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Google to open AI research centre in Ghana

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The research center will focus on using AI in areas such as healthcare, agriculture and education, Google said.



Google plans to open an artificial-intelligence research centre in Accra, Ghana, the latest in a string of investments the tech company has made in Africa.

The research centre will focus on using AI in areas such as healthcare, agriculture and education, Google said. "We're committed to collaborating with local universities and research centres, as well as working with policy makers on the potential uses of AI in Africa," the company said in a blog post on Wednesday, reported Business Insider.

The new AI centre in Ghana will open later this year and include machine learning researchers and engineers, Google said, thought it did provide details on the number of staff it will hire.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai promised last year during a visit to Lagos that Google would continue raising its profile on the continent. At the time, Pichai announced new investments in African startups as part of the company's Launchpad Accelerator in Africa. The company also launched a special version of YouTube built for users with slow internet connections.

Google's interest in Africa comes at a time when a lot of international money is being spread around the continent. In 30 years, the United Nations expects Africa to be home to 25 percent of the world's 9 billion population. Not only does that represent a huge market but investors are planning for the day that Africa's developing economies hit their stride.

Last month, Facebook opened a technology hub in Lagos, which will host a start-up incubator. The social network has made numerous other investments there, including launching satellites to help deliver internet access to sub-Sahara Africa.

According to recent reports, Russia is eyeing investments in East Africa and the Chinese have spent billions on infrastructure and other projects there.