



Submission to the United Nations to identify the terms of reference and modalities for the establishment and functioning of the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and Global Dialogue on AI Governance

February 2025

Context

The United Nations (UN) put out [a questionnaire and request for public comment](#) on a proposal to form an **Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, as well as a **Global Dialogue on AI** in the context of the **Global Digital Compact**. The questionnaire was sent out in late 2024, and the following brief report forms the response submitted by the AI Policy Lab at Umeå University, Sweden.

Introduction

The AI Policy Lab is a leading research initiative dedicated to fostering informed, evidence-driven discussions on AI governance, ethics, and regulation, while also advancing research based on concrete societal and technical needs. Our mission is to provide policymakers, industry leaders, and the public with expert insights into the implications of AI, ensuring that AI policy development is both well-informed and responsive to real-world challenges.

Members of the AI Policy Lab have actively contributed to policy discussions on AI and digital governance, engaging with stakeholders in the European Union, the UN, and other international bodies. As a non-profit, non-partisan, and non-lobbying entity, we are committed to advancing transparent, responsible, and human-centric AI policies.

AI Policy Lab welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies' consultation on the establishment of the "Independent International Scientific Panel on AI" and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. We support the UN's initiative to foster international cooperation on AI regulation and are pleased to provide insights in response to the consultation questions outlined below.



On the International Scientific Panel

What should be the mandate of the multidisciplinary Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, to be established within the UN?

The Panel should provide independent, multidisciplinary, and evidence-based assessments of AI's impact, risks, and governance needs. By doing so, it will serve as a reliable knowledge source, ensuring AI governance is guided by scientific rigor, ethical responsibility, and a commitment to sustainable and equitable development.

To achieve this, the Panel must integrate expertise from a diverse range of scientific fields, including but not limited to technology, law, ethics, social sciences, economics, and human rights. This interdisciplinary approach will enable the Panel to inform global policy, promote responsible AI development, and ensure alignment with international norms and sustainable development goals.

Additionally, the Panel should be equipped to provide both solicited and unsolicited advice on AI-related topics and societal developments. This flexibility will allow it to proactively address emerging challenges, guide regulatory decisions, and highlight best practices in AI governance and deployment. The Panel's key responsibilities include:

- **Providing expert recommendations:** Offer both solicited and unsolicited advice to policymakers on AI regulation and implementation, risks, and emerging developments.
- **Monitoring AI opportunities and risks:** Assess the societal, economic, and environmental impacts of AI, ensuring governance frameworks remain proactive and adaptive.
- **Identifying and promoting best practices:** Share concrete and varied sets of good practices in AI development, deployment, and education, including sustainability, transparency, and ethical considerations to maximise AI's positive contributions to society. The practices should consider differences and challenges in advanced economies and emerging markets.

- **Ensuring alignment with global norms:** Promote AI policies that align with international standards, sustainable development goals, and human rights frameworks.
- **Establishing oversight mechanisms:** Support the creation of regulatory and accountability structures to ensure AI governance remains transparent, responsible, and equitable.
- **Acting as an AI Accountability Board,** where AI-related disputes such as algorithmic discrimination, ethical and privacy violations, intellectual property rights, and other related issues are examined and resolved by independent experts.

What should be the size, composition, and governance structure of the Panel?

The Panel should consist of 35–50 leading experts from diverse scientific disciplines, ensuring a multidisciplinary foundation with a strong understanding of AI's societal and environmental impact. It should include representatives from both developed and emerging AI research communities to ensure global representation, gender diversity, and expertise bridging technical and non-technical fields. The Panel should be led by a Chair and Vice-Chairs, and organised into flexible thematic working groups that can be adapted to address timely and emerging AI issues. A Scientific Advisory Board should provide oversight and peer review, while a small Secretariat ensures coordination and communication. This lean structure enables the Panel to provide independent, rapid, and multidisciplinary expertise on both ongoing and urgent AI governance challenges. The governance structure and leadership decisions should rotate to enable all the actors to have the opportunity to lead and create new decisions and thematic working groups. The Independent International Scientific Panel on AI should be responsible and accountable to the needs of local organisations and society. This will increase the reach and contribution of the panel.

How should the nomination and selection process of the Panel be?

The selection process should be transparent, merit-based, and globally inclusive, ensuring geographic and disciplinary diversity. A combination of self-nominations and nominations from member states, scientific organisations (ACM, AAAI, IEEE, EURAI), and professional bodies should be used. This process should prioritise scientific excellence, multidisciplinary expertise, and global societal representation while maintaining transparency and accountability to ensure the credibility of the Panel's work.

The entire process should be publicly documented, with clear criteria and justification for selections, reinforcing trust and legitimacy in the Panel's work.

The nomination and selection process of the Panel should include the establishment of an independent ethics committee responsible for overseeing the process. This committee would ensure that candidates meet strict ethical standards and that potential conflicts of interest are transparently addressed.

To enhance inclusivity and legitimacy, the selection process should be expanded by introducing a public consultation phase involving not only the scientific community but also civil society and industry.

A rotating membership system could be implemented to maintain a dynamic exchange of ideas while preserving institutional continuity. To achieve this, half or a quarter of the Panel's members could be replaced every 2–4 years, ensuring a balance between fresh perspectives and accumulated expertise.

What types of evidence-based impact, risk, and opportunity assessments should the Panel deliver, and with what frequency?

The Scientific Panel is expected to serve as a trusted source of knowledge, guiding AI governance with robust, science-backed insights. It should produce structured, evidence-based assessments on AI's impact, risks, and opportunities. These assessments will provide actionable insights to guide policymakers, industry leaders, and other stakeholders in responsible AI governance. The frequency and structure of these reports will ensure that AI policy remains dynamic, adaptive, and grounded in empirical evidence. The key deliverables include:

- **Annual reports:** Comprehensive evaluations of AI's global impact, emerging risks, and policy recommendations, including analyses of self-regulation by major AI firms and its implications.
- **Thematic assessments (every 1-2 years):** In-depth studies on critical AI issues such as bias, automation, geopolitical risks, misinformation, and AI's role in addressing climate change and sustainability.
- **Rapid response briefings (as needed):** Timely analyses of urgent AI developments, such as breakthroughs in general AI, misinformation crises, or major regulatory shifts, ensuring that governance frameworks remain proactive.
- **Risk and safety audits (periodic):** Evaluations of AI safety frameworks, accountability mechanisms, and risk mitigation strategies to assess whether AI systems adhere to best practices and ethical standards.
- **Opportunity forecasts (every 2-3 years):** Forward-looking assessments of AI-driven advancements in key sectors, including healthcare, education, economic development, and environmental sustainability, identifying areas of potential benefit and policy needs.
- **Best practice reports (quarterly):** Guidelines on ethical AI deployment, sustainable AI solutions, and responsible innovation to inform global AI strategies and industry standards.
- **Solicited and unsolicited policy briefs (as needed):** The Panel should provide both requested and independent advice on AI governance, ensuring that emerging risks and opportunities are addressed promptly.



On the Global Dialogue on AI Governance

What should be the mandate of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, to be established within the UN?

The Dialogue should facilitate global coordination on AI governance, aligning national, regional, and multilateral efforts. It should engage diverse stakeholders, including governments, industry, academia, and civil society, to establish global norms and principles for AI governance. The Dialogue should prioritise accountability, sustainability, and equitable access, ensuring AI development aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It should also assess AI-related risks, promote capacity-building, and develop an adaptive governance framework that evolves with technological advancements. The core objectives of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance are:

- **Facilitating global coordination:** Align AI governance efforts at national, regional, and international levels to ensure consistency in policy development and regulatory approaches.
- **Developing AI governance norms and principles:** Establish global governance structures, ethical guidelines, and regulatory mechanisms to promote safe, transparent, and responsible AI development.
- **Strengthening accountability and transparency:** Implement mechanisms to track AI's global impact and hold both public and private actors accountable for ethical and responsible AI deployment.

The Dialogue should also support other UN agencies in upholding their mandates, ensuring AI governance is framed in a way that maintains international security rather than being perceived as adversarial to dominant states or corporate actors. By institutionalizing these efforts, the Global Dialogue on AI Governance will provide a strong foundation for responsible, inclusive, and globally coordinated AI governance.

This Global Dialog agency could be set up as a semi-open platform to enable the exchange of and access to information. The information could be provided by UN member states and be accessible for society and organisations.

What types of outcomes should the Dialogue achieve?

- **Global AI governance framework:** Principles guiding responsible AI development.
- **International AI risk and trustworthiness standards:** Mechanisms to mitigate AI-related risks.
- **Multilateral policy recommendations:** Actionable guidelines for harmonising AI policies.
- **Capacity-building initiatives:** Support for AI policy development in developing and developed nations, ensuring equitable participation in global AI discussions
- **Monitoring and accountability mechanisms:** Evaluation of AI governance progress.
- **Public engagement reports:** Transparent updates on governance discussions.
- **AI governance coordination mechanism:** Structured collaboration between key stakeholders.

How should Governments and all relevant stakeholders be involved?

All governments and stakeholders must take proactive steps in AI governance rather than waiting for others to act. This includes actively contributing to policy discussions, updating national AI regulations to align with global frameworks, and adopting enforceable ethical and safety standards. Industry leaders, civil society, and academic experts should be integral to these discussions to ensure AI policies are socially responsible, technically sound, and economically viable.

A yearly global summit, modeled after the IPCC for climate change, should serve as the main forum for setting AI policy priorities, reviewing progress, and coordinating international regulatory efforts. Regional and sector-specific summits should complement this by allowing nations with AI expertise to showcase best practices and offer targeted policy guidance.

Capacity-building programmes should support developing nations through financial aid, expert training, and infrastructure to bridge governance gaps. Advanced AI nations should commit to knowledge-sharing agreements to ensure regulatory strategies are accessible to all, preventing technological disparities. Governments should provide dedicated funding and structured data-sharing agreements to enable the panel to conduct thorough AI risk assessments and policy evaluations. Transparency measures, such as public AI governance reports and annual progress updates, should be mandated. Independent oversight mechanisms must be in place to review compliance with AI safety and ethical standards.

To maintain policy relevance, governments should establish working groups and task forces to implement the panel's recommendations, leading to concrete actions like legislation, regulatory updates, and international AI treaties. Collaboration with the private sector should include AI audit mechanisms to ensure corporate adherence to ethical and regulatory standards.

Institutionalising these measures will ensure AI governance remains enforceable, transparent, and aligned with societal interests, fostering responsible AI deployment on a global scale.

What should be the format of the Dialogue?

To ensure that the Dialogue remains **inclusive, adaptive, and action-oriented**, the format should bridge global AI governance discussions with concrete policy outcomes, in a multilayered, inclusive, and dynamic way, combining:

- **Annual high-level summits:** bringing together governments, international organisations, industry leaders, civil society, and academia to set priorities and assess progress.
- **Thematic working groups:** expert-led groups focusing on key AI governance areas, such as ethics, safety, fairness, economic impact, and AI for sustainable development.
- **Regional and sectoral dialogues:** ensuring diverse representation by engaging different regions, industries, and stakeholder groups through dedicated forums.

- **Continuous virtual engagement:** a digital platform for ongoing discussions, public consultations, and real-time collaboration among stakeholders.
- **Scientific-policy interface:** regular briefings from the independent international scientific panel on AI to ensure that governance discussions are evidence-based.
- **Public and civil society engagement:** open sessions, citizen panels, and AI literacy initiatives to foster inclusivity and transparency.
- **Implementation and review mechanisms:** regular reporting, monitoring, and adaptive policymaking to track progress and refine governance strategies.

On the Establishment and Functioning of the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance

What should be the relationship between the Panel and the Dialogue?

The Panel should provide expert, evidence-based assessments, while the Dialogue serves as the platform for translating these insights into governance frameworks. The Panel should act as a knowledge hub, ensuring AI governance remains informed, ethical, and responsive. Through continuous research, policy briefs, and technical evaluations, the Panel can identify emerging risks, best practices, and regulatory gaps, helping policymakers make informed decisions.

The Dialogue, in turn, should ensure that the Panel's findings translate into actionable policies by fostering cooperation between governments, industry leaders, civil society, and academia. Regular consultations, working groups, and global AI governance discussions can help refine these policies and drive their implementation. By facilitating multistakeholder collaboration, the Dialogue ensures that AI governance frameworks remain practical, adaptable, and aligned with international standards.

To maintain effectiveness, the Panel should produce timely reports and recommendations that feed directly into the Dialogue's deliberations. The Dialogue should also create structured mechanisms, such as expert hearings, advisory committees, and stakeholder engagement sessions, to ensure Panel insights are continuously integrated into governance strategies. This synergy bridges science, policy, and implementation, fostering a governance model based on cutting-edge research and cooperation. Establishing feedback loops between the Panel and Dialogue will create a dynamic system that continuously adapts to technological advancements and global challenges, ensuring AI governance remains proactive and forward-thinking.

Additionally, the Panel should play a role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of governance frameworks developed by the Dialogue. This could include conducting periodic assessments of AI policies, identifying areas requiring adaptation, and providing recommendations for regulatory improvements. In turn, the Dialogue should facilitate policy testing, pilot initiatives, and real-world application reviews to ensure governance frameworks remain robust and effective in different geopolitical, economic, and technological contexts. By implementing these coordinating mechanisms, the Panel and Dialogue will ensure AI governance remains responsive, globally coordinated, and driven by both scientific expertise and practical policy considerations. Their interaction should not be static but continuously evolve to address emerging AI challenges, fostering a regulatory environment that is inclusive, forward-looking, and capable of managing AI's complexities at a global scale.

How can the Panel and Dialogue effectively draw on and leverage existing initiatives within the UN? How can the UN system best support the Panel and Dialogue in a coordinated manner?

To ensure sustainability and independence, the UN should provide fixed annual funding rather than rely on fluctuating member state contributions. A dedicated AI governance fund could ensure stability and transparency while avoiding financial dependency and legitimacy concerns. If funding comes from member states, smaller, diversified contributions should be prioritised to avoid dependency and legitimacy concerns.

The UN should integrate AI governance into existing frameworks, fostering collaboration across agencies like UNESCO, ITU, UNDP, and OHCHR. Coordination with WHO, ILO, UNEP, and UNCTAD will streamline efforts on AI's impact in healthcare, labour, environment, and trade. Formal collaboration agreements and shared research platforms can enhance efficiency.

To maximise impact, the UN should embed the Panel and Dialogue into global forums, summits, and decision-making processes. An annual AI Governance Summit can evaluate progress and refine policies. Regional AI hubs can promote inclusivity, particularly for developing nations, ensuring equitable access to expertise, funding, and regulatory support.

The UN, together with the Panel, should consider incorporating AI into the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to advance objectives such as education, healthcare, and environmental protection, which should be highlighted in the Panel's work.

The UN can encourage member states to voluntarily share national AI policies and regulations. This collaborative effort between the UN, its member states, and the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI can help harmonise AI governance frameworks.

The UN, together with the Panel, can launch global initiatives to improve AI literacy at all levels, particularly in developing regions, including by educating policymakers.

The establishment of the Panel and Dialogue is an urgent and essential step to ensure AI development and deployment remain safe, transparent, and ethical. As AI advances rapidly, the need for robust governance mechanisms becomes increasingly critical. The success of these initiatives hinges on their ability to adapt swiftly, remain inclusive, and provide globally representative frameworks. Immediate action is required to align AI governance with pressing societal and environmental challenges while reinforcing international cooperation and accountability.

Authors

(Authors in alphabetical order after the first lead author)

- Virginia Dignum, Director AI Policy Lab, Umeå University
- Frank Dignum, Director of the Center for Transdisciplinary AI Research for Good (TAIGA), Umeå University
- Maja Fjaestad, Adjunct Associate Professor, AI Policy Lab, Umeå University (contributed up until late 2024).
- Jason Tucker, Researcher at The Institute for Futures Studies, Sweden and Adjunct Associate Professor, AI Policy Lab, Umeå University.

