

Setting up your AI key for Strata

Google Gemini API — quick start and how to claim the \$300 / 90-day free credit

Strata's AI features (executive roadmaps, deliverable roadmaps, analysis) use Google's **Gemini** models. You provide your **own API key**, so AI usage stays under your control and billing. This short guide shows the fastest way to get a key for free, and how to unlock the more capable **Gemini Pro** models using Google's **\$300 free credit**.

1. Quick start — free key in ~5 minutes (Google AI Studio)

The simplest path. No credit card needed for the basic free tier.

- 1 Go to **aistudio.google.com** and sign in with a Google account.
- 2 On first visit, accept the Generative AI terms and confirm your region (the Gemini API is not available in every country).
- 3 In the left sidebar click **Get API key** → **Create API key** → choose **new project** (AI Studio creates it for you).
- 4 **Copy the key** — it starts with AIza.... Keep it secret.
- 5 In Strata, open **Settings** → **AI / API key**, paste the key, and save.

Good to know. The free tier covers the fast **Gemini Flash** models with modest limits (around 10 requests/minute). That's perfect to try Strata. The most capable **Gemini Pro** models are **paid tier** — for those, enable billing and use the \$300 free credit in section 2.

2. Unlock Gemini Pro — \$300 free credit for 90 days (Google Cloud)

New Google Cloud customers receive **\$300 in credit, valid for 90 days**. This covers the paid **Gemini Pro** models and higher rate limits.

- 1 Go to **cloud.google.com/free** and click **Get started for free**; sign in and pick your country.
- 2 **Add payment information.** A card is required only to verify your identity — you may see a small temporary authorization, which is **not a charge**.
- 3 You now have a Cloud project pre-loaded with **\$300** of credit for **90 days**.
- 4 Link this project to your key: back in **AI Studio** → **Get API key**, create (or select) the key **inside that Cloud project**. This enables the Pro models and higher quotas on your key.
- 5 In Strata's AI settings, select the **current Gemini Pro** model from the list (model names are updated often — pick the latest "Pro" entry shown).

You will not be charged automatically. When the 90 days end or the \$300 is used up, the trial simply stops — billing starts **only if you manually upgrade** to a paid account. Eligibility: new Google Cloud users who have never used the free trial before.

3. Keep your key safe & your costs predictable

- Treat the key like a **password**: don't share it, email it, or post it publicly.
- In AI Studio / Cloud console, **restrict the key** to the *Generative Language API* and add per-minute / per-day **quotas**.
- In **Cloud Billing**, set a **budget alert** (e.g. at \$50, \$150, \$250) so you're warned as you approach the \$300.
- If a key ever leaks, **delete it** in AI Studio and create a new one.

4. Troubleshooting

Symptom	Fix
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"API not enabled"	Enable the Generative Language API for your Cloud project.
"Model not available" / region error	The Gemini API isn't offered in every country — check your account region.
Rate-limit / quota errors	You're on free-tier limits. Enable billing (use the \$300 credit) for higher quotas.
"Unknown model" name error	Model versions change. Pick the current Gemini Pro model from the list in Strata.

Useful links: AI Studio — aistudio.google.com · Google Cloud free trial — cloud.google.com/free · API keys — aistudio.google.com/app/apikey
Offers, model names, quotas and pricing change over time — always confirm on the official Google pages above. Questions about Strata: gilles@auerbach.be