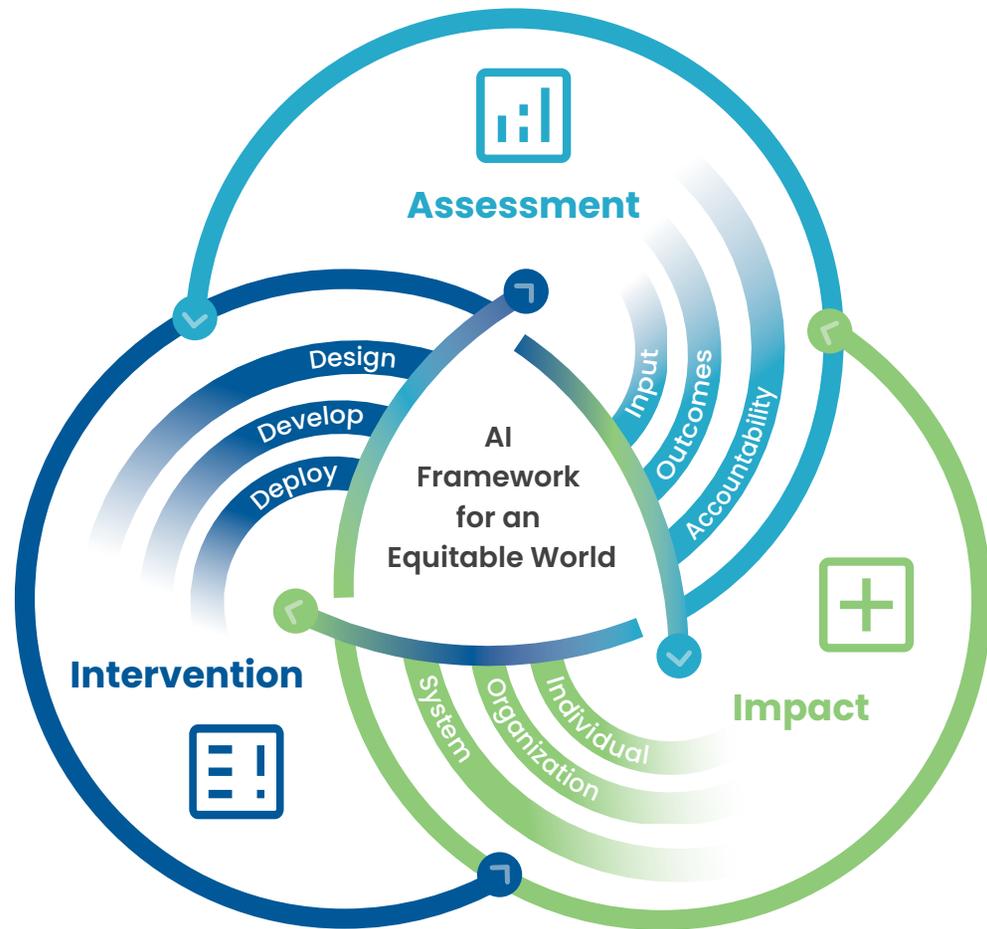# Artificial Intelligence Framework for an Equitable World

How we build artificial intelligence models, who we build them with, and how we make decisions about adoption have implications for the world we live in today and the world we can make for tomorrow. This framework is designed by and for all those working to build an equitable world, whether in nonprofit or community-based organizations, technology developers, funders, or service providers. By sharing a common framework, we are better positioned for successful collaborations.

Assessment

Input
Outcomes
Accountability

AI Framework for an Equitable World

Design
Develop
Deploy

Intervention

System
Organization
Individual

Impact

About the framework

Each aspect of the framework is interrelated and can be a starting point. As one aspect is explored, the insights inform the others, generating additional considerations and decisions. This framework is not intended for one-time use but as a tool for ongoing and evolving discussions.

ASSESSMENT

Input: What goes into the data sets, models, and tools is as important as what goes into the planning, training, and expectations for their use. How are we planning to use a tool? What was put into that tool to build it? What are we adding to the tool by using it, and is that addition intentional or accidental?

Outcomes: We must evaluate what comes from the models we build or use and establish accountability by engaging with those most impacted. Are these outcomes appropriate and satisfy our goals and values? How will these outcomes affect each community we work with?

Accountability: An equitable world requires us to be accountable to each other. It pushes us to let go of prioritizing shareholder value above all else and encourages accountability with all users and communities.

Who do we engage to get clarity on inputs and outcomes? How can we foster transparency and accessibility at all levels of a community?

IMPACT

Individual: Our individual choices matter as they inform the bias, values, and assumptions built in and shaping our use of AI. How can we take responsibility in understanding those choices to ensure our actions as individuals foster accountability?

Organization: Organizations or teams often move fluidly through the framework as both builders and users, impacted and accountable, interveners and recipients of intervention. As members of organizations, what questions can we ask about our policies and fidelity to those policies?

As individuals outside an organization, how can we ask for accountability and transparency?

System: We are all impacted by systems while collectively powerful in changing or building those systems. Where are incentives built or opportunities held? Can organizations or individuals collaborate there for interventions?

INTERVENTION

Design: Using accessibility and accountability as guides, we design datasets, AI models, policies, and practices through our layers of impact. Who is included, and where are opportunities to shift inputs toward better outcomes?

Develop: AI tools have many pieces and phases, with different impact groups contributing interventions in various ways, from the datasets and algorithms to the interface and content. What resources are influencing the development? What requires regular assessment and impact evaluation?

Deploy: Whether we design or develop the tools, we may use them for our work within different layers of impact. Accountability for impacts is just as important here as with design and development. Where have we used assessment to mitigate harm? How are we supporting ourselves and others in reaching equitable outcomes?

HOW TO USE THE FRAMEWORK

This framework is for you. Whether you work in a nonprofit or community-based organization, a foundation, or a technology vendor or service provider, you make decisions that influence how, where, and when artificial intelligence tools are designed, built, and implemented across our work and world. We must use a shared framework to guide our discussions and decision-making to create an equitable world.

What does using this framework in your day-to-day processes look like, and how can you start using it today? Below is a collection of tips, suggestions, and examples to support you as you get started. These recommendations encourage you to integrate the framework into your processes and practices in the ways that work best for you and your collaborators.

When

While the framework can be a valuable tool for structured or formal processes like strategic planning, technology project planning, or development roadmaps, it is essential to acknowledge the many ways decisions are made outside of those situations. As such, we envision the framework as a tool you can use in various daily situations.

There is no single "beginning" to an artificial intelligence technology consideration. As opportunities emerge and pass, new needs surface or change, and even skills or interests build or shift within your team. Use the framework

to refocus your considerations throughout the build and implementation processes, support the assessment of how AI tools are a relevant consideration with new circumstances, and prompt continuous evaluation of implemented tools or systems. Print the framework to bring to meetings, put it up by your desk, or share it with your team to invite regular use.

How

There are myriad situations you may use the framework to navigate. Consider these tips:

- Start small with a tactical decision or idea. As you explore your options, move through the different aspects of the framework to identify questions. Then, build toward more strategic and broader considerations.

- Remember that AI tools, services, and projects are not isolated but likely involve other systems, programs, or policies. Use the framework in adjacent conversations or decisions to support bridging AI considerations with your other work.

- Be inclusive in these conversations by inviting people from different teams or departments, folks involved in various design and development stages, and people from inside and outside your organization. AI impacts everyone, so do not limit your use of the framework to only those on specific teams.

Just as the right prompt makes all the difference with AI tools, the right questions make the most difference in applying the framework to your work and decision-making. The framework's strength comes from the interrelationships of the aspects. Questions you generate from the framework do not need to be constrained to one topic or aspect but are most valuable when connected across aspects. To do this, ask yourself or your collaborators questions that start with "how" to initiate open-ended discussions. For example, instead of asking, "What outcomes do we anticipate?" try asking, "How will we surface and evaluate the outcomes that emerge? How often will we assess them? How will we support accountability for those outcomes when they cause harm?"

Questions to get started

- Where can we design or expand policies to evaluate if inputs and outcomes align with our goals?

- How can we communicate accountability steps for both organizations and individuals in our community?

- Where can we develop training for a diversity of people or staff so that our deployment of tools can be adequately adopted and safely used?

- How can we report what we are learning to influence the whole system we are part of?

- Where can we collaborate with other organizations or people to test ways to improve our outcomes by

combining our inputs for more inclusive data? Where can we design or expand policies to do this safely and align with our communities' expectations for data privacy?

- How can we engage folks across the whole system (outside of our mission area or geography, for example) to better assess our outcomes and strengthen the tools we develop?

- Where can we develop tools or models inside our organization that could be shared or repurposed to support others?

This briefly illustrates some of the questions you can generate by connecting the concepts, groups, and ideas across the aspects. Adding the nuance and specifics of your work, mission, community, and data to the questions will only strengthen their ability to guide you to make the best decisions for your work.

ABOUT NTEN

We are creating a world where missions and movements are successful through the skillful and equitable use of technology.

We build transformative power by connecting people who are putting technology to work for social change. We strengthen their individual and collective capacity for doing good by offering expert trainings, researching effective approaches, and providing places where relationships can flourish. We relentlessly advocate for redesigning the systems and structures that maintain inequity.

NTEN reports support the sector's growth and development by benchmarking nonprofits' technology goals and challenges and identifying areas of need.

For more, visit **nten.org/publications**.

ABOUT IFTF

Institute for the Future is the world's leading futures organization. Our mission is to prepare the world to create better, more equitable futures by disrupting short-term thinking with visions of transformative possibilities.

IFTF was founded in 1968 as an independent, public-interest nonprofit and a spinoff from RAND Corporation with original support from the Ford Foundation. Our founding articles of incorporation state that "it is imperative that society acquire the necessary tools, methods and research capabilities to identify and cope with socio-economic questions before they become tomorrow's critical problems." This was a revolutionary call-to-action at a tumultuous time in history—a call for a more rigorous systems approach to the future that would help people find agency in their own expertise to be better prepared in uncertain times.

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