

# IOD PARC AI Policy

Supporting Fair, Ethical, Transparent, and Safe Use

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## Introduction

Rapidly evolving AI technology carries clear potential for improving the efficiency and productivity of IOD PARC's work. AI tools and systems have multiple potential applications to our diverse service delivery for clients. There is also considerable scope for using the technology to support our internal processes, including in the areas of finance, project management, and business development. At the same time, AI technologies have disruptive potential across multiple dimensions of the organisation and its business processes. As a company, we also have a responsibility to ensure that our use of AI aligns with our broader values, as well as those of our clients and stakeholders. It is also important that our uptake of AI tools and systems is informed by a candid assessment of the various risks that they can present. A clear, company-wide approach to using AI tools and systems is key to balancing the risks and opportunities of the technology.

This document sets out a principle-based policy to serve as the foundation for a supportive framework to guide the use of AI tools and systems by IOD PARC staff and associates. Its purpose is to help staff and associates ensure that their application of AI tools and systems in both client-facing and internal work is **fair, transparent, ethical, and safe**. To do so, it establishes a clear set of behavioural standards and norms linked to each of these principles. These are aligned with existing IOD PARC policies on safeguarding, ethics, environment, and information management. The policy also identifies a series of practical steps that IOD PARC will take in order to ensure that staff have sufficient support to adhere to these behavioural standards and norms when using AI tools and systems.

The development of the policy was informed by the experience of staff who have begun using AI tools and systems for both consulting and internal work, as well as a review of relevant AI regulatory and professional frameworks. Given the rapidly evolving nature of AI technology and the legal regulations and professional standards that seek to govern or shape its use, this policy is a living document that will be updated periodically to reflect wider developments in the field.

The development of this policy is the first step in a broader process that will shape IOD PARC's uptake of AI tools and systems. Subsequent steps will include the development of a directive and time-bound AI Strategy for supporting uptake, and a living set of practical guidance relating to specific AI tools and systems, which will include frameworks for decision making on AI use at both the corporate and project level.

# Fair

## Aim and scope

The aim of this principle is to ensure that our uptake of AI tools and systems is as inclusive as possible, and that any risks to the wellbeing our staff relating to AI use are understood and mitigated. Given the focus on staff, the scope of this principle is therefore primarily internal. This contrasts with the other three principles covered in this policy, which have a strong focus on safeguarding the interests of our clients and their stakeholders, and protecting the integrity and quality of the services that we offer.

## Rationale

AI tools and systems carry a dual potential for improving and disrupting our way of doing business. As a company, it is highly likely that we will continue to experience increased demand for AI skills and competencies, and for the use of AI tools and systems in the services that we offer.

The impact of this increased demand will be felt differently by individuals within our staff and associate group. Some individuals may have an existing interest in or skill set relevant to the use of AI tools and systems, making them well positioned to respond quickly to increasing demand. Others will have different interests and skills and may be less comfortable with using the new technology. The impact of the uptake of the technology across the company or within individual projects will also be felt differently by individual staff and associates. For example, some of the processes that could be automated with AI tools and systems are likely to include those currently performed manually by more junior staff in the organisation. Equally, more senior staff who may be less familiar or comfortable with AI tools and systems might struggle to integrate AI tools and systems into the projects that they lead, and may therefore miss out on potential efficiency or quality gains.

The differentiated impact of AI on the day-to-day work of staff and associates has implications for career development, remuneration, and performance assessment which need to be understood and carefully managed. While it is unrealistic to expect all staff to develop high levels of expertise in the application of AI tools and systems, it is important that all staff are provided with opportunities for learning about them and becoming familiar with their use. As a company, we also have a responsibility to ensure that as we begin using AI tools and systems, staff at all levels continue enjoy opportunities for meaningful and rewarding participation in the services that we offer.

In short, we have a responsibility to ensure that our use of the AI tools and systems is **fair** to our staff and associates. This means actively supporting staff and associates to understand and use AI tools and technology, while taking deliberate steps to assess and mitigate its disruptive potential on their professional wellbeing.

## Behavioural commitments

The individual and collective behavioural norms for upholding this principle are as follows:

### 1. Supporting equal access

IOD PARC will ensure that all staff have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the potential uses of AI tools and systems in our services, as well as skills in their application. This does not mean that all staff will be expected to become experts in the use of AI tools and systems. Instead, we will focus on helping all staff develop a basic understanding, while also supporting those with a specific interest or need to develop more advanced skills and

competencies using our existing L&D processes. The details of IOD PARC's approach to implementing this behavioural commitment will be set out in the AI Strategy.

## 2. Balancing opportunities and risks

IOD PARC will ensure that decisions about the use of AI tools and systems, whether at the company-wide or project level, will be informed by an honest assessment of any potential negative implications that their use might have on staff. This will involve assessing and mitigating risks to the inclusivity our processes, including threats to meaningful and rewarding participation in work for staff at different levels of the organisation. Where risks are identified, we will ensure that these are minimised or mitigated in consultation with the affected individuals. We will not use AI tools and systems in a manner that poses unacceptable risks to the professional wellbeing of our staff. Implementing this behavioural commitment will require developing straightforward guidance for decision making on AI tool and system uptake.

# Transparent

## Aim and scope

The aim of this principle is to ensure that we clearly and openly communicate how and why we use AI tools and systems in our services both to our clients and their stakeholders, as well as to each other. The behavioural commitments outlined below apply equally to both staff and associates.

## Rationale

Transparency in our use of AI tools and systems is a crucial principle to uphold for several reasons. Most importantly, principle of transparency is a fundamental component of many of the professional frameworks that seek to shape the practice of evaluation and research. This includes the United Nations Evaluation Group's 2016 Norms and Standards for Evaluation, which identify transparency as an "essential element of evaluation that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability". The OECD DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation also highlight the importance of transparency in evaluation processes.

Transparency is key to maintaining the trusting relationships that we aim to develop among ourselves, and with our clients and their stakeholders. The adoption of AI tools and systems will be accompanied by expectations among commissioners relating to efficiency gains in evaluation processes. This is likely to lead to discussions between clients and service providers about how the resources from efficiency gains are best utilised. A transparent approach to this will help ensure that our relationships with our clients are based on trust.

The transparent use of AI tools and systems is also crucial for upholding the quality and integrity of the services that we deliver. AI tools and systems should not be used to cut corners in ways that undermine the quality of our work. Transparency of method, including clear communication around when and how AI tools and systems are used, is critical for ensuring that the results of our work are explainable, defensible, and therefore credible.

Lastly, transparency is important for maintaining a positive organisational culture. Clear and open internal communication about AI uptake can help to reinforce trust among staff and associates, and reduce the scope for misunderstanding, resentment, or suspicion.

## Behavioural Commitments

### 1. Clear and open communication

IOD PARC's staff and associates will aim to consistently and honestly explain to clients and their stakeholders when, how and why we use AI tools and systems in our service delivery. This communication will be tailored to the needs of the different groups of stakeholders that we engage with while providing our services. Internally, staff will also consistently and openly explain to each other when and how they use AI tools and systems for their work.

Implementing this principle will require the development of guidance for communicating how and why we use AI tools at systems at different stages of the project cycle, including in technical proposals, data collection tools, and analysis and reporting processes.

### 2. Feedback mechanisms

We will develop and maintain a communication mechanism for staff, associates, or clients to ask questions or raise concerns about our use of AI tools and systems. This will require the

identification of focal points at the company and project level who be available to respond to general and specific questions or feedback about our use of AI.

# Ethical

## Aim and scope

The aim of this principle is to ensure that our approach to using AI tools and systems to support our service delivery aligns with our wider values, our ethical code of conduct, and other internal and external policies or frameworks relating to research and evaluation ethics. The scope of this principle is therefore both internal and external. Internally, we will aim to ensure that our use of AI tools and systems is coherent with our values and existing policy framework. Externally, we will aim to use AI tools and systems in a way that upholds the integrity of our services and the interests of our clients and the stakeholders that they work to support.

## Rationale

The ethical use of AI technology is an emerging and multidimensional topic. In IOD PARC's field of work, there have been several efforts to define ethical standards for AI use, which have been used to inform this policy principle. These include the 2019 OECD Council on Artificial Intelligence recommendations, the UN Chief Executive Board's 'Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the United Nations System', and the 'Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence' adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 2021.

IOD PARC has a clearly defined ethical code of conduct which outlines behavioural standards that staff and associates must adhere to in the course of their work. These standards apply to all of the tools, methods, and processes that we engage with when delivering our services. This code of conduct applies equally to our use of AI tools and systems. Additionally, IOD PARC's first company value is acting with integrity, by doing the things the right way, for the right reasons. This has important implications for our use of AI tools and systems. In our context, we can best ensure that our uptake of AI is aligned with our code of conduct and company values by ensuring ethical use. This means using the technology in a way that:

- Upholds our people-focused organisational culture
- Is respectful of the rights of our staff, associates, clients, and their stakeholders
- Does not undermine the quality or integrity of our service delivery
- Aligns with our policies on safeguarding, the environment, gender and social inclusion

## Behavioural Commitments

### 1. People-centred oversight

IOD PARC aims to put people at the centre of its business model and working culture. We recognise in staff their intrinsic value as people, the knowledge and skills that they bring to the organisation, and their role as employee-owners. We will ensure that our adoption of AI tools and systems does not undermine this fundamental characteristic of our organisation's culture. We will adopt AI tools and systems where these support the productivity of our service delivery but will always prioritise the role of our people in oversight and decision making. This will help to uphold our people-focused organisational culture and will also help to mitigate the various forms of bias that can affect AI tools with generative capacities. For our staff to exercise oversight and decision-making authority effectively, they will need clear guidance on the various capacities and potential biases of different AI tools and systems, as well as methods for ensuring that our use of these tools aligns with our ethical code of conduct and our policy on gender and social inclusion.

## 2. Purposeful and proportionate use

IOD PARC will aim to use AI tools in a purposeful and proportionate manner, where there is a clear rationale for adoption aligned to wider organisational values. This could include adoption of AI tools which enhance staff productivity or the quality of service delivery. Such an approach requires careful and transparent decision-making around the uptake of AI tools and systems, whether at the company or project level, which takes into account ethical considerations, environmental impact, safety and transparency risks. This will require clear guidance and usage criteria for staff for decision making around the adoption of AI tools and systems on a case-by-case basis.

## 3. A rights-based approach

IOD PARC will use AI tools and systems in a manner that is supportive of the rights of our staff, associates, clients and their stakeholders. Given IOD PARC's field of work, ensuring a rights-based approach to AI use is particularly important for our engagement with external stakeholders during the course of our service delivery. Relevant rights that may be impacted by AI use include the right to privacy, and the right to free and informed consent. External stakeholders also have a right to expect that their perceptions, experiences, expertise, and other contributions to evaluation processes are treated with due value and respect. Ensuring that our use of AI tools and systems upholds these rights will require the development of clear and accessible guidance relating to the use of AI tools and systems at different stages of the evaluation process.

# Safe

## Aim and scope

The aim of this principle is a safety-first approach to our use of AI tools and systems. Above all, this means ensuring that information relating to or provided by our staff, clients, and their stakeholders is kept secure, and confidential and anonymous where necessary.

## Rationale

A safety-first approach to AI use is paramount to maintaining our reputation as a trusted provider of monitoring and evaluation and organisational development services. There are also several legal regulations which prescribe how we must handle and store data, and which are addressed by our Information Management Policy. It is therefore vital that our use of AI tools and systems fully complies with the requirements set out in our Information Management Policy, as well as with any additional information management agreements that we have with clients in relation to specific projects.

Ensuring a safety-first approach can be challenging when using AI tools and systems. This is because it is not always easy to understand what happens to the data that is processed by these tools and systems. It is therefore essential that staff and associates have clear guidance about relating to how different AI tools and systems process and handle information, as well as details about how they can be safely used.

## Behavioural Commitments

### 1. Safety First

IOD PARC will prioritise information safety in its use of AI tools and systems, which will be used in accordance with our existing Information Management Policy and any other data management agreements we have with specific clients or other stakeholders. All staff and associates will be expected to know how to use AI tools and systems in a safe manner. This will require the development of specific framework to the inform decision making around the use of specific AI tools and systems, as well as refresher trainings on IOD PARC's information management policy and the implications of this for AI use.

### 2. Ensuring Explainability

When we use AI tools and systems, we will make sure that we can clearly explain to all stakeholders how we keep their information safe. This applies equally to the use of AI tools and systems for internal and external processes. This will require the development of clear guidance to inform communications regarding the safety dimensions of our use of AI technology.