses the harder question: who controls the system and can you prove it to regulators? IBM takes a holistic approach spanning data, operations, technology, and assurance, with continuous monitoring. As AI moves into production, that kind of ongoing accountability becomes non-negotiable."

"AI is accelerating the pace at which sovereignty questions move from theory to daily operations," said **Erik Fish, Director of Geotechnology at Eurasia Group**. "As geopolitics, regulation, and data governance increasingly converge, governments and enterprises must move while demonstrating clear control over critical data and infrastructure. The challenge is no longer a trade-off between openness and sovereignty, but governing data, access, and infrastructure amid growing regulatory and geopolitical constraints."

Operational Independence Through Environment Choice

Customers can deploy IBM Sovereign Core in the environment of their choice – whether in on-premises data centers, supported in-region cloud infrastructure or through IT Service Providers. IBM is collaborating with IT Service Providers globally, starting with an initial rollout in Europe with Cegeka in Belgium and the Netherlands and Computacenter in Germany. These partnerships allow local operational independence and compliance management, while enabling IT Service Providers to offer differentiated sovereign services to enterprises preparing for and running AI-scale workloads.

"As organizations navigate increasingly complex compliance and regulatory requirements, we're seeing strong demand for digital platforms and software that allows sensitive data to remain within controlled, compliant boundaries," said **Gaetan Willems, VP Cloud & Digital Platforms, Cegeka** "Partnering with IBM to offer a pre-architected solution through our in-country environment enables us to deliver enterprise-ready software to our clients, while allowing them to address local compliance standards."

"With IBM Sovereign Core, we can focus on configuring the software to each client's specific use cases rather than spending months piecing together disparate components and validating sovereignty controls," said **Christian Schreiner, Unit Director Cloud, Computacenter**. "It can significantly accelerate our time-to-value and let us help clients who previously couldn't consider AI solutions at all."

IBM Sovereign Core Availability

Starting in February, IBM Sovereign Core will be available in tech preview, with full general availability planned for mid-year 2026. At GA, additional capabilities will be introduced.

To learn more about IBM Sovereign Core, read our blog here, and join us virtually for the IBM Tech Summit, January 27, register here. To join the waitlist for IBM Sovereign Core Tech Preview, visit here.

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[1] *Gartner, The Future of Cloud in 2030: AI-Enabling Cloud Services.6 August 2025, Dennis Smith. AI. GARTNER is a registered trademark and service mark of Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and internationally and is used herein with permission. All rights reserved.*

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