

An Open, Free and Secure Digital Future for All

Annual Report
2023

Participating United Nations Organizations

[Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology](#)

[United Nations Development Programme](#)

[United Nations Office for Project Services](#)

[United Nations University](#)

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Up to date as of May 2024

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Executive Summary

In an era of rapid technological change, the equitable and safe distribution of its benefits requires urgent, multi-stakeholder collective action on a global scale.

Launched in 2023, the [Digital Cooperation Fund](#) (the Fund) embodies this mission. Aligned with the [Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#) and the [Common Agenda](#), the Fund is dedicated to fostering robust digital cooperation for the global common good.

Partners of the Digital Cooperation Fund support concentrated investments in carefully targeted action areas of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation that remain under-addressed and demand international or global multi-stakeholder collective action beyond national-level digital transformation.

Initial funding windows include supporting digital cooperation on governance of artificial intelligence (AI), digital cooperation for safe and inclusive Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), and global digital cooperation.

The Fund Supports the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation

The UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation ([A/74/821](#)) provides a vision for a digitally interdependent world. It lays out actions for the global community to connect, respect, and protect people in the digital age.

Aligned with the objectives outlined in the Roadmap and the [Common Agenda](#), the Fund is committed to enhancing digital cooperation to further the global common good. Its strategic focus is clearly delineated through the linkages of funding windows with crucial action areas identified in the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.

The [Digital Cooperation Fund](#) will make concentrated investments in carefully targeted action areas of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation that:

- remain under-addressed
- demand international, cross-border or global multi-stakeholder collective action
- go beyond national-level digital transformation to international pooling of expertise, data, algorithms, and alignment of digital governance with human rights across jurisdictions

These funding criteria prevent overlap with national level digital transformation activities, such as those funded under the SDG Joint Fund's Digital Transformation window.

Achieving universal, affordable, connectivity by 2030

Ensuring digital inclusion for all, including the most vulnerable

Ensuring the protection of human rights in the digital era

Promoting digital trust and security

Promoting digital public goods to create a more equitable world

Strengthening digital capacity building

Supporting global cooperation on Artificial Intelligence

Building a more effective architecture for digital cooperation

Digital Cooperation on
AI Governance

Digital Cooperation on
AI Governance

Digital Cooperation
for Safe and Inclusive
Digital Public
Infrastructure

Digital Cooperation
for Safe and Inclusive
Digital Public
Infrastructure

Global Digital
Cooperation

Global Digital
Cooperation

Initial Funding Windows

The Fund's initial funding windows are strategically positioned to leverage the critical policy opportunities presented by the forthcoming Global Digital Compact. Its first project, under the funding window Digital Cooperation on AI Governance, focused on operationalizing the [Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence](#) project.

In 2024, the Fund will broaden its focus to activities under the funding windows for Digital Cooperation for Safe and Inclusive Digital Public Infrastructure and Global Digital Cooperation.

Digital Cooperation Fund | Milestones and Roadmap

October 2023

Digital Cooperation Fund Launch

January 2024

DPI Safeguards
Window 2 Project Launch

November 2023

Advisory Body on AI
Window 1 Project Launch

May 2024

Geneva Liaison
Project Launch

\$350,000

11/2023
Omidyar
Network

\$1,175,200

11/2023
Co-Develop
(Global Impact)

\$19,879

11/2023
Czech
Republic



\$217,699

12/2023
Italy



\$438,596

12/2023
Germany



\$779,897

2/2024
Switzerland



\$545,291

2/2024
Finland



\$500,000

3/2024
United Arab
Emirates



Anticipated Commitments for 2024

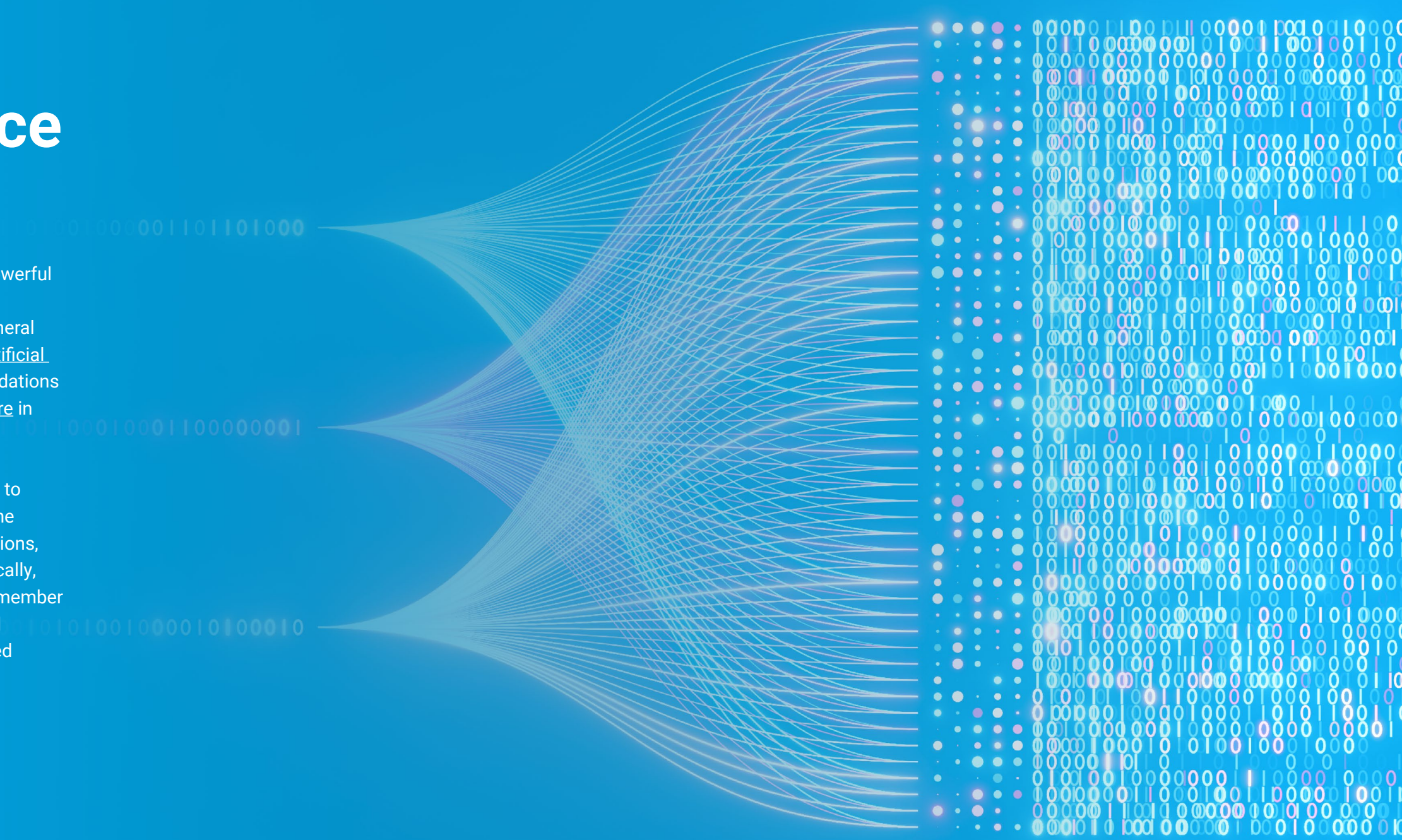
\$4M Total Commitments

as of March 2024


Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence

A global approach is imperative for effective AI governance, as powerful AI models, once connected to the open Internet, can scale rapidly across borders. To foster such an approach, the UN Secretary-General is convening the multistakeholder [High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence \(AIAB\)](#) to undertake analysis and advance recommendations for international governance of AI, prior to the [Summit of the Future](#) in September 2024.

The project supports the Advisory Body's role as a key contributor to policy discussions on international AI governance and establish the Advisory Body as a global resource, whose reports, recommendations, and knowledge products harness the world's foremost geographically, gender and age-balanced expertise to foster cooperation among member state, private sector, civil society and other stakeholders on global governance of AI. The overall impact of this project is strengthened cooperation on global governance of AI.



“The Multistakeholder Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence [...] brings together global expertise from governments, business, the tech community, civil society and academia.”

A close-up photograph of António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a red patterned tie. He has grey hair and is gesturing with his right hand while speaking. The background is a blue wall with a white geometric pattern.

“[The Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence] is truly universal, with representation from all parts of the world, in order to foster the networked, inclusive, evidence-based solutions that are needed. Universality means one country or group of countries cannot dominate. Transparency and mutual accountability are built in. The Advisory Body will consider how to link and coordinate with various initiatives that are already underway – including by the EU, and the G7 Hiroshima Process. It will be at the centre of a global network of science-based action by governments, private sector, and civil society.”

António Guterres, Secretary-General

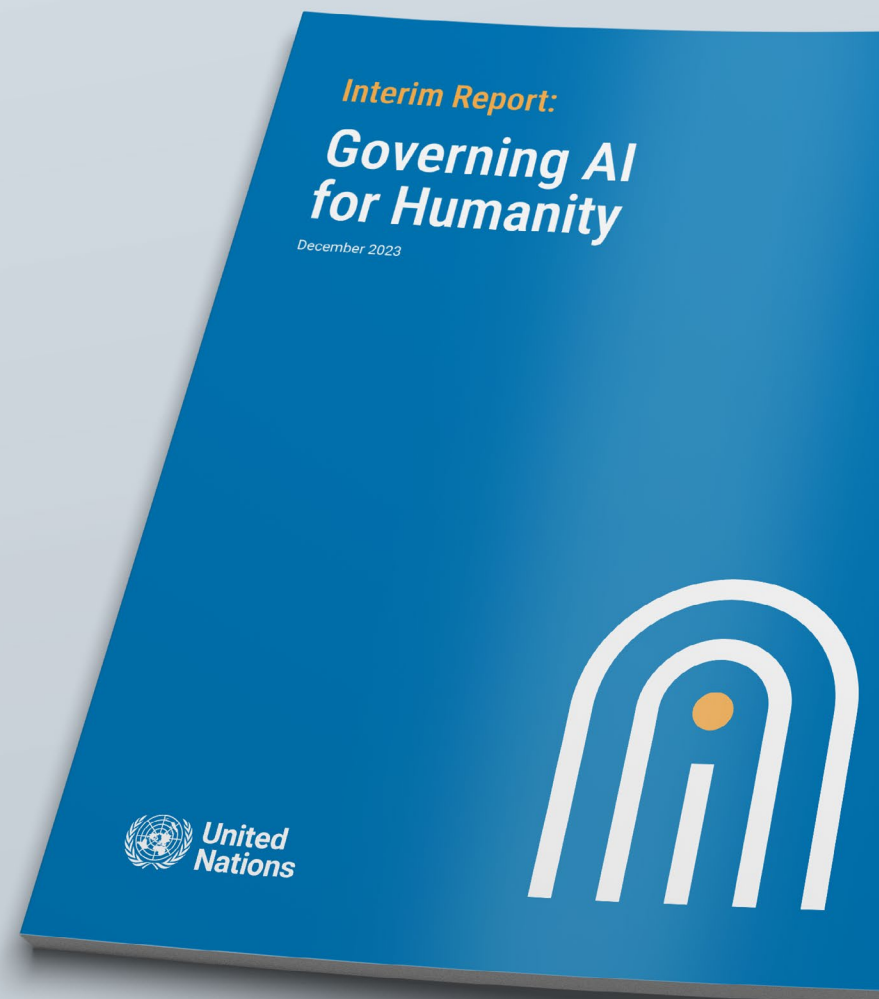
Supporting Global AI Governance

The project marks a significant milestone in the United Nations' efforts to address global governance challenges in artificial intelligence by successfully launching the [Advisory Body on AI \(AIAB\)](#). A gender-balanced group of 39 individuals from 33 countries across all regions, the AIAB brings together expertise from government, civil society, the private sector, and academia. The project supports the operational needs of the AIAB and ensures the delivery of its outputs.

During its inaugural meeting in New York, the AIAB engaged in intensive and wide-ranging discussions, reaching a consensus on the existence of a global governance deficit in AI and affirming the UN's crucial role in addressing this gap. This consensus was highlighted in one of the AIAB's major outputs, the Interim Report titled '[Governing AI for Humanity](#),' issued in December 2023.

As the AIAB works towards its final report and the upcoming [Summit of the Future](#) in September 2024, the project conducted numerous deep-dive sessions with AI experts from around the world, encompassing a wide range of expertise. Additionally, the AIAB convened a dedicated in-person meeting in Geneva to engage with multi-stakeholder groups and plans to focus on finalizing the report during an upcoming meeting in Singapore.

Through these efforts, the AIAB has significantly enhanced stakeholder cooperation on AI governance, contributing to the development of more effectively governed AI globally. With the Summit of the Future approaching, the focus will soon shift towards implementing the recommendations made by the AIAB in late 2024.



AIAB | Milestones and Roadmap

August 2023

Call for Experts

1800+ nominations from
128 countries

End-2023

Initial In-Person
Meeting in New York

Two-day meeting of
the Advisory Body

Early-2024

Consultations

15+ deep dives and 40+
consultations reaching
1,000+ experts

May 2024

In-Person Meeting
in Singapore

Two-day meeting of
the Advisory Body

September 2024

Summit of the
Future

Member States consider
Global Digital Compact

October 2023

AI Advisory Body
Formed

Members appointed, work
commences

December 2023

Interim Report
Released

International AI governance
principles and functions

March 2024

In-Person Meeting
in Geneva

Three-day meeting of
the Advisory Body

Mid-2024

Final Report
Released

Incorporating results
from consultations

Digital Public Infrastructure Safeguards*

DPI is poised to turbocharge economic development by providing a foundational layer of digital infrastructure to be leveraged by governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals alike. However, risks of data breaches, surveillance, and exclusion, particularly affecting women and minorities, often scale in tandem. Neglect by governments and companies of DPI safety and inclusivity risks undermining citizen trust and hampering the socio-economic development potential of these transformative technologies. To shape this digital transformation towards safe and inclusive approaches, the DPI Safeguards Initiative seeks to mitigate risks of DPI to people, while empowering governments and organizations to harness its potential for the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

This high-impact initiative is working to develop the first global [DPI Safeguards Framework](#) and to promote its uptake across countries, supported by governments and relevant private sector and civil society actors. Therefore, the overall impact of this project will be reduced poverty and inequality through safer, more inclusive implementations of DPI. Activities under the project are carried out in ways that align ethical, safety and other regulatory standards with universal human rights and rule of law frameworks and boost sustainable development, at a critical juncture for governance of DPI.

*Outlook into ongoing project activities during 2024.

Developing the DPI Safeguards Framework

In its initial phase, the project made significant advancements in developing the safeguards framework. Most notably, it established and operationalized multi-stakeholder working groups, volunteering time and expertise to create universal and unifying safeguards. This foundation directly led to the publication of a first interim report, which contextualizes and explores various categories of risks pertinent to the safety and inclusion aspects of DPI.

Focusing on learning from real implementations, the project engaged 15 countries to gather practical insights. This strategy also involved a thorough analysis of 20 existing digital or DPI-related frameworks, providing critical insights to refine methodologies and approaches.

In April 2024, the project released an Inductive Report and Framework structure, with over 2,000 visits to the dpi-safeguards.org website and 650 visits to the Resource Hub. A dedicated engagement strategy has been further enhanced by hosting five convenings, with six more already scheduled, to expand outreach. Additionally, to accommodate a wider audience, the project introduced French and Spanish language options on its website.



Geneva Liaison Project*

Since the [World Summit for the Information Society's](#) first phase in 2003, Geneva-based UN and non-UN entities have played key roles in shaping global digital cooperation, including [CERN](#), [IEC](#), [IGF Secretariat](#), [ILO](#), [ISO](#), [ITU](#), [OHCHR](#), [UNCTAD](#), [UNODA](#), [WEE](#), [WIPO](#), [WTO](#) and others. Geneva hosts the permanent missions of 177 States, 42 international organizations, over 420 NGOs, many multinational companies, and a relevant academic sector.

With several UN digital cooperation-related processes reaching key milestones in 2024–2026, it becomes imperative to activate this Geneva-based ecosystem. These processes include:

- [Summit of the Future and Global Digital Compact](#) in 2024
- [World Summit for the Information Society+20 \(WSIS+20\)](#) in 2024

This project aims to strengthen the bridge between Geneva-based and New York-based processes, with full respect for the mandates of different UN entities, so as to ensure greater coherence and complementarity between relevant activities in Geneva and New York at this critical time for digital cooperation. The overall impact of this project will be greater coherence and complementarity between digital cooperation activities in Geneva and New York during a key period for global digital cooperation.

*Outlook into ongoing project activities during 2024.

