

IGF Policy Network on AI submission to the consultation on United Nations Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence and Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance

January 2025

The second informal consultation of the intergovernmental process to identify the terms of reference and modalities for the establishment and functioning of the Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

Please provide a brief description of your organization / entity

PNAI is a global multistakeholder initiative hosted by the UN IGF, bringing together data governance experts, stakeholders and changemakers from across the world. It provides an open platform to share and develop expertise, insights, and recommendations. The primary goal is to foster dialogue, exchange practices and contribute to the global AI policy discourse.

Please describe the process you followed to collect, consult, and prepare your input

The multistakeholder community of PNAI jointly drafted the responses. This was followed by seeking inputs from the IGF MAG community. Once the response was drafted another round of comments were sought before submitting the response.

On the Panel

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

The panel's mandate should be to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state and future trends of Artificial Intelligence (AI), delivering timely reliable and up-to-date scientific insights on AI opportunities as well as risks - both upstream and downstream (including ethics), cost, opportunities, and capabilities to governments and concerned stakeholders. This will enable policymakers to formulate, evidence-driven decisions and foster a deeper scientific understanding among all involved parties. Given the complexity, uncertainty and rapid development of AI systems, the panel's research scope and priority should be focused and reviewed periodically.

The panel should adopt a scientific methodology and an independent and inclusive approach to define the topics to be analyzed, promote transparency and accountability by making all reports and meeting minutes publicly accessible. The panel should implement a research process that prioritizes openness and innovation, beginning with a scoping phase that includes multistakeholder consultations and bibliographic review. Priority themes should be identified through open calls with experts for thematic input, reviewed by a Multistakeholder Advisory Committee, and thoroughly discussed by the panel to ensure their relevance. The panel should actively incorporate perspectives from marginalized and underrepresented communities and be independent to ensure a truly global and inclusive AI governance approach.

There should be an evaluation of the panel's effectiveness and necessity as part of the GDC review as set out in its §74.

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

The panel should consist of experts from the UN's member states by equitably balancing voices of the global south and global north, geographic gender and youth representation. Members should be selected based on their scientific expertise, with due regard to interdisciplinary perspectives. The panel should comprise members coming from civil society, government, academia, technical community and the private sector as well as members of the judiciary sector. As this is a scientific panel, more weight should be given to the composition of the panel to members with research and science backgrounds. The panel's composition should also include experts in AI ethics, human rights, and public

policy to complement technical expertise with broader societal considerations. Although the panel includes the term “scientific”, we note that, AI currently as developed and deployed is primarily an algorithmic and statistical computer application for commercial purposes with social and legal implications; therefore the panel should have equal participation with experts from technologists, law and social scientists. The principles of the panel are to maintain scientific rigor, effective consensus-building, and being independent and impartial.

The tenure of the panel members should be for a three-year term and panel members should rotate by roughly one-third each year, in order to enhance diversity and bring in new viewpoints. Two of the members, considering global diversity, would be selected by the panel internally to serve as co-chairs.

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

The appointment of members should follow a transparent inclusive and merit based selection process. There should be an open call for nominations inviting applications from governments, civil society, technical community, industry and academic institutions. A multistakeholder and independent selection committee should be set up to evaluate and provide recommendations to the UN Secretary-General. Panel members should be chosen based on their expertise by the independent multistakeholder selection committee, with careful consideration given to gender and geographical diversity. All relevant stakeholder groups from civil society to business, research, public sector, politics and international organizations should be represented. However, more weight should be given in the composition of the panel to members with research and science backgrounds in various areas (technology, law, social sciences).

To enhance credibility, the selection criteria should prioritize transparency, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and periodic reviews to ensure accountability and fairness in appointments.

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

The panel should also provide evidence-based concise briefs on relevant developments on an ongoing basis. It should review its research scope and priority

periodically and regularly consult with global research networks to ensure the highest standards of scientific rigor.

The panel's methodology should be based on human-centred, scientific and evidence-based methodologies and prioritize transparency. It should begin each research cycle with a scoping phase that includes multistakeholder consultations concerning emerging risks and opportunities of AI systems and their governance. Priority themes for the panel's work should be identified through open calls for thematic input, reviewed by the Multistakeholder Advisory Committee, and discussed by the panel to ensure that its outputs address harms, risks and opportunities. All outputs should be open for input and consultations before final adoption by the panel.

The panel should produce annual reports addressing priority themes, offering a synthesis of evidence-based assessments. It may also issue succinct briefs on relevant developments on a rolling basis.

Transparency and accountability should be central to the panel's operations. All reports and meeting minutes should be publicly accessible to promote transparency and public engagement.

On the Dialogue

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

The mandate of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, should be to monitor , analyse and share knowledge of current developments in AI governance and anticipate emerging trends, including potential risks at regional and global levels, with the aim of fostering more diverse perspectives and knowledge sharing, and creating a generally recognized minimum framework for AI governance within multi-stakeholder dialogue.

The dialogue should serve as a platform to support interoperability and compatibility of artificial intelligence governance approaches through sharing best practices and promoting common understanding (§ 55(b) GDC) on questions relevant to global AI governance.

The dialogue should also support capacity building, responsible research and innovation, while addressing the societal impacts of AI on employment and advocating for sustainable development aligned with the UN's SDGs.

What type of outcomes should it achieve?

The outcomes from the dialogue could be papers with recommendations for a generally recognized minimum framework for AI governance, and at the same time highlight emerging critical risk scenarios on the development and deployment of AI. Additional recommendations could be captured as messages and/ or chair summaries, reflecting the key insights and points of common ground.

Additionally, the Dialogue should promote capacity building in AI governance, especially in developing countries, and encourage sustainable, responsible AI development aligned with global development goals.

How should Governments and all relevant stakeholders be involved?

The Global Dialogue on AI Governance should adopt a multistakeholder approach, including governments, private sector actors, civil society organizations, the technical community and academia to reflect the diversity of AI governance stakeholders. To avoid the duplication of efforts, the global dialogue of AI governance should be integrated to existing UN multistakeholder mechanisms, particularly the Internet Governance Forum, and its substructures dealing with AI, like the Policy Network on AI, WSIS AI4Good, UNESCO, among others.

What should be the format of the Dialogue?

The Global Dialogue on AI Governance should adopt a multistakeholder approach, including governments and all relevant stakeholders, which includes the private sector, civil society organizations, the technical community and academia to reflect the diversity of AI governance stakeholders. Additionally, it would draw upon and complement existing platforms, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), AI for Good Summit, and UNESCO's Global Forum on AI Ethics, which will ensure regional inclusiveness and broad thematic coverage.

The dialogue could convene annually aligning with the UN Internet Governance Forum

For each annual dialogue, there should be an open call for issues, where stakeholders can propose topics of relevance. Based on these inputs, the priority themes can be defined, around which the program could be structured. There should be an open call for sessions.

Relevant international organizations and UN entities should be invited to participate to avoid duplication of efforts and foster synergies.

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

The priority themes identified and addressed by the Panel, as well as the reports should serve as a basis for the discussions during the Dialogue. The outcomes of the deliberation of the Dialogue should be fed back into the Panel for their further research. It is suggested that the Panel and the Dialogue maintain an iterative, open communication process to ensure ongoing alignment and coherence throughout their engagement.

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?

There should be a close connection and cooperation with IGF MAG and their structures dealing with AI like IGF PNAI. In addition, liaison to the Panel should be encouraged from existing initiatives within the United Nations including the IGF.

The panel should maintain a regular exchange of ideas and research collaboration with existing UN initiatives, such as the IGF and its substructures dealing with AI, like the PNAI etc. The Dialogue should be derived from the existing UN multistakeholder mechanism, particularly the IGF.

Relevant UN entities should be invited to participate in the Dialogue and to provide input to the Panel to avoid duplication of efforts and foster synergies. Regular consultations with the Multistakeholder Advisory Committee would further enhance the effectiveness of the Dialogue process and ensure coherent collaboration. The Panel should establish a formal coordination mechanism with the IGF, to facilitate knowledge sharing, optimize resources, and strengthen the alignment of objectives.

Secretariat

The panel and dialogue's work should be supported by a dedicated light-weight secretariat. The secretariat should handle day-to-day operations, coordinate logistics, provide support for drafting reports, and organizing meetings and consultations. The secretariat should work closely with the IGF Secretariat.

Multistakeholder Advisory Committee

The Multistakeholder Advisory Committee, composed of multistakeholder representatives, would support the panel and dialogue to ensure a balanced representation between stakeholders governments, civil society, technical committee, business, media, academia, etc.), gender, geographies, etc. Its members would be selected for three-year terms and would be rotated by roughly one-third each year, in order to enhance diversity and bring in new viewpoints.

Additional Comments

On behalf of the Internet Governance Forum's Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence (PNAI), we thank the co-facilitators for the opportunity to provide our comments on the Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. We believe that while fulfilling the provisions of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), the solutions should build on existing structures, adopt an inclusive approach, avoid process proliferation, as well as remain cost-efficient.