

Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

Funding and resourcing GPAI Working Group project

A partnership approach

GPAI Steering Committee meeting 21 September 2021.

This document is the revision of a proposal prepared by Canada and the Centres of Expertise that was reviewed and discussed by the Steering Committee under item 5 of the agenda for the 4th Session of the Steering Committee on 10th May 2021. Comments received on the ONE Communities platform and during that meeting were factored in this revised version.

The document was recirculated to the Steering Committee for review and comment. Delegates discussed it at the 6th Session of the Steering Committee meeting on 21 September and were offered the opportunity to provide written comments through the ONE Community Platform ([here](#)) by 28 September.

The document has had one final sentence added to the last paragraph to satisfy an outstanding comment and is being circulated again for final approval.

Action required: For approval by 29 October.

secretariat@gpai.ai.

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Funding and resourcing GPAI Working Group projects: a partnership approach

1. Context

The importance of finding a sustainable solution for the funding of GPAI (including the GPAI Secretariat, the Centres of Expertise, and the Working Group projects) is crucial. With respect to the Working Group projects, as their implementation gets underway and in view of their specific needs and nature, it is proposed that the GPAI consider a framework for governing the provision of support for this element of the GPAI's work through funding or other resources provided by non-governmental contributors on a project-specific basis.¹ A project-based approach would:

1. **ensure coordinated, structured solutions with routes to scale** so that GPAI can fully meet its mission to promote the responsible adoption of AI through applied AI projects while seeking to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
2. **support the co-creation of solutions** between domain specialists (the 'problem owners') and technical experts (the 'solution developers') with a multi-sectoral approach; and,
3. **access the knowledge, implementation capacity, resources, and funding needed** for the development and successful implementation of the applied AI projects (self-funding).

To date, the Centres of Expertise have begun engaging with non-governmental contributors on GPAI Working Group Projects on a project-based approach through various arrangements (e.g. as service providers). This has occurred to a large degree outside the GPAI framework with the Centres of Expertise – domestic government-funded entities in their own right in addition to part of the GPAI structure – entering into such arrangements alone.

In order to increase GPAI oversight and ownership insofar as such arrangements may impact GPAI work and outcomes, as well as to help foster coherence across GPAI work, this paper proposes the following a pilot approach: The Steering Committee and GPAI Members would (i) be provided with information on the Centres for Expertise's engagement with non-governmental contributors in relation to GPAI Working Group Projects and (ii) exercise greater oversight over the management and resourcing of GPAI Working Group Projects and the use of the "GPAI" name, bearing in mind reputational or other risks.

The proposals also seek to ensure that the necessary flexibility for the Centres of Expertise to continue effectively engaging with such non-governmental contributors is maintained. Broadly, responsibility is divided between a) responsibility for the GPAI name and work programme (which lies with the GPAI Members and structures) and b) the other aspects of

¹ While a similar project-based approach could also be used as a means for *GPAI Members* to provide additional funding or other support to specific GPAI Projects, in addition to supporting the GPAI's budget more broadly, given that different procedures would be needed in such case, this paper and proposal is limited to the provision of funding or other support by non-governmental contributors.

engaging with non-governmental contributors, e.g. legal, administrative, financial responsibilities which would remain with the Centres for Expertise.

2. Discussions to date

The Steering Committee had a preliminary discussion on these questions during its May 2021 meeting [[GPAI/SC/M\(2021\)3](#)]. Delegates provided a number of comments on the proposal tabled by Canada and the Centres of Expertise [[GPAI\(2021\)12](#)] — written comments are available at the ONE Community platform ([here](#)). Delegates of the Steering Committee recognised potential benefits of supplementing Working Group Projects through a partnership approach with non-governmental actors, though a number of delegates raised concerns relating to governance.

At the June 2021 Steering Committee meeting, delegates agreed that further work on a sustainable solution for the funding of GPAI as a whole (including the GPAI Secretariat, Centres of Expertise and projects) was needed. They acknowledged the short-term and long-term challenges of GPAI funding and noted a proposal to recommend creating a body (Sub-Committee) to focus on these questions.

This revised proposal incorporates the comments provided by the Steering Committee. It proposes a pilot approach to support Working Group Projects through project-specific support from non-governmental contributors to be implemented during the remainder of 2021 and 2022 and to be monitored by the GPAI Steering Committee.

Moving forward, GPAI Members would continue to reflect on the funding of Working Group Projects in light of experience during this pilot stage as well as in the context of considering the work of the informal Member Reflection Group on Funding (RGF), with a view to developing a longer-term framework for funding and resourcing all parts of the GPAI (including the GPAI Secretariat, the Centres of Expertise, as well as Working Group Projects).

Delegates are invited to review this document and provide any comments. In the absence of comments by 28 September 2021, the proposed approach for the pilot of the funding of Working Group projects will be considered as agreed by the Steering Committee.

3. Proposal: a project-based approach to funding and support

This document proposes a pilot for the governance of project-based support from non-governmental contributors to the work of the GPAI Working Groups. The proposal aims to outline how the Steering Committee and GPAI Members can:

- be afforded transparency regarding funding and support provided to GPAI Working Group projects and
- provide effective oversight of the GPAI work programme and the use of the GPAI name, together with attendant potential reputational risks.

The proposal seeks to strengthen accountability while at the same time maintaining the necessary level of autonomy for the Centres of Expertise. Lastly, it seeks to provide for a means through which non-governmental actors' contributing to GPAI can be recognised as "GPAI Contributing Partners". As a starting point, the Centres of Expertise would remain responsible for the legal, administrative, and financial aspects of engaging with non-governmental contributors (as they are to some degree already, e.g. in service contracts related to existing GPAI Working Group Projects). This would include allocating relevant

resources, managing the funds, and entering into formal agreements with non-governmental contributors where necessary. While in the longer term such funding could potentially be accepted and managed through other means, at present neither the necessary capacity nor the governance and legal frameworks are in place.

The Centres of Expertise, working together with the Working Groups, would work within the approved GPAI Work Plan for 2021 Projects and the subsequent 2022 Work Plan when approved, identifying the Working Groups' needs, flagging opportunities for support, and approaching prospective non-governmental contributors for practical, action-focused discussions on soliciting support and/or funding for supporting specific approved GPAI Working Group projects.² Non-governmental contributors would have the opportunity to contribute funding and in-kind —services or staff loans, hosting support, or in-kind material or non-material (e.g. data)— contributions directly to projects that are approved but not fully funded by GPAI.

All Working Group projects would continue to be selected through the same competitive process as they are at present and subject to the same concept note, project template, and Steering Committee approval requirements. There would be no distinction between projects supported by financial or in-kind contributions from non-governmental contributors and those that are otherwise supported.

Further, all engagement with non-governmental contributors on GPAI Working Group Projects would be required to be in line with the GPAI Terms of Reference [[GPAI\(2020\)1](#)], insofar as they apply to such projects or their outcomes, including the prerogatives and responsibilities of the GPAI Working Groups and other GPAI structures. The Centres of Expertise would be responsible for ensuring that their and the Working Groups' engagement with non-governmental contributors on GPAI Working Group Projects, including the terms of any relevant agreements, respect these requirements and that the projects continue to reflect the proposals as approved in the GPAI.

To ensure accountability and oversight, where collaboration involves the provision of funds, or where other forms of support and collaboration are significant, the Centres of Expertise would provide the Steering Committee and all GPAI Members with information – including the name of the proposed or actual contributor, the Working Group Project concerned, and the nature (and amount, where applicable) of the contribution – on an ongoing basis via the [ONE community platform](#). A template will be developed in due course. All Steering Committee delegates and GPAI Members would have the opportunity to request that any such collaboration and its link to GPAI and GPAI work be discussed either in the Steering Committee and/or among all GPAI Members.

Where the Centres of Expertise or Working Groups consider that it would be mutually beneficial to the contributor and to GPAI that a non-governmental contributor be recognised as a “GPAI Contributing Partner”, they may propose this to the Steering Committee and GPAI Members. Such proposals will be circulated to the Steering Committee and GPAI Members and considered approved in the absence of objection within 10 days. Steering Committee participants and GPAI Members may also make such proposal.

Noting the risk that a project-based approach might have for the equitable distribution of resources available across approved projects, it is proposed that the Steering Committee and GPAI Members review the overall state of play regarding the distribution of funding

² Either prioritised projects or projects held in reserve pending available resources or fund raising.

every six months in order to discuss the need for any actions to improve the balance of funding across projects.

Lastly, it should be noted that the proposed approach set out in this document is not intended to cover:

- The provision of **goods and services in return for payment** in accordance with the rules for procurement of the relevant Centres of Expertise
- Participation in open elements of the projects' lifecycle (e.g. invitations to feedback on projects and 'beta' outputs via blogs on the OECD AI Work page or open workshops).
- Participation in Working Groups as **observers** — see forthcoming Sub-Committee guidance document of forms of engagement [GPAI\(2021\)29](#)
- The provision of support to individual Working Group experts or co-chairs (e.g. chief of staff or staff of the expert/co-chair's team).

Pilot phase

It is proposed that the approach set out in this paper would be implemented on a time-bound pilot basis for the remainder of 2021 and 2022. The Steering Committee and GPAI Members would be invited to monitor this pilot approach and review it, together with the work of the informal Member Reflection Group on Funding (RGF), in the context of developing a longer-term framework for funding the GPAI as a whole (including the GPAI Secretariat and the Centres of Expertise). In this regard, issues raised but not resolved during discussions on the present proposal will be discussed as part of this review, for example, the exploration of including an "overhead" on all such contributions that could be used to fund other GPAI WG projects or help support the participation of a diversity of voices in the SC that might not otherwise be able to engage.