AI Insights
for Policymakers

Program Overview & FAQ

CIFAR   Mila

OVERVIEW

The AI information space is noisy, often highly technical and full of competing claims and vested interests. Finding reliable, independent and, above all, relevant insights is challenging. This rings especially true for policymakers who are grappling with how best to approach, regulate or leverage AI for the public interest despite having limited access to technical AI expertise and no clear mechanism to engage with scientific experts.

The AI Insights for Policymakers Program addresses this gap by providing a platform for policymakers and scientists to have timely and meaningful interactions on key issues. Ultimately, we seek to bolster evidence-based policies across Canada by enabling policymakers to tap into the breadth and depth of the Canadian AI ecosystem's knowledge.

WHO LEADS THIS PROGRAM?

This initiative is led by a secretariat based out of Mila and CIFAR, with guidance from an Advisory Committee. Two co-chairs, Blake Richards and Nidhi Hegde, provide strategic leadership to the Expert Group, a diverse group of ten researchers from across Canada with wide-ranging expertise in the technical and sociotechnical aspects of AI.

WHAT SERVICES DO YOU OFFER?

Two services are currently available:

OFFICE HOURS

- Free and non-partisan/unbiased

- Offered either in-person or virtual, every four months in cities across Canada:

    - November 27, 2024 – virtual
    - January 10, 2025 – Montreal, Quebec
    - March 19, 2025 – virtual

- Policymakers have a 45–60-minute time slot to sit down with the expert group made up of Canadian AI scientists to discuss their challenges relating to AI and policy, helping them build their thinking around complex issues.

- Within one week after the office hours session, the secretariat will provide you with a brief summary of the discussion and resources for further understanding.

Sign up

POLICY FEASIBILITY TESTING

- This service is a more in-depth consultation than office hours, allowing the Expert Group to work with you directly to review the feasibility of your AI policies through a technical lens.

- If you are interested in bringing a draft policy proposal to the expert group, contact us by email.

AIPP@mila.quebec

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS I CAN GET INVOLVED?

Share your insights into policymakers' use of AI by taking our Survey: "Identifying Gaps in Policymaker Needs: AI Developments and Risks."

This survey of Canadian policymakers is intended to benchmark and track their perspectives on AI risks and capabilities, to identify where their views align or differ and to identify gaps and needs where policymakers can benefit from AI expertise. Results will be shared publicly and updated regularly.

Take the survey

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?

To participate in the program's offerings, including office hours and survey, you must be working as a Canadian-based policymaker at any level of government — federal, provincial, or municipal — or affiliated with a policy organization.

If you have any additional questions, please contact us at

AIPP@mila.quebec

HOW ADVANCED DOES MY UNDERSTANDING OF AI HAVE TO BE? HOW SPECIFIC SHOULD MY QUESTION BE FOR OFFICE HOURS?

We are open to organizations at different stages in their thinking and development of AI, from preliminary to advanced. Your question should be as specific as possible, so that we are better able to provide answers. We are happy to work with you before any office hours to sharpen your question. Multiple members of your team may attend the office hours and have the chance to clarify your question before discussion with the Expert Group.

Examples of questions that could be brought to the Expert Group include the following:

- What would be a good technical measure to categorize AI systems in my specific policy area?

- If my government organization wanted to publish curated datasets, how could they be watermarked?

WILL OUR DISCUSSION BE CONFIDENTIAL?

All questions and conversations raised through office hours and emails will be kept confidential, shared only with the Expert Group and the secretariat. If we see value in sharing high-level insights into common areas of concern across different organizations, we will expressly ask permission.