

Q&A: AI Moonshot

1. What is AI Moonshot ?

AI Moonshot is a proposed framework for global and national AI governance that draws upon the lessons learned in the global movement to close the digital divide. It is emerging from the Global South. Not yet proven in the real world, it is aspirational. It is designed to be operationalized in interaction with the G21, (G20 plus the 55 nations of The African Union incorporated as one member in 2023) where several developing nations – Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa – have been (or will be) hosts of the world's dominant nations in succession from 2021 to 2025.

2. What does the term AI Governance refer to?

AI governance refers to government policies that comprise two aspects:

- the reduction of AI's risk and
- the optimization of AI's benefits

3. Isn't AI already regulated?

No, Nations with AI strategies are struggling to remake their strategies, policies and laws in light of the new era of AI, represented by Chat GPT and other examples of generative AI. Furthermore, no approach to AI regulation is solid unless it is global in nature. National regulation is needed but is not sufficient because harmful AIs can slip across borders or be directed by malicious actors across borders to do harm. While there were numerous efforts to regulate AI from 2022 to 2024, they primarily constituted initial steps towards AI governance.

Various initiatives aimed to lay the groundwork for future AI regulation but did not constitute legal regulations, and none keep pace with rapid innovations in AI research. Meaningful AI hopes to integrate the best of these prior efforts and tie them to a macroeconomic model specific to the Global South, where the potential for global growth is greatest.

4. What do you mean by the term "meaningful"?

A meaningful system is one that is aligned with context – e.g. that creates a balance between the center and periphery of a system. Such a system does not concentrate wealth in the top tier of a nation. It does not accelerate climate change, or cause species extinction. It does not harm public health. Over the past 25 years, Thailand and Indonesia have adopted "meaningful broadband" as a government policy, where "meaningful" technologies refer to three qualities: usability, affordability, and empowerment. MAI operationalizes these three terms using data to create context-relevant metrics that determine whether a technology is meaningful or not.

5. How does AI Moonshot build upon lessons learned in the 25-year global movement to close the digital divide?

The movement to close the digital divide has demonstrated that the five largest developing nations have the scale needed to close the divide on a financially sustainable basis.

6. Who will AI Moonshot serve?

AI Moonshot is intended to serve the Global South, specifically focusing on the middle band of five large nations of the G21 – India, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico. Additionally, other pivotal best-practice nations may be included for comparison and benchmarking, such as Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and Estonia. The focus is on uplifting the lower-middle class within these countries, thereby creating a more equitable global economy.

7. Why is it important to link China as well as the USA in an AI Moonshot governance model?

There are three fundamental reasons for this linkage. First, MAI aims to strike a middle ground between China's over-regulated approach and the USA's under-regulated approach to AI governance. Second, both the USA and China are considered leaders in talent and innovation in designing and testing frontier models of AI. By bringing together talent from both countries, AI Moonshot hopes to leverage their strengths for the Global South. Third, from an economic perspective, the digital economies of both nations are complementary rather than competitive. Despite political tensions, MAI seeks to operationalize this complementarity for mutual benefit.

8. What will induce China to be involved in AI Moonshot?

China's involvement in AI Moonshot can be incentivized by two main factors: talent and financial resources. Previous attempts by Western networks such as OECD and the AI Safety Summit have failed to effectively engage China in global AI governance models. However, given China's significant talent pool and financial resources, it cannot be excluded from any successful global AI governance initiative. The Digital Divide Institute has extensively engaged with China over the years, leveraging partnerships with prestigious institutions like Harvard and Peking University. By tapping into Chinese expertise and resources, MAI aims to overcome the challenges of the AI arms race and encourage meaningful participation from China. Developing nations owe more than \$1 trillion to China as a payback from development assistance. This funding could be a factor in negotiations that include China's participation.

9. Doesn't the developing world have its own AI policies?

While the developing world, India in particular, has its own AI policies and models, they often lack the resources, data, scale and expertise to match the advanced AI models produced in the USA or China. AI Moonshot seeks to address this disparity by aggregating talent and innovation from developing as well as advanced countries. The AI Moonshot secretariat, based in Mexico, is actively reaching out to significant AI research labs worldwide to engage them in AI Moonshot during its formulation stage. By fostering collaboration between diverse AI ecosystems, AI Moonshot aims to create a comprehensive framework that will evolve over time to meet the needs of the Global South.

10. Why is AI MOONSHOT urgent?

AI MOONSHOT is urgent for two primary reasons. Firstly, the imminent arrival of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is expected sooner than previously anticipated, necessitating swift regulatory action to ensure responsible AI development. Secondly, AI's complexity, combined with geopolitical and economic challenges, requires urgent action to balance harm reduction and maximize AI's benefits. By addressing issues such as wealth inequality and climate change, AI MOONSHOT aims to harness the transformative potential of AI for global good.

11. What is the platform for AI Moonshot?

The platform for AI MOONSHOT is the G21. These nations, which represent 94% of GDP, provide a suitable platform for AI MOONSHOT. The key date is 2025, with South Africa serving as the host in 2025. It is crucial to activate a global AI model by late 2025 to effectively address the challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

12. What are the key dates for AI MOONSHOT implementation?

Key dates for AI MOONSHOT implementation are tied to seminars scheduled in each of the AI MOONSHOT test-market nations, as well as scheduled meetings of the Digital Economy Track of 2020 host nations. More specific information will be provided on the AI MOONSHOT website soon.

13. Is AI MOONSHOT top-down or bottom-up?

AI MOONSHOT adopts a top-down and bottom-up strategy. It requires pressure from outside and networking from inside the G21 and within each nation to succeed. For example, in Indonesia, AI MOONSHOT will facilitate best practice exchange among the nation's kabupatens (equivalent to "counties" in the USA) to enable knowledge-sharing and innovation at multiple levels of governance.

14. Is there a historical precedent to the challenge of regulating AI?

Yes, the challenge of regulating AI can be compared to previous efforts such as the 1944 Bretton Woods conference and the consumer movement to regulate the internet in the 1980s. AI MOONSHOT draws upon these historical examples to design a framework for AI governance that addresses contemporary challenges and opportunities.

15. What binds the five test market nations together?

These factors:

- An intermediate (unbiased) position between China and the USA.

- Comparable internal digital divides, highlighting shared challenges and opportunities.
- Sufficient economies of scale to make AI ecosystems financially accessible to lower-middle- class populations
- National policies favorable to public-private partnerships which incorporate international as well as domestic enterprises.
- Stable democratic governance.

16. What is the financial model of AI MOONSHOT?

AI MOONSHOT aims to collaborate with the International Finance Corporation (a division of The World Bank) and the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank in China with the aim of reducing wealth inequality and helping establish a sustainable global middle class in large developing nations. By focusing on smart infrastructure and 5G spectrum combined with satellite communications, AI MOONSHOT seeks to empower individuals and businesses in each nation's lower-middle class, to harness AI for economic growth. In light of the recent plan of Mr. Sam Altman of Open AI for \$5- \$7 trillion enhancement of global AI infrastructure regarding semiconductors and data centers, AI MOONSHOT will integrate that Open AI plan into an AI MOONSHOT version that incorporates the Global South.