

Key intervention: AI for social impact

Thematic Area of the Coalition	<p><i>Expanding access to and capabilities for productive and freely chosen employment and sustainable enterprises</i></p> <p>This area of work centres on the promotion of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, decent work and productivity growth. The aim of partners contributing to this thematic area is to empower businesses, particularly SMEs, and workers with the skills, technologies and resources necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world, while ensuring fairness, equity and access to opportunities, particularly for youth and women and to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG targets 8.5 and 8.6. Key actions include promoting access to lifelong learning and skills development, harnessing the power of digitalization and AI for the common good and sustainable development, and developing formalization strategies along with other active labour market policies.</p>
--------------------------------	---

1. Background and context

The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform societies, particularly the world of work. Realizing the full potential of AI technologies requires navigating both significant opportunities – for job creation, innovation and productivity gains – and challenges in terms of job quality, working conditions and employment relations. For example, algorithmic management is increasingly being used to organize, assign, monitor, supervise and evaluate work, which can enhance efficiency and productivity but also creates risks, such as work intensification, bias and reductions in workers’ agency and privacy.

Addressing the “AI divide”, both across and within countries, due to uneven access to the necessary infrastructure, finance and skills risks is also essential to ensure that the development and deployment of AI contributes to decent work and social justice, rather than exacerbating inequalities and undermining fundamental rights.

Linked to this intervention, the ILO Observatory on AI and Work in the Digital Economy will be a key global platform for knowledge-sharing, learning, and engaging with constituents and other partners. Given the array of existing and emerging observatories and platforms on AI, a key issue is to create greater synergies and scale through partnerships.

Collaboration within the Global Coalition for Social Justice will leverage expertise and synergies of its partners at the global, regional and country levels. The efforts under this intervention will be aligned with steps taken on the implementation of the Global Digital Compact and the follow-up to the G20 commitment under the recently concluded Brazilian Presidency to establish guidelines for the safe, secure and trustworthy use of AI in the world of work, as well as the G7 Leaders’ Declaration under Italy’s presidency promoting inclusive, human-centred, digital transformation that underpins economic growth and sustainable development, which was followed by the adoption by the Ministers of Labour of a “G7 Action Plan for a human-centred development and use of safe, secure and trustworthy AI in the World of Work”, where relevant.

2. Collective ambition and rationale

This key intervention promotes socially just AI by addressing inclusion and access to technologies that benefit all segments of society, driving positive social change, while supporting AI use cases to tackle pressing social justice issues.

The overarching objective of this intervention is to support and work with governments and employer and worker organizations, along with multilateral organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to promote a human-centred approach to AI through stronger partnerships, enhanced knowledge and capacities, and implementation of relevant actions. This would underpin policy and regulatory responses in countries and globally to promote decent work opportunities and address challenges in line with international labour standards, empirical evidence and social dialogue.

There are a growing number of actors, including international organizations, thinktanks and academia, that focus on the impact of AI on the economy and society but there is, overall, insufficient focus on social justice dimensions.

For this reason, there is an important opportunity to promote greater emphasis on issues related to the social dimension of sustainable development, while enhancing coherence and coordination among stakeholders, including those engaged on AI policy/regulatory monitoring and analysis.

The ambition is to make social justice dimensions central to the global discourse on AI, which goes beyond a singular focus on potential job impacts to also addressing implications for the quality of jobs, working conditions, employment relations, workplace inclusion (including both gender equality and jobs for youth) and the use of AI in the workplace through algorithmic management. A strategic focus on the digital divide is critical from both a worker and employer perspective.

The proposed actions support progress towards meeting the SDGs, in particular, SDG 8, 10 and 17. Relevant SDG indicators include 8.2, 8.5, 8.8, 10.3, 17.6 and 17.7.

3. Actions and expected results

The key outcomes and deliverables from this intervention are:

- **Stronger partnerships, awareness and coherence on a human-centred approach to AI**
 - Network of national observatories to enhance peer learning and their focus on world-of work dimensions in the analysis and tracking of AI impact and policy/regulatory interventions
 - Collaboration between international organizations, think tanks and academia working on AI to promote decent work and social justice
- **Better evidence on AI policy and regulatory responses**
 - Collection and sharing of (1) evidence on the impact of AI on jobs and productivity and (2) good practices in the development and implementation of policies and regulations to address challenges and promote decent work opportunities through AI
 - Social dialogue and capacity-building to raise awareness and knowledge on such issues as the responsible use of AI in the workplace and the deployment of AI to improve effectiveness and inclusivity of public services

- **Enhanced approaches to tackle the digital divide in the world of work**
 - Tools and capacity-building to promote interventions, such as digital and AI skills development that support access to decent jobs, especially for women, youth and vulnerable groups
 - Commitments to address the digital divide and promote opportunities in low- and middle-income countries through skills development, labour market policies, entrepreneurship development and other interventions

4. Partners' contributions

Partners can contribute by:

- Supporting national and global networks of observatories/platforms to increase their capacities and focus on/advocacy for addressing world-of-work dimensions in the development and deployment of AI
- Collecting information and evaluating policy and regulatory responses to AI in the context of their implications for the world of work and supporting associated research
- Identifying good practices in the utilization of AI tools to improve the effectiveness and inclusion of public services in such areas as employment services and job matching, labour inspection, social security systems, and the delivery of training and business development services (for MSMEs)
- Supporting projects and interventions that address the digital divide, including through skills development
- Supporting national and international skills institutions to scale up basic digital skills programmes for all workers, enterprises and unemployed persons and promote seamless sharing of digital skills tools and teaching and learning materials
- Sharing resources, expertise and knowledge to assist in efforts to build capacities through targeted training activities
- Participating in and supporting social dialogue