

FREE RESOURCE — TEMPLATE

AI Vendor & Platform Selection

A structured template for comparing AI vendors and platforms side by side — capability matrix, true-cost pricing, security and compliance, data governance, integrations, and weighted scoring — so you reach an objective, evidence-backed decision.

6

COMPARISON
AREAS

CAPABILITY MATRIX

3

PLATFORMS
SIDE BY SIDE

PRICING

/10

WEIGHTED
SCORING

SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

Fillable

TICK & TYPE
IN ANY VIEWER

WEIGHTED SCORE

PREPARED FOR

Cloudswitched Knowledge
Library

PREPARED BY

Cloudswitched Ltd.

VERSION

2026 Edition

FORMAT

Interactive PDF

00

How to use this template

Use this template to evaluate up to three AI vendors or platforms side by side against a consistent set of criteria. Complete each section with your team, fill in the fields, tick the capability matrix, and capture a weighted score so the final decision is objective rather than driven by the slickest demo or the loudest hype.

This is an **interactive PDF** — tick the boxes and type platform names, costs, contract terms, scores and notes directly in any modern PDF viewer. Print it if you prefer to work on paper.

HOW TO WORK THROUGH IT

Shortlist your platforms (Section 01), tick which capabilities each one includes (Section 02), capture the true cost including usage and overage (Section 03), compare security, compliance and data governance (Section 04), confirm your integrations and deployment model are supported (Section 05), then score each platform against weighted criteria to reach a decision (Section 06).

COMPARE THE TRUE COST, NOT THE HEADLINE SEAT PRICE

The advertised per-seat price rarely reflects what you will actually pay. Token / usage charges, premium model tiers, fine-tuning, vector storage, API overage and enterprise security add-ons all stack up. Capture every line in Section 03 and compare the three-year total cost of ownership at your real expected usage, not the entry plan.

The six comparison areas

- **01 Platform Shortlist** — names, vendor contacts, headline per-seat cost and contract term.
- **02 Capability Comparison Matrix** — tick which capabilities each platform includes.
- **03 Pricing Comparison** — true per-seat / usage cost with all add-ons.
- **04 Security, Compliance & Data Governance** — certifications, data residency and model-training controls.
- **05 Integration & Deployment Requirements** — APIs, identity, data sources and hosting model.
- **06 Scoring & Decision** — weighted scoring and the final recommendation.

01

Platform Shortlist

Document the AI platforms you are evaluating with their key vendor contact and headline pricing information. Keep the shortlist to three so the comparison stays manageable — if you have more, run a quick first pass and bring the top three through to the detailed matrix.

PLATFORM A

PLATFORM & VENDOR CONTACT

PER-SEAT / MONTH

CONTRACT TERM

PLATFORM B

PLATFORM & VENDOR CONTACT

PER-SEAT / MONTH

CONTRACT TERM

PLATFORM C

PLATFORM & VENDOR CONTACT

PER-SEAT / MONTH

CONTRACT TERM

TIP

Record the headline per-seat rate here, but treat it as a starting point only. The real comparison happens in Section 03 once token / usage charges, premium model tiers and enterprise add-ons are included.

02

Capability Comparison Matrix

Tick the box under each platform for every capability that is **included as standard** in the quoted plan. Leave it unticked if the capability is an extra-cost add-on or unavailable — and note the add-on cost in Section 03.

Tick = included as standard **Blank** = extra cost or not available

CAPABILITY	PLATFORM A	PLATFORM B	PLATFORM C
Choice of frontier models <i>(multi-provider)</i>	☐	☐	☐
Retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) / knowledge base	☐	☐	☐
Fine-tuning / custom models	☐	☐	☐
Function calling / tool use	☐	☐	☐
Agents / workflow automation	☐	☐	☐
Document & file analysis	☐	☐	☐
Image / multimodal input	☐	☐	☐
Code generation & analysis	☐	☐	☐
Admin console, SSO & SCIM provisioning	☐	☐	☐
Usage analytics & cost reporting	☐	☐	☐
Prompt / template library & sharing	☐	☐	☐
API & SDK access	☐	☐	☐
On-prem / private cloud deployment option	☐	☐	☐

03

Pricing Comparison

Calculate the true cost of each platform including all add-ons, not just the headline per-seat rate. Fill in the figures below for a 20-seat deployment at your expected usage, then carry the three-year total into the scoring section.

COST ELEMENT (PER SEAT / MONTH UNLESS STATED)	PLATFORM A	PLATFORM B	PLATFORM C
Base per-seat monthly fee	-----	-----	-----
Token / usage charges (est. per month)	-----	-----	-----
Premium model / fine-tuning add-on	-----	-----	-----
Setup, onboarding & enterprise add-ons (one-off)	-----	-----	-----
TOTAL YEAR 1 — 20 SEATS	-----	-----	-----
TOTAL 3-YEAR COST — 20 SEATS	-----	-----	-----

FOLD THESE INTO YOUR TOTALS BEFORE COMPARING

Token / usage overage beyond the bundled allowance, premium or frontier model tiers, fine-tuning and inference charges, vector / embedding storage, additional context-window pricing, and any annual price-increase cap. A low base seat fee with metered usage can cost far more over three years than a higher all-inclusive plan.

COMPARE LIKE FOR LIKE

Make sure each quote covers the same seat count, the same expected monthly usage and the same contract length before comparing the totals.

04

Security, Compliance & Data Governance

For AI platforms, how your data is handled matters as much as the capability list. Capture the headline figures below, then tick the security and governance commitments each platform offers — and get the critical ones written into the contract and data-processing agreement.

DATA & SERVICE METRIC	PLATFORM A	PLATFORM B	PLATFORM C
Data residency / hosting region			
Data retention period			
Guaranteed uptime SLA (%)			

SECURITY & GOVERNANCE COMMITMENT	PLATFORM A	PLATFORM B	PLATFORM C
SOC 2 Type II certified	☐	☐	☐
ISO 27001 certified	☐	☐	☐
GDPR / UK GDPR compliant (DPA available)	☐	☐	☐
Customer data excluded from model training	☐	☐	☐
Encryption in transit & at rest	☐	☐	☐
RBAC & audit logging	☐	☐	☐
Data deletion / right-to-erasure support	☐	☐	☐

05

Integration & Deployment Requirements

Document the integrations, data sources and deployment model you depend on, and verify each shortlisted platform can meet them. A missing connector or an unsupported hosting model discovered after roll-out is expensive to work around — confirm it in writing before you sign.

IDENTITY & ACCESS — SSO / SAML / SCIM PROVIDER REQUIRED

MICROSOFT 365 / GOOGLE WORKSPACE INTEGRATION REQUIREMENTS

DATA SOURCES TO CONNECT (CRM, DATA WAREHOUSE, DOCUMENT STORES)

API / SDK REQUIREMENTS FOR CUSTOM APPS & AGENTS

DEPLOYMENT MODEL (SAAS, PRIVATE CLOUD, ON-PREM) & REGION

VERIFY, DON'T ASSUME

"Integrates with your data" can mean anything from a certified, governed connector to a manual file upload. Ask for the specific connector name, the permissions and licence it requires, and a reference customer using it at your scale and on your hosting model.

06

Scoring & Decision

Score each platform out of 10 against the weighted criteria below, then apply the weighting to reach a weighted total out of 10. The highest weighted total is your evidence-backed recommendation.

#	CRITERION	WEIGHT	PLATFORM A	PLATFORM B	PLATFORM C
01	Capability completeness	20%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10
02	Model quality & accuracy	25%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10
03	Total cost of ownership (3 yr)	15%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10
04	Security, compliance & data governance	20%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10
05	Integration & deployment fit	10%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10
06	Ease of use & admin console	10%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10
WEIGHTED TOTAL		100%	----- / 10	----- / 10	----- / 10

RECOMMENDED PLATFORM _____

Justification for decision

06

Decision sign-off

Record who made the decision, when, and when the contract should next be reviewed. The AI market moves fast — a diarised review date stops an auto-renewal locking you in before you have re-tested capability, pricing and newer models.

DECISION MADE BY

DATE

REVIEW / RENEWAL DUE

BEFORE YOU SIGN

Get the data-processing agreement, the "no training on your data" commitment, the data-residency region, the included usage allowance and the annual price-increase cap written into the contract — not just the sales deck. Confirm the data-deletion process and any early-termination terms in writing.

Choosing an AI platform and want a second opinion?

Cloudswitched helps UK SMEs evaluate, procure and roll out AI platforms securely — vendor-neutral advice, data-governance review and a fixed-price implementation plan.

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