



ITUPP
DOHA2026

Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26)
9-27 November 2026 - Doha, Qatar

PLENARY MEETING

Document 74-E
12 October 2026
Original: English

Report by the Secretary-General

ITU AI FOR GOOD: STRATEGIC REVIEW

Summary

This document responds to Council's request for an assessment of the financial and operational outlook for AI for Good and related externally funded initiatives, as well as recommendations for the platform's future capability and long-term sustainability.

ITU commissioned this review to inform deliberations at PP-26.

Action required

The Plenipotentiary is invited to **consider** this report.

Financial implications

Within the allocated budget.

References

*Resolution [214 \(Bucharest, 2022\)](#) of the Plenipotentiary Conference;
Council Resolution [1439 \(C26\)](#)*

ITU AI for Good: Strategic Review

Executive Presentation for
Member States at PP-26

OCTOBER 2026

Serving those who
serve the world



AI for Good



Strategic review of AI for Good and priorities for the upcoming 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference

Member States requested an assessment of AI for Good's financial and operational outlook and recommendations for its long-term sustainability. ITU commissioned this review to inform deliberations at PP-26. **This review focuses specifically on AI for Good and should not be read as an assessment of ITU's broader AI activities.**

The review is informed by 30+ interviews, benchmarking of 12 peer platforms, ITU financial data, and direct observation of the 2026 Summit, within the mandate set by Resolution 214.

In less than a decade, **AI for Good has grown from 500 to 12,000 Summit participants, established a year-round community of 60,000+ members across 177 countries,** catalysed 1000+ practical AI use cases and technical reports, and supported 10+ UN-wide AI initiatives.

Its UN mandate, institutional legitimacy, neutrality and sustained focus on translating AI into practical development impact distinguish AI for Good from the growing landscape of commercial and government-led AI platforms and events.

Demand for AI for Good has never been stronger, with 2027 marking its tenth anniversary and presenting a unique opportunity to build momentum alongside the Geneva AI Summit hosted by Switzerland.

However, its business and operating model has not kept pace with the platform's growth, leaving AI for Good with limited working capital and reserves and increasing operational complexity for the AI for Good team.

A clear definition of AI for Good's intended impact and a dedicated Trust Fund to retain surpluses, provide working capital and receive voluntary contributions are essential for its longer-term sustainability

In addition, **reforms to simplify approvals, clarify roles and outsource operational tasks could remove the main operating bottlenecks** and improve long-term sustainability.

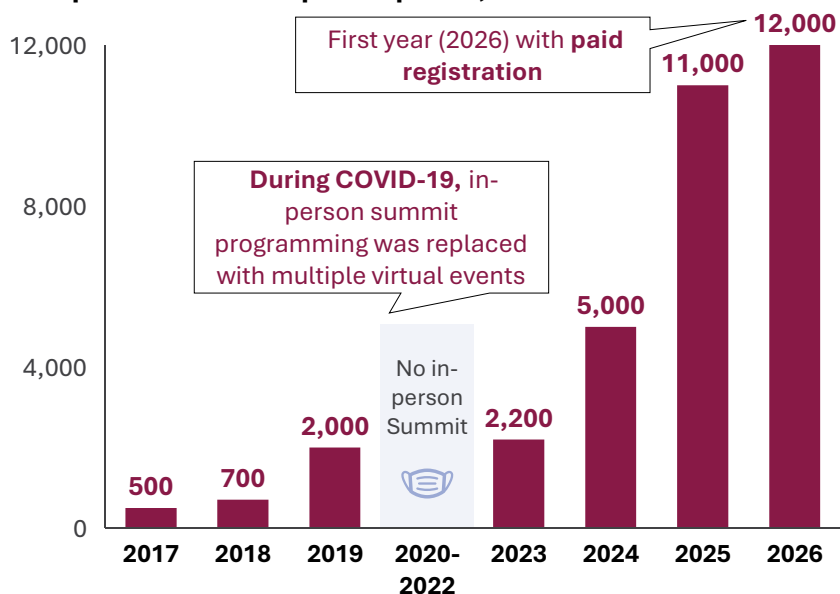


In less than a decade, AI for Good has become a leading AI platform and a major strategic asset for ITU

From a one-off event to a global Summit:
participation grew from 500 in 2017 to 12,000...

...and from a Summit to a leading AI platform:
year-round programming and a global community.

In-person Summit participants, 2017-2026¹



60,000+ Members of the AI4G Neural Network, the largest AI community in the UN system¹

10,000+ Requests to speak, pitch or partner since the end of the 2025 Summit, up from 300 in 2021²

177 Countries represented in the community¹

1000+ AI use cases and technical reports³

150+ Accredited media on site, international coverage and strong social reach¹

50+ United Nations organisations³

10+ UN-wide AI initiatives, coalitions and hubs^{i, 3, 4}



AI for Good is a unique UN-convened platform bringing the global AI ecosystem together around practical impact as AI rapidly evolves.

VALUE PROPOSITION

AI for Good's value proposition is based on 3 S:



*AI for Good has the **broadest scope of activities among peers.**ⁱ This is a **strength**, as it attracts all types of stakeholders, but also a **liability**, as the team is spread out across many responsibilities*

COMPETITIVE EDGE

*While other AI platforms have emerged in the last few years (e.g., WEF, AI Summit), AI for Good remains **unique** thanks to:*



Unique platform to connect with **UN system on AI**



Perceived **neutrality** and trust-worthiness vs. peers



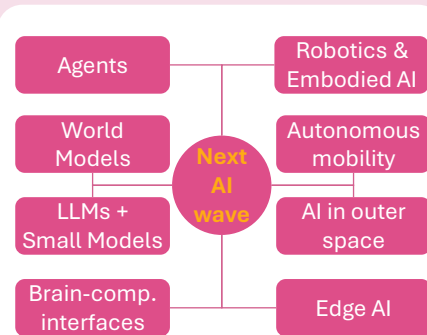
Greater openness and **accessibility** vs. peers



Strong **brand recognition** within AI ecosystem

FAVOURABLE TRENDS

***Demand** from Member States for additional events and activities **already exceeds the team's capacity**. Furthermore, the **next AI wave** is likely to accelerate demand for AI for Good's activities*



Telecommunications will be a critical enabler of this AI wave



AI for Good has identified several areas of focus to strengthen its impact and long-term sustainability

AREAS OF FOCUS

I VISION & VALUE PROPOSITION



Clarify impact and theory of change: Define what success looks like ahead of the Summit and then measure outcomes intentionally.



Manage the portfolio of initiatives: Focus activities and resources where AI for Good can deliver the greatest value and impact.

II BUSINESS MODEL



Improve working capital: Build sufficient liquidity to support reliable annual delivery.



Strengthen funding predictability: Build a more stable funding base, including longer-term commitments.



Reform current cost-recovery rules: Remove constraints that limit revenue growth and surplus generation

III OPERATING MODEL



Accelerate annual procurement: Enable earlier and more efficient procurement for recurring delivery needs.



Streamline sponsor approvals: Make routine sponsor processes faster and more flexible while maintaining safeguards, across a sponsor base that grew 5.7x in 4 years³



Increase staffing flexibility: Strengthen surge capacity to respond to peak delivery requirements.

The following slides set out **potential solutions** to these areas of focus, **supporting stronger delivery and long-term sustainability**

In its next phase, AI for Good should further focus activities on measurable outcomes and strengthen collaboration across ITU and the UN



AGREE SHARED OUTCOMES

Adopt one outcome framework for AI for Good

Agree 3–5 measurable outcome goals with annual targets and named owners, engaging key stakeholders



TRACK PROGRESS AND DELIVERY

Set one delivery plan with owners, milestones and an outcome dashboard.

Review **monthly**, update ITU leadership **quarterly** and report to stakeholders **annually**.



ALIGN PARTNERS AND INITIATIVES

Build on **ITU and UN expertise** to deliver complementary offerings, avoiding duplication.

Review the portfolio of initiatives to scale, combine, adapt or close; assign owners and measurable milestones to retained initiatives



INTENTIONALLY DISPLAY SOLUTIONS

Prioritise **demonstrations of real solutions** solving global challenges, per stakeholder feedback

Apply shared **outcome and quality criteria** to themes, speakers and formats, including sponsor and Member State requests.

AI for Good already raises two thirds of its budget externally, with ITU's contribution translating into both direct value and wider intangible benefits

Financial Snapshot: AI for Good Annual Financial Budget, FY 2026...

CHF 8.5–8.8 M

AI for Good's total **FY26 budget**¹

~67%

FY26 budget comes from **extrabudgetary revenue**; the remainder mainly from ITU contributions^{v,1}

4.6x

Growth in sponsorship revenue from 2022 to 2026⁶

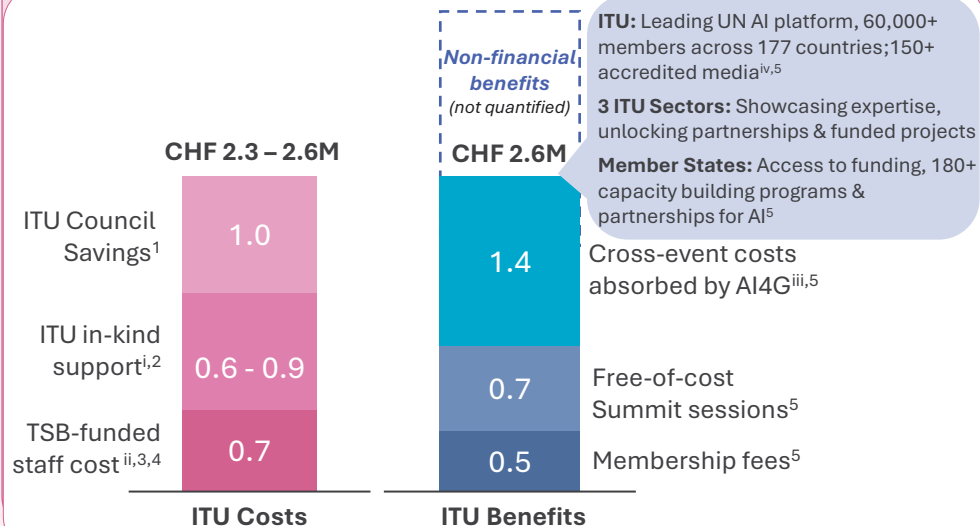
<1 year

Almost **none of AI for Good funding is committed beyond one year**⁷

CHF 0.1 M

Virtually no budget headroom for next year¹

...and measurable cost-benefit analysis of ITU's contribution to AI for Good, FY2026 (CHF M)



Notes: (i) Estimated based on inputs from relevant ITU teams (e.g., HRMD, FRMD, ISD) and presented as a range to reflect uncertainty in the attribution of in-kind contributions, including potential overlap with broader ITU activities; (ii) Calculated as: Staff cost x % time spent on AI for Good; (iii) This figure reflects costs AI for Good bore to accommodate co-location of WSIS and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance at Palexpo, separate from AI for Good's own costs; (iv) ITU senior leadership featured in top-tier media outlets such as BBC, CNN, and CNBC during Summit; (v) Includes externally funded projects of ~CHF 0.3M (~3% of the total FY26 budget). Of the remaining ~33%, ITU contributes CHF 2.3–2.6M (~28%), and the opening balance accounts for ~CHF 0.4M (~5%)

Sources: (1) ITU Finance team, FINIST P.30063.2.25 - 2026 AI4G-31.7.2026-estimates, 2026; (2) ITU teams (8 in total), AI4G ITU in-kind support - HR and non-HR costs, 2026; (3) ITU Finance Team, AI4G Core team details-staff costs (20260819), 2026; (4) AI for Good team, AI4G Platform review - Direct HR costs (20260821), 2026; (5) AI for Good team, AI4G Platform review - Impact Quantification, 2026; (6) AI for Good team, Sponsorship revenue 2017–2026, 2026; (7) Dalberg, Dalberg stakeholder interviews, 2026

Benchmark suggests several revenue levers could strengthen AI for Good's economics, balanced by access and independence

	Potential upside	Key trade-off / considerations
 Host support	Explore longer-term host arrangements and greater value-sharing to strengthen event economics.	Requires consultation and agreement with the host
 Sponsorship	Expand and differentiate sponsorship offerings to increase revenue per partner and number of sponsors. Some peers attract >3x more sponsors per 1,000 participants.	Requires strong safeguards to protect agenda independence and avoid perceptions of sponsor influence.
 Registration yield	Use differentiated corporate pricing. Some peers generate ~15x higher registration yield, rising to ~200x for highly exclusive models.	Requires careful design to ensure higher corporate pricing could cross-subsidise free or discounted access for delegates, students and other participants.
 New revenue streams	Meeting rooms, leaders' lounges, multi-year partnerships and licensed national activities could diversify income , but become more attractive if AI for Good can retain surpluses and reinvest them.	Requires enabling financial, compliance and operational frameworks .

Important to prioritise yield over volume: Attendance growth alone does not improve economics; the marginal participant currently costs more than they generate. The larger opportunity is therefore to increase revenue per participant and partner, not simply scale volume

A Trust Fund could address AI4G's funding and cash-flow constraints through segregated funding windows and controlled advance financing

AI FOR GOOD TRUST FUND: A dedicated ITU financial mechanism for AI for Good with two principal windows:

	Summit Window	Project Window
Scope	The annual AI for Good Global Summit and related events	AI for Good projects: skills, practical AI solutions, research and partnerships
Funding sources	Fund-wide resources: voluntary contributions; Summit/events sponsorship and cost-recovery income; and other eligible resources. ⁱ Contributions may be pooled (to the overall program or agreed window) or earmarked for specific projects	
Core principle	Full cost recovery: break even at minimum each year	Earmarked funds used only for the accepted purpose
Approval	Annual Fund budget approved by SG, ⁱⁱ including detailed Summit budget	Approved project document for each project. Secretary-General approves pooled/unearmarked allocations
Advance financing	Member States' ask: ITU-backed advance facility, supplemented by voluntary contributions	No advances. As a general rule, commitments/execution begin only once financing is secured and funds deposited
Surplus	Eligible, unrestricted surplus may be credited to the AI4G reserve, ⁱⁱⁱ subject to ITU approvals and council decisions	Project balances are separate from the AI4G reserve; treatment follows contribution terms and applicable ITU rules

Shared controls

Segregated accounts and records

Quarterly reporting to the SG

Council reporting via financial operating report

ITU internal controls & audit

Notes: (i) Miscellaneous revenue and other lawfully accepted resources under ITU Financial Rules; (ii) The annual Fund budget covers both windows: detailed Summit budget and consolidated view of the Project Window; (iii) After costs, liabilities and advance repayment. Source: (1) ITU, AI for Good Trust Fund Terms of Reference (Draft 03/10/26), 2026; (2) ITU, Council decision on the advance financing facility (Draft 03/10/26), 2026

An ITU-backed Advance facility could provide AI4G with the necessary liquidity to support delivery and ensure long-term financial sustainability

1

**ITU-BACKED ADVANCE
FACILITY...**

Credit facility, provided by the **ITU Reserves / Savings**, to bridge temporary cash-flow gaps



2

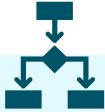
... Supplemented by
VOLUNTARY-CONTRIBUTION

Credit facility, provided by the **AI4G trust fund**, against voluntary contributions raised for AI4G

- (i) **Credit facilities** are temporary and will be repaid as event income is generated **and**
- (ii) AI for Good would use the **liquidity to strengthen delivery and build sufficient retained working capital over time**, ultimately eliminating the need for external liquidity backstops.

ITU and AI4G should clarify decision rights, formalise policies and processes, and selectively outsource delivery to accelerate execution

Lever 1



Delegated authority for routine, recurring decisions

- **Sponsorship pricing flexibility:** ITU approves prices for individual offeringsⁱ (e.g., exhibition space, leadership pass) and standard discounts for additional groupsⁱⁱ (e.g., repeat sponsors) upfront, giving AI for Good flexibility to tailor packages to sponsor budgets within agreed limits
- **Routine procurement:** Delegate purchase approvals up to CHF 10K,^{iii,1} from the current CHF 5K threshold¹

Lever 2



Clear policies & processes to reduce exception approvals

- **Policy changes:** Revise policies to minimise recurring exception approvals (e.g., *amend the ITU Guidelines for Event-Related Sponsorship to explicitly permit AI for Good to monetise thought-leadership slots under clear safeguards, drawing on the ITU Telecom World precedent*).^{iv,v,2,3}
- **Documented delivery processes:** Agree workflows with ITU teams, including owners, timelines and escalation routes (e.g., *sponsor contracts, communications, security*)^{vi}

Lever 3



Increased outsourcing to enable speed and flexibility

- **Event procurement :** Appoint earlier a competitively selected professional conference organiser (PCO) and within an increased, pre-approved annual budget to manage equipment, speaker logistics, and advertising under agreed service standards & ITU oversight^{vii}
- **Staffing flexibility:** Leverage the PCO for the use of temporary staffing during peak periods.
- **Sponsorship vetting:** Leverage qualified external providers to support due diligence and risk screening of prospective sponsors, while maintaining ITU's compliance standards, oversight & decision-making authority.

Notes: (i) ITU currently approves broader sponsorship packages (e.g., diamond, gold and silver) containing multiple offerings, limiting flexibility; (ii) Currently, only one category of discounts exists (ITU members); (iii) Increase to CHF 10K would enable faster procurement for small, high-frequency purchases (e.g., speakers, performers); (iv) 2020 ITU sponsorship guidelines require SG exception approval for sponsored speakers; (v) 2017 ITU sponsorship guidelines note an exception for WSIS and TELECOM for sponsored speakers; (vi) Workflows for processes exist, but need updating, alignment and consistent application to accelerate delivery; (vii) AI for Good procured CHF 200K of services through the PCO. PCO's role could expand further.

Sources: (1) Dalberg, Dalberg stakeholder interviews, 2026; (2) ITU, ITU guidelines for event-related sponsorships 2020, 2020; (3) ITU, [ITU guidelines for event-related sponsorships 2017](#), 2017.



With increased flexibility, AI for Good can become a trusted global platform helping countries turn AI into practical, measurable impact

Recommendations for Member States consideration



Create AI4G Trust Fund

Welcome the AI for Good Trust Fund



Confirm AI4G surplus retention

Endorse retention of AI4G surpluses within the Fund to support delivery of AI4G summit and projects



Authorize working capital advance

Authorize an advance from ITU reserves / savings to fund AI4G Summit delivery ahead of revenue receipts



Invite voluntary Fund contributions

Invite Member States, Sector Members and partners to contribute to the Fund



Ensure annual oversight

Request annual Council reporting on the Fund and its implementation, with a review after 2027 Summit

What AI for Good could become



Reliable annual Summit delivery

Deliver well-planned, high-quality Summits each year



Responsive year-round global engagement

Deliver activities responding to country needs, especially in LMICs



Platform for joint delivery

Bring ITU, UN partners and the private sector together to advance solutions



Sustainable long-term funding base

Secure multi-year partnerships and voluntary contributions alongside ITU support



Measurable impact and accountability

Track agreed outcomes and report progress to Member States annually



Annex



Potential recommendations emerging from PP-26

Input for decision-making

recognizing

- a) the rapid growth, strategic relevance and value of AI for Good for a wide range of stakeholders;
- b) the financial and operational challenges identified through the review of AI for Good;
- c) the need to strengthen AI for Good's financial sustainability, operational flexibility and ability to deliver measurable impact;

instructs the Secretary-General

- 1. to review relevant internal frameworks, policies and processes and take appropriate measures to address the identified challenges and enable the effective and sustainable delivery of AI for Good;
- 2. to take the necessary steps to establish and operationalize the AI for Good Trust Fund, enabling an advance facility for working capital;
- 3. to report to the Council on progress in implementing these measures;

instructs the ITU Council

to take such decisions as may be necessary to support the implementation of these measures, including appropriate arrangements for surplus retention and advance financing;

invites Member States, Sector Members and other partners

to consider making voluntary contributions to the AI for Good Trust Fund.