

CCIA Comments on the Modalities of the Scientific Panel on AI and a Global Policy Dialogue on AI

Scientific Panel on AI

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

The UN High-Level Advisory Body (HLAB) offers a useful blueprint for the Scientific Panel, drawing upon specialized expertise to guide the development of policy objectives. However, it is essential that the Scientific Panel includes a broader range of representation compared to the HLAB. In particular, the Panel should include experts who can offer views on pro-innovation approaches to AI governance, and represent broad perspectives across the macroeconomy. This ensures the inclusion of various perspectives on AI, including providing a platform to analyze the opportunities presented by open-source solutions. Additionally, the consideration of risks should be presented alongside the vast positive opportunities and significant benefits brought by AI, particularly in advancing economic development and accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Panel should also consider the various norms, laws, and regulations already existent that apply to AI, while fostering international approaches that enable the development of, access to, and use of AI technology.

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

The Scientific Panel should be driven by a multistakeholder approach, ensuring equal participation from both member states and non-state actors. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) structure can serve as a valuable model for structuring this approach, with necessary adjustments, as AI technologies involve a wide variety of applications spread across industry, the public sector, and academia.

The panel should consist of individuals with specialized expertise and a proven history in AI research and its applications, including socio-economic disciplines, ensuring a balance across academic institutions, industry, and government labs. It is important to recognize that significant expertise resides within the private sector, making it essential for the panel to include representatives from companies. It should also include opportunities for participation by representatives from relevant international forums on AI, such as the Global Partnership on AI, standards organizations, and member states.

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

The Panel should hold Plenary meetings at least once a year, offering governments and observer organizations the opportunity to nominate experts from scientific communities to contribute to various functional working groups. The nomination process should be transparent and inclusive, ensuring a diverse range of expertise and perspectives are represented. By prioritizing equitable representation and adoption, the UN can support a more inclusive and balanced approach to AI governance, fostering global cooperation and sustainable development.

A steering committee should be formed with 1 or 2 members from all sectors, including from Member States/governments, industry, academia, civil society and the technical community. The steering committee should then conduct a public call for nominations in their respective sectors and submit nominees from that process, ensuring that experts are chosen based on their qualifications, research experience, and contributions to the field of AI and its applications. This approach would help establish a transparent, bottom-up, and inclusive process from the start, broadening the scope of expertise to include diverse viewpoints from different sectors, including industry, academia, and civil society.

To maintain balance, the nominations should aim for a mix of diverse disciplines and backgrounds, ensuring that the panel is representative of global perspectives.

Once the experts are selected, the Steering Committee would determine the leadership of the Panel, including Chair and Vice-Chair, and then experts would be assigned to specific working groups based on their expertise, where they can collaborate on focused tasks, such as assessing the risks and opportunities of AI in different sectors or exploring the potential of open-source AI initiatives. These functional working groups should be dynamic, with experts rotating periodically to ensure fresh perspectives are integrated into the work of the Panel, while maintaining continuity and expertise.

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

The Scientific Panel should focus on compiling and creating a model to synthesize and disseminate existing research. Given the rapid pace of innovation across various subfields of AI and its diverse applications, the Panel's efforts and resources would be most effectively utilized by supporting and aggregating research that is already being conducted at the national and regional levels. This approach would align with best practices established by ICANN, which focuses on evaluating existing research to identify areas of scientific consensus.

The mandate of the Scientific Panel should be inherently multidisciplinary, with members tasked with drawing upon and synthesizing pre-existing research on AI rather than initiating new research projects. This approach—emphasizing secondary data analysis—would be both cost-effective and efficient, allowing the Panel to focus on advancing its objectives within the allocated timeline. By utilizing a combination of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods data, where appropriate, the Panel can ensure a comprehensive understanding of the current state of AI research and its applications, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts already underway in the scientific community.

Global Policy Dialogue on AI

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

First, the Dialogue should serve as a platform for learning from global best practices and lessons in AI governance, drawing on insights from around the world to reduce friction in national approaches, without promoting specific governance frameworks or regulations. It should avoid advancing global governance of aspects of AI, given countries' diverging interests and priorities, and instead exchange views to lay a basis for sharing best practices and further cooperating with the goal of fostering the creation of AI technology globally. Second, it should highlight, where relevant, AI's positive impact on global economic progress and development by showcasing diverse use cases from around the world, including on relevant workstreams across the Global Digital Compact like digital public infrastructure and connectivity.

What types of outcomes should the Dialogue achieve?

By supporting global exchanges on AI governance while respecting national priorities and regulatory approaches, the Dialogue would facilitate the exchange of best practices on governance frameworks, policies, and strategies that have been successfully implemented in different regions, leading to equitable AI innovation and growth. Such a process would be critical for capacity building and ensuring that all stakeholders have a common understanding of best practices and principles in supporting the use of AI for sustainable development. This would also assist academia and industry in adopting best practices for research in and commercialization of AI tools and offerings.

How should Governments and all relevant stakeholders be involved?

Stakeholder participation must be meaningful, transparent, bottom-up, and inclusive of both government and non-governmental voices actively involved. This includes providing structured avenues for input, where all stakeholders can contribute expertise, including industry, governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, technical communities, and the private sector.

What should be the format of the Dialogue?

The Dialogue should take place annually on the margins of existing meetings at the UN, rotating between locations to ensure equitable access. This could take place during the annual Internet Governance Forum. It should adopt a decentralized, multistakeholder approach that affords equal participation to member states and stakeholders, with opportunities for remote participation and the submission of written comments. Individual policy forums could adopt specific themes, to allow for a more tailored, flexible discussion of relevant topics.

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

The Global Dialogue on AI Governance should provide a platform for considering the insights and recommendations of the Scientific Panel. There should be natural synergies between the Dialogue and the Scientific Panel, with the Dialogue serving as a venue for the Panel to share its research, assessments, and scientific analysis with the global community. This structure would also allow a wide range of stakeholders to engage with the Panel's work, offer input where relevant, and bring the Panel's findings back to their respective regions.

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

The Dialogue and Panel should complement, not duplicate, ongoing discussions, including those within the UN system such as the AI for Good Summits and the work of technical standards-setting organizations like ISO. It would be valuable for the Dialogue to align with existing UN global events, such as Day 0 of the Internet Governance Forum, where key stakeholders already gather to address AI policy issues. It should also aim to complement and uphold other relevant outcomes of the Global Digital Compact where relevant, including the work of the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance. To maximize synergies, the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies could conduct an inventory of ongoing efforts across the UN system to achieve similar goals to the Panel and Dialogue, and provide recommendations to avoid duplicative or conflicting efforts.