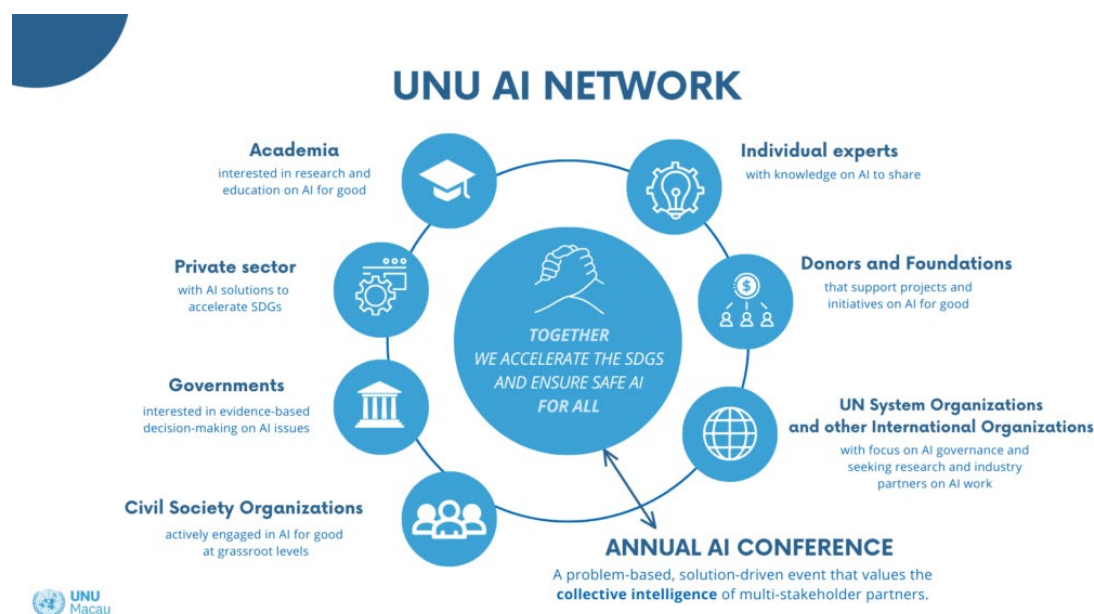# UNU Artificial Intelligence Network
TOGETHER we accelerate the SDGs and ensure safe AI for all.
Concept Note

Artificial Intelligence (AI) develops at an unprecedented speed, which offers great opportunities to accelerate progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Meanwhile, AI poses risks, which may negatively impact people, the planet, peace, and prosperity.

How can we maximize the potential of AI for sustainable development, while ensuring AI is responsible, inclusive, accountable, and fair for all, especially those from the Global South? To leave no one behind, we must work together to tackle the challenges related to AI and support the Global South to participate in the decision-making meaningfully. This is the vision behind the UNU AI Network.

Initiated by the United Nations University (UNU), in partnership with the alliance's members, the UNU AI Network will serve as a global multi-stakeholder platform where academia, industry, policymakers, and civil society can leverage their strengths and tackle together AI challenges faced by the world. Particularly, the network strives to advocate and promote evidence-based policymaking and decision-making.

Within the multi-stakeholder network, partners will complement one another with their comparative advantages. For instance, governments can offer authentic scenarios by raising challenges they face at local, regional, or national levels. Private sector partners can provide technology tools to help solve these issues. Academic partners can provide pre-assessment, feasibility analysis, policy recommendations, and impact assessment for policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. The learning can be scaled up with training and education programs.

Guided by UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, UNU AI Network hopes to pursue its mission through joint projects with network partners, which can result in solutions – commitments, science-based policy recommendations, and technological tools – to be shared with the world, especially the Global South, and, hence, contribute to a people-centered and sustainable digital future for all.

UNU AI Network's **objectives** are to:
• increase social awareness and stimulate social change for responsible and inclusive AI;
• leverage academic contributions to AI policy-making and AI project implementation at national, regional, and global levels;
• encourage evidence-based and data-driven decision-making in AI policy and strategy making;
• support the implementation of UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence;
• support meaningful participation from the Global South, as well as from marginalized groups;
• facilitate exchanges on AI issues between North and South, East and West.

The following stakeholders would make ideal **network members**:
• Academia interested in research and education on AI for good;
• the private sector, which has AI solutions to accelerate SDGs;
• Governments interested in evidence-based decision-making on AI issues;
• civil society organizations, which are actively engaged in AI for good at grassroots levels;
• UN system organizations and other international organizations, which focus on AI governance and seek research and industry partners on AI work;
• Donors and foundations, which support projects and initiatives on AI for good;
• Individual contributors, who have knowledge and expertise on AI to share.

Roles and Responsibilities of Members
Network members are expected to join two meetings per year, one online and one face-to-face, to discuss project implementation and network work plans for the following year. United Nations University Institute in Macau (UNU Macau) will serve as the secretariat and initiate the network on behalf of UNU.
The network aims to focus on one project every 1-2 years, which emerges from the annual AI conference, involves one country or region, and invites interested network members to actively participate in the development of the project, such as identifying issues, contributing financial resources, conducting research-based analysis, and providing technology tools as solutions. The project outcomes will lead to policy recommendations.

Membership Fees and Voluntary Contributions
No membership fee is required to join the UNU AI network. However, voluntary contributions are highly encouraged by partners to support network activities and their sustainability, as well as in-kind support for engagement in network meetings and activities.
To ensure the sustainability of the network, the UNU AI Network secretariat aims to raise 200,000 USD to fund the first joint network project and hire a coordinator to manage the network and keep it lively. The contributing partners will be considered founding partners, which will have additional benefits of mutual interests.

Benefits of membership:
In addition to contributing to an important cause, network members will
• Have access to the broad network of resources, including people, financial, and knowledge resources, exclusively for the network members;
• Co-create meaningful opportunities and projects, and exclusively engage the network members for implementation and cooperation;
• Have the opportunity to host the annual AI conference.

Network activities can include, but are not limited to:
• providing research and training support to AI project implementation at the national or regional levels led by other UN entities or technology industry (e.g. providing pre-assessment, impact assessment, policy recommendations, and post-project training, etc.);
• co-creating educational/training programs or knowledge products for decision-makers and

key stakeholders;
- co-organizing webinars/talks/panels/forums;
- co-producing publications such as academic papers/blogs/policy briefs/white papers;
- Contributing to the design and development of the annual AI conferences;
- developing youth ambassadors on the topic and empowering them to initiate network activities.

Network Launching

The UNU AI Network will be officially launched at the First UNU Macau-led Annual AI Conference in Macau on 25 April 2024. The conference will be problem-based and solution-driven, which values the collective intelligence of multi-stakeholder partners. During the event, network members will identify pressing issues of common interest and co-create the vision and plan for the network's activities in the following year.

The conference outcomes will be presented at the ITU's AI for Good Global Summit, in May 2024, and, later, more elaborate contributions will be submitted to the Global Digital Compact and the Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024.

In addition, UNU and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are preparing an agreement to connect the UNU AI Network and UNIDO's Global Alliance on AI for Industry and Manufacturing (UNU-AIM), so that the collective resources and opportunities will be significantly increased.