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CHECKLIST

Build your token budget: a practical checklist

Get more value from every token
Make AI costs easier to understand and manage. This checklist helps you map use cases, measure cost per task and direct AI investment towards where it creates the greatest business value.

Seven steps
to get started

As AI usage grows, organisations need to understand more than the total cost. They need to know what AI is being used for, what each task costs and what value it creates.

That is the idea behind tokenomics. Instead of treating tokens as an isolated technical cost, tokenomics connects AI consumption to use cases, workflows and business outcomes.

A token budget makes that visible. It helps you understand where AI resources are being used, choose the right model for each task and direct investment towards the use cases that create the most value. The goal is not to restrict AI usage, but to make it easier to govern and scale with confidence.

Use these seven steps to get started.

START WITH THE USE CASE:
It's tempting to compare AI models or vendors first. Instead, begin with the problem you're trying to solve. Once the use case is clear, choosing the right model, platform and governance becomes much easier.

Start by understanding where AI creates value and what it costs

1.

Start with the use cases

Tokenomics begins by understanding which tasks AI should actually help solve. Once your use cases are clear, it becomes much easier to choose the right model, estimate costs and measure value.

- [ ] Which AI use cases should you prioritise?
- [ ] Which teams are already using AI?
- [ ] Which use cases have the greatest business potential?

2.

Measure the cost per task

Don't start with the price per token. The more meaningful metric is the cost of completing an AI-assisted task – and how that compares to the time, cost or value it creates.

- [ ] What does one AI-assisted task cost?
- [ ] What did the same task cost before AI?
- [ ] How frequently is the task performed?

3.

Measure what matters

To govern AI effectively, you need more than total spend. Connect AI usage to teams, work-flows and business value so you can prioritise where AI creates the greatest impact.

- [ ] Cost per team
- [ ] Cost per use case
- [ ] Cost per workflow
- [ ] Business value created

Turn your token budget into a tool **for smarter AI decisions**

4.

Choose the right AI model for the task and use case

Different AI models offer different capabilities, costs and deployment options. Choose the model based on the task and the sensitivity of the data – not the other way around.

- Which AI models are used for different use cases?
- Where are tokens generated – in infrastructure you control or by an external AI provider?
- Which use cases involve sensitive information?
- Is there a simpler or more cost-effective alternative?

5.

Create visibility – not restrictions

The purpose of a token budget is not to limit AI usage. It is to create the visibility needed to make better decisions about where AI delivers the greatest value.

- Which teams are using AI?
- What is AI being used for?
- Which use cases create the most value?

6.

Turn your token budget into a management tool

Like any business investment, AI should be re-viewed and managed over time. Your token budget should support better decisions – not simply report costs.

- Who is responsible for reviewing AI usage?
- How often are AI usage and costs reviewed?
- When should the budget be adjusted?

CHECKLIST

Manage for value, **and keep learning**

7.

Finish with three questions

Before scaling an AI use case, pause and ask these three questions to determine whether you're ready to move forward.

- Does it create more value than it costs?
- Do we understand why?
- Will we still be able to measure that value six months from now?

Key takeaway

Tokenomics isn't about using fewer tokens. It's about understanding where AI creates value, what that usage costs and how resources can be directed towards the right tasks.

When cost, usage and business value are tracked together, AI becomes easier to prioritise, develop and scale. A token budget therefore provides more than cost control, it creates a better basis for deciding what to scale, change or stop.

Therefore, the goal is not to set the perfect budget from the start. Create visibility, track how usage evolves and adjust as the organisation learns more.

Next step

Once you know where AI is being used, what it costs and what value it creates, it becomes easier to make informed decisions about what to scale, change or prioritise.

The next step is to make that visibility part of how AI is governed across your organisation. With the right structure for models, data, costs and usage, you can develop AI with greater control and direct investment towards where it creates the most value.

Want better control over how AI is used and developed across your organisation?

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