

Call for Proposals

Global Assessment of Responsible AI in Cities

Technical support to research Artificial Intelligence (AI) opportunity and constraints to leverage AI for people-centred smart cities

May 2022

Size of Grant:	Up to 50,000 CAD
Submission Deadline:	June 10 th , 2022
Submission:	Applicants shall submit their call for proposals response until the specified deadline above with reference to 'Responsible AI in Cities' in the subject line to this e-mail addresses: AI4DAfrica@idrc.ca

Project Key Information

Lead Organization:	International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Region/Country:	Global
Maximum proposed value:	Up to 50,000 CAD
Partner:	United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Purpose of the Call for Proposals

The purpose of the Call for Proposals is to solicit proposals from interested non-profit and/or civil society organizations to provide technical research support to undertake a thorough the purpose of this study is *to undertake a thorough assessment related to the opportunities and constraints for local governments to responsibly use, implement and govern AI technologies in cities*. We are looking for research organization to lead the design and analysis of a global survey of cities, desk-based research to capture case studies on the use and governance of AI in cities, and the drafting of a research paper with findings and policy recommendations to address capacity gaps identified in the desk review and from the survey.

This call for proposals is addressing organizations that are specialized in research and in the topics of AI and broader frontier technologies and smart cities. The study is expected to answer the following four research questions:

1. What are the current aspirations, including plans, of cities with respect to using AI to improve livelihoods? What opportunities are the low-hanging fruit for cities to benefit from AI?
2. What are the current strengths and needs of cities to responsibly use AI as a means to improve public services (e.g., urban basic services, infrastructure, housing, human livelihoods, health and education, etc.) and ultimately improve living and working conditions of all?
3. What are the current capacity gaps and governance structures and mechanisms to address AI related challenges and ethical, human rights and inclusion implications?
4. What are the opportunities for standardization, cooperation, and multi-stakeholder governance to ensure responsible use of AI in cities? To what extent are new inter-city partnerships and platforms helpful or necessary given AI cuts across geographical place and governance boundaries?

Who we are

About IDRC

As part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) champions and funds research and innovation within and alongside developing regions to drive global change. We invest in high-quality research in developing countries, share knowledge with researchers and policymakers for greater uptake and use, and mobilize our global alliances to build a more sustainable and inclusive world. IDRC will be responsible for issuing the contract and will follow IDRC's Terms and Conditions.

www.idrc.ca/en/about-idrc

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat, the United Nations agency for human settlements, helps the urban poor by transforming cities into safer, healthier, greener places with better opportunities where everyone can live in dignity. UN-Habitat works with organizations at every level, including all spheres of government, civil society and the private sector to help build, manage, plan and finance sustainable urban development. Our vision is cities without slums that are liveable places for all, which do not pollute the environment or deplete natural resources. At the dawn of a new urban era, with most of humanity now living in cities, UN-Habitat is at the frontline of the battle against fast growing urban poverty and the scourge of climate change. that is caused by poorly planned urbanization and threatens the lives and livelihoods of entire cities and communities. As the United Nations gateway for cities, UN-Habitat is constantly improving its focus and responsiveness to the aspirations of cities and their residents.

www.unhabitat.org

About the project

AI and AI-enabled solutions are opening up new opportunities for cities, where most of the world population resides, where most of the production and consumption activities take place, and also where most of the negative environmental externalities are generated. These developments are dramatically changing cities and our societies at a time when the world is experiencing extreme urbanization and climate change with significant impacts on cities' basic services, infrastructure, housing, human livelihoods, health and education. At the same time, as AI is triggering opportunities and change, there are significant risks and challenges such as potential bias and discrimination, privacy violations and other human rights violations have been associated with AI. Like most new technologies, AI has the potential to exacerbate existing problems, reinforce structural inequalities, and superimpose biases.

To overcome these challenges, AI and AI-enabled solutions need to be lawful, ethical, and robust, and they should be appropriately governed, managed and deployed to ensure the prosperity they bring is shared among all. The right capacities at different levels, policy makers and technical groups, supported by relevant international standards, should also exist to ensure local governments have the full knowledge and skills to govern, regulate, adopt, deploy, and measure AI solutions.

Recognizing the vital role of the United Nations (UN) system in addressing the opportunities and challenges of AI, an interagency working group on AI (IAWG-AI), co-led by UNESCO and ITU, was established in 2020 during the 40th High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) session. The IAWG-AI is working towards facilitating the exchange of information, strengthening internal system-wide capacity, contributing to all relevant AI interagency mechanisms, processes, and strategies, and facilitating interagency cooperation in capacity building activities to support Members States. In 2022, a new workstream on AI for people-centred smart cities, co-chaired by UN-Habitat, ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, was established.

The objective of the workstream is to understand the needs of cities and the capabilities of UN System organizations in relation to AI, and how to leverage AI for people-centred smart cities while promoting ethical guidelines for AI that are human-rights based, strengthening inter-agency cooperation, and implementing key performance indicators and other metrics to ensure that these values are respected.

This project, supported with funding by IDRC, is about realizing the first desired outcome of the workstream which is a global AI need assessment in cities to understand current gaps and the needs of cities, in relation to AI, as well as opportunities for standardization, cooperation and multi-stakeholder governance. The assessment is expected to generate evidence on the needs and capacities of cities related to the use of AI while informing the process to develop technical guidelines on how to use, implement and govern AI in local government contexts.

What we are looking for

The selected research organization will work directly with IDRC and UN-Habitat teams and is expected to collaborate with UN organizations in the IAWG-AI and other stakeholders. The collaboration will be facilitated by UN-Habitat. The organization needs to have demonstrated experience in research in the topics of AI and smart city and should have the capacity to design and administer survey in multiple languages and undertake desk-based research.

The selected organization is expected to undertake the following work:

1. Design and administer global survey of cities to capture the following:
 - Local government's level of AI awareness and understanding of AI implications.
 - Local government's level of awareness and understanding of globally or regionally adopted ethical frameworks of AI.
 - Legal and regulatory frameworks for AI governance at the regional, national or local level, and emerging institutional arrangements and policy instruments to guide adoption of AI in cities.
 - Human, financial and institutional capacities, structures, technological infrastructure, data systems and datasets to facilitate responsible AI adoption and governance.
 - Capacity-building needs (technical, governance, etc.)
 - Local government AI procurement strengths and weaknesses.
 - Current governance structures and mechanisms to address ethical and human rights and inclusion challenges with AI
 - Cooperation for AI with other stakeholders (national, civil society, other local governments, and private sector.)
2. Conduct comprehensive desk-based research to document good practices, lessons learned and case studies on the use and governance of AI in cities. This review is expected to capture:
 - Successful and unsuccessful cases of AI implementation in different socio-economic contexts and geographies. How are local authorities using AI in an innovative way to solve urban challenges?
 - Newer governance models, approaches and tools used to integrate responsible AI solutions into city technology ecosystems and govern them for the benefit of all.
3. Develop policy recommendations to address capacity gaps identified in the desk review and from the survey.

Expected Deliverables and Timeliness

Deliverables	Estimated duration	Comments
1. Comprehensive research plan including methodology, approach, timeline and survey questionnaire.	10 days	Research plan to be approved by IDRC and UN-Habitat.
2. Communication and outreach materials for the survey	3 days	UN-Habitat to assist with contact list and distribution of the survey.
3. Desk review of use of AI in cities focusing on successful and unsuccessful AI implementation cases, risks, standards, and emerging approaches to AI governance including ethical frameworks.	30 days	Researcher is expected to compile a repository of case studies. If required, UN-Habitat will arrange for interviews with cities to gather more information.
4. First draft of the research paper capturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research methodology - Definitions and background information - Findings of the survey - Case studies - Policy recommendations 	20 days	UN-Habitat to share the draft with subject matter experts for feedback. Feedback is to be sought from the UN inter-agency working group on AI
5. Expert group meeting (EGM) to validate findings and gather feedback and additional insights	5 days	UN-Habitat to organize and facilitate the expert group meeting.
6. Final draft of the paper, background documents, data, briefing materials, etc.	10 days	Editing and branding of the paper to be undertaken by UN-Habitat in collaboration with IDRC.
7. Final paper translated to French	5 days	UN-Habitat and IDRC to publish the paper and undertake dissemination and promotion.

Eligibility Criteria

The following eligibility criteria apply

- Independent legal status and capability to receive funds and direct project activities. This can be demonstrated through documentations such as certificate of registration/incorporation.
- Clear organizational profile and management structure. This can be demonstrated by providing details on organization's vision, mission and objectives, management structure and governance, i.e., profiles of board of directors, head of organization and chief of finance.
- Continuous operation over a period of at least 2 years to demonstrate its financial sustainability, capacity and relevance. This can be demonstrated by providing audited

financial statements (balance sheet and income statement) and auditors report for the past two years.

Evaluation Criteria

Experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the organization have the relevant experience and proven track record in implementing activities in the areas of the project?• Has it managed projects of similar technical complexities and financial size in the past?• Is the project linked with the core business of the organization?	25%
Expertise: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the organization have qualified technical staff with the experience and the technical skills required by the project?• Does the organization and proposed team have relevant gender and inclusion experience?	25%
Cost-effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the budget for each component of the activity to be performed cost-effective i.e., the cost should be economical and prudently estimated to avoid any under/over estimation, justifiable/well supported, accurate and complete?	25%
Methodology: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the proposed research methodology sound and does it respond adequately to the research questions, specifications and requirements of the project?	25%

Format and requirement for proposals

Organizations responding to the call for proposals are expected to submit a technical proposal that covers, at a minimum, the following:

1. Organization details including name of the organization, logo and details of the contact person.

Please attach proof of registration or certificate of incorporation, organizational profile and audited financial statements.

2. Organization relevant work experience and proven track record in implementing proposed project activities. Outline a list of similar projects that the organization has implemented in the following areas demonstrating how the experiences in past projects are relevant in the execution of the current proposal.
 - a. Experience of leading research work, undertaking needs assessment and researching artificial intelligence in cities, smart cities, or related concepts
 - b. Experience of facilitating workshops and other stakeholder engagement sessions
 - c. Experience in publishing high-quality, impactful and policy-oriented research products.

Please attach any relevant supporting documents verifying your organizations experience in the required areas, such as project reports, publications, media articles/news, references from your partners, etc.

3. Description of proposed project implementation methodology and relevant approaches including research design, questions and methods, data collection and analytical frameworks, proposed activities and expected outputs and outcomes.

Please attach a project work plan.

4. Details of proposed staff, including experience, education background and areas of expertise, and their different roles in the project.

Please attach CVs of key management staff, technical and non-technical staff that will be involved on the project.

5. Preliminary breakdown of budget for the project activities with justifications

Instruction to Applicants

1. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.
2. Applicants shall submit their proposal by email until the specified deadline with 'Responsible AI in Cities' in the subject line, to AI4DAfrica@idrc.ca.
3. Proposals and accompanying documents submitted to a different email address will not be considered.
4. Any clarification queries and correspondences should be sent by email.
5. Proposals failing to provide the requested information will be disregarded.
6. All costs must be in CAD.
7. The proposal language should be in English.
8. The technical proposal will be evaluated based on whether it responds adequately to the specifications and requirements of the call for proposals. All proposals will be assessed on a comparative basis against the criteria specified in the call for proposals document. Interested organizations must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochure, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc).
9. Only shortlisted applicants will be notified, and their respective project managers asked to participate in a technical session organized to help evaluate the technical performance of the applicant organization.
10. Only successful applicant organizations will be notified.
11. This Call for Proposals does not entail any commitment on the part of IDRC or its partners, either financial or otherwise. IDRC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without incurring any obligation to inform the affected applicant(s) of the grounds.

Terms and Conditions

The contract will be issued by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and will follow their terms and conditions.