

Terms of Reference - Consultancy

Scoping a programme of work on artificial intelligence

1. Background

[The Elders](#) are an independent group of global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights and a sustainable planet. They are supported by a secretariat team based in London.

The Elders' [strategy for 2023 – 2027](#) focuses on three programmes that address existential threats to humanity requiring a collective response - the climate crisis, pandemics, and nuclear weapons – and a fourth programme on conflict (a threat in itself, and a risk factor for other threats). We also have four cross-cutting commitments which are incorporated into our programmes: multilateralism, human rights, gender equality and women in leadership, and intergenerational dialogue.

Recognising the significance of artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on all programme areas within their 2023-2027 strategy, Elders are considering a programme of work on AI, in particular on the international governance.

Elders recognise that AI has the potential to bring enormous benefits to human life, by helping solve some of the world's biggest challenges. However, without effective global governance, supported by meaningful and enforceable regulation, AI poses huge risks. These risks cut across the Elders' strategic priorities: uncontrolled AI will increase the risk of catastrophic events, such as an accidental nuclear launch or a bio-engineered pandemic. AI is already exacerbating other global challenges, including the use of autonomous weapons, wide-ranging human rights violations and global inequality, while contributing to the climate and nature crisis through its high-intensity extractive demand on energy, water, and mineral resources.

Despite these risks, an effective form of global governance which protects human rights, dignity, and privacy seems distant. Decision-making on AI's development sits disproportionately within profit-driven private companies. Global cooperation remains hamstrung by national competition and leaders who prioritise perceived economic advantage over their responsibilities to manage the risks to their own populations and the world. Leaders are not speaking out about the risks nor taking concrete actions.

2. Purpose of the Consultancy

The primary purpose of the consultancy is to explore a potential new programme of work on AI. This will include developing proposals for a programme strategy, an indicative implementation plan outlining activities for the first year, and a prioritised list of possible stakeholders and partners to engage with in implementing the strategy to enable Elders to make well-informed and effective interventions.

3. Deliverables

Provide up to 30 days of consultancy advisory support on production of the deliverables set out below over the period 1 December 2025 – 31 May 2026, working closely with The Elders' Secretariat team.

The focus will be on a proactive, flexible approach, actively scoping opportunities for Elders to develop their approach to AI and respond to emerging priorities by undertaking follow-up and any actions agreed. Key to the success of this work will be translating technical issues into accessible language and linking to The Elders' priorities.

Development of a proposed programme strategy

- Context analysis including change, power dynamics and stakeholder analysis.
- Develop draft proposals for Elders' likely positions.
- Propose an overall programme goal/outcome and identify target audiences.
- Develop a theory of change, change objectives and impact indicators.
- Draft an implementation plan, including possible interventions and activities.
- Provide strategic input and support for a potential convening of experts with Elders and facilitate ad-hoc expert briefings.

Additional ongoing responsibilities

- Relationship building and representation
 - Building on your existing network of contacts lead the strategic expansion of Elders' external relationships on AI to maximise support and potential for Elders to have influence.
 - Identify and manage strategic organisational partnerships to increase reach, impact and achievement of programme outcomes.
- Communications
 - Provide inputs, support and briefings for Elders' speeches, statements, and events as required.
 - Provide, on a proactive and ongoing basis, suggestions for articles and social media content by The Elders to support work on AI.
- Elders' Board Meetings
 - Help with preparing drafts of and/or comment on Board papers as agreed with the Elders' Secretariat team. Attend Board meetings virtually, as required.
- Other deliverables:
 - Provide advice and support on other deliverables as agreed with the Secretariat team.

- Monitor relevant media developments and share relevant articles with the Secretariat team.

4. Reporting, Ways of Working and Invoicing

- The consultant will work closely with the Programmes team and will be assigned a Manager in the team who will manage the relationship and determine priorities etc.
- The consultant is expected to participate in fortnightly meetings as agreed with their Manager. The consultant is otherwise to be available to provide advice by phone, Teams or email.
- Attending meetings on behalf of The Elders Secretariat team and undertaking desk-based research may also be required.
- The consultant will invoice The Elders Secretariat team on a monthly basis, listing the activities carried out and the number of hours/days used for each.
- Subject to satisfactory performance and agreement between both parties there is potential to renew this contract.

5. How to apply

Please send a short covering letter (maximum 1 page) and CV (maximum 2 pages) via email to mary.rowlatt@theelders.org and include:

- "AI Consultancy" in the subject line.
- Your day rate in GBP (including VAT).
- Your availability to begin the assignment.
- The cover letter should cover:
 - Why you are qualified for the role.
 - How your experience relates to the Elders' values and priorities.
 - Examples of impact you have had.

The deadline for applications is Monday 1 December 2025 and interviews will follow shortly afterwards.