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Transparency Divergence in AI

Enterprise Procurement Guide

As foundation models barge into everyday workflows, the AI industry's practices on AI Trust are diverging: some labs are becoming more opaque under competitive and legal pressures, while others lean into transparency in AI as a core enterprise value proposition. The 2025 edition of Stanford's Foundation Model Transparency Index (FMTI) shows an industry-wide drop in transparency, even as adoption accelerates, making procurement choices more consequential than ever.

What Is the Stanford's Foundation Model Transparency Index?

2The FMTI is a recurring, annual benchmark that evaluates how openly major AI developers document their flagship foundation models across 100 transparency indicators (spanning upstream inputs like data, labor, and compute; model details such as capabilities, evaluations, and mitigations; and downstream use, policies, and impact). [CRFM overview]

The Index changes every year. In 2025, the criteria were tightened, so scores aren't directly comparable with 2024 (see GitHub indicators & methodology for details).

Still, the year-on-year changes remain meaningful: it shows which companies are moving toward deeper, more substantive transparency versus those pulling back.

Importantly, the FMTI assesses disclosure quality, not safety or performance—it is neither prescriptive nor regulatory. It is a report card on corporate transparency, not a verdict on whether a model is accurate, robust, or beneficial.

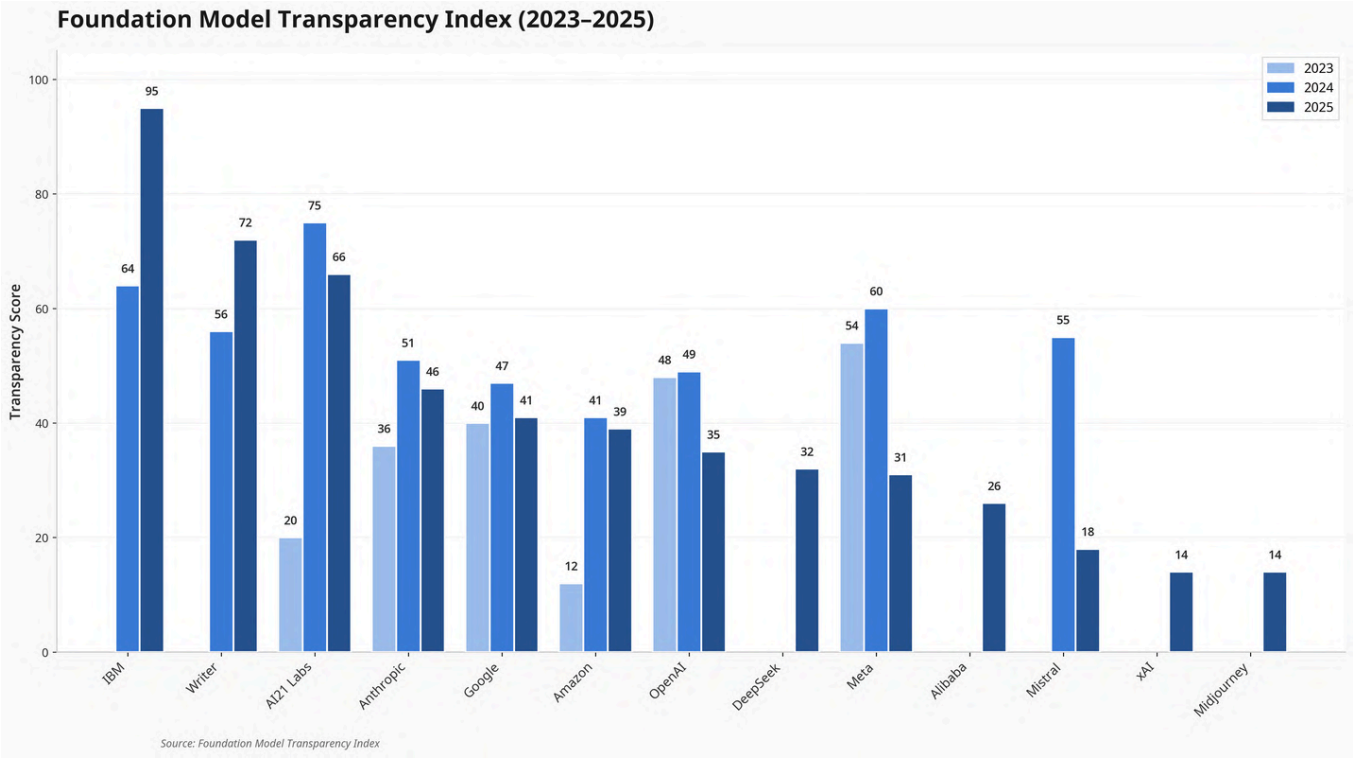


The Transparency Divergence: What the 2025 Data Shows

In 2025, the average transparency score fell to c. 40/100 (down 17 points year-over-year), with the steepest opacity in training data, training compute, and post-deployment usage and impact.

The result is a clear divergence: a small cluster of top performers, a mid-pack, and a group of low scorers that reveal little about their models.

Competitive secrecy—driven by incremental model improvements and fragile advantages—plus mounting legal exposure (e.g., copyrighted data questions, downstream harms) are key reasons for the decline. Yet enterprise buyers and evolving regulation are exerting countervailing pressure toward transparency, particularly in B2B contexts.



Source: Foundation Model Transparency Index

How Organizations Can Use the Index in Procurement 2025 Data Shows

1. Triage and due diligence

Use FMTI scores as a first-pass signal of vendor openness. Prioritize high-scoring vendors and flag low scorers for deeper review around data provenance, risk mitigations, and monitoring.

2. RFP/RFI structure

Map FMTI dimensions into criteria and scoring: training data sources & rights, compute/environmental reporting, evaluation methodology and reproducibility, downstream policies and incident reporting. Where applicable, require the EU Model Documentation Form (or equivalent).

3. Contract clauses & SLAs

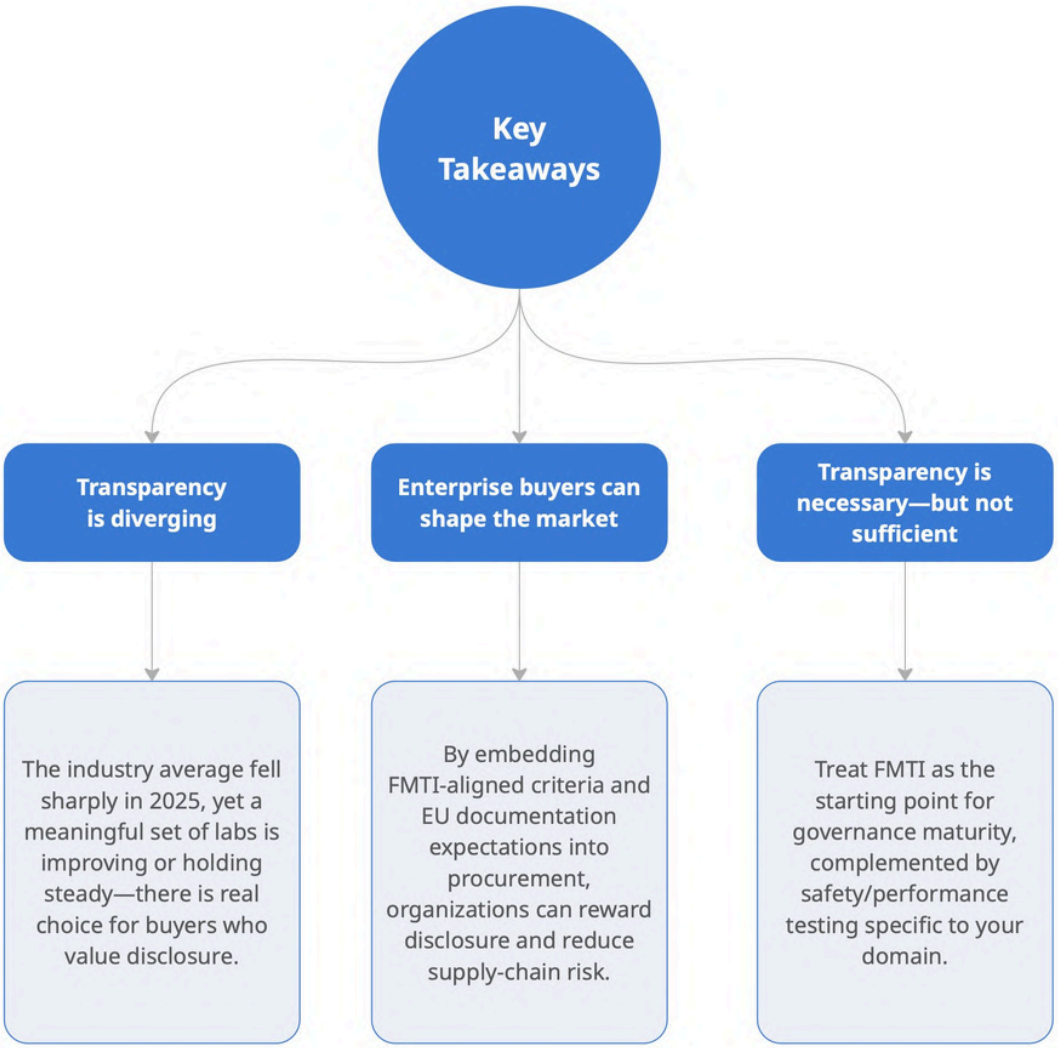
Convert transparency expectations into contractual obligations such as: disclosure of data provenance and licensing basis, publication of evaluation protocols, commitments to post-deployment monitoring, environmental impact statements, and auditor access to documentation.

4. Governance & monitoring

Re-check vendor FMTI standings annually and align your model oversight with EU timelines. If a supplier's score declines, reassess risk, require remediation, or diversify.

5. Don't conflate transparency with safety/performance

The Index measures disclosure, not accuracy or robustness. Use it to shortlist disclosure-ready vendors, but make sure to run independent safety, robustness, and bias evaluations tailored to your use case.



Conclusion

Nemko Digital helps organizations operationalize AI transparency—from RFP design and contractual clauses to audits and governance frameworks aligned with the EU AI Act and leading industry indices. If you're ready to build trustworthy, compliant AI, let's talk about a procurement and governance roadmap tailored to your risk profile and 2026 objectives.



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With two decades of experience at the intersection of AI, strategy, and compliance, Pep has led groundbreaking work in AI tooling, model risk governance, and GenAI deployment. Previously Director of AI & Data at Deloitte, he has advised multinational organizations on scaling trustworthy AI—from procurement chatbots to enterprise-wide model oversight frameworks.

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