

# Geneva AI Initiative – Call for Applications 2025–2026

Deadline: 7 November 2025 (17:00 CET)

## Introduction

The Geneva AI Initiative is a program by the EPFL AI Center in collaboration with the Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC).

It aims to strengthen the artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations (IOs) based in Geneva.

By connecting these organizations with cutting-edge AI expertise and resources from EPFL and its partner institutions, the initiative seeks to enhance both their operational effectiveness and their societal impact.

This call invites applications to participate in a structured, three-step program guiding organizations from learning to action:

### **1. AI fundamentals course (DASHI – 4 days)**

An accessible introduction to AI concepts, strategy, and exemplary use cases, designed to demystify AI for practitioners.

### **2. Project scoping and proposal development**

Tailored one-to-one guidance in defining project ideas and preparing strong proposals.

### **3. Potential for project funding**

An independent evaluation process to support projects that demonstrate clear merit, feasibility, and societal impact.

Selected participants will also receive complimentary access to the AMLD Intelligence Summit 2026, where they will present their project ideas in a private workshop on 12 February 2026 alongside other applicants and AI experts. This session will provide constructive feedback and opportunities to build partnerships for proposal development.

## Scope

This call is open exclusively to NGOs and IOs based in Geneva, with a significant part of their activities carried out locally.

Ideal applicants can demonstrate a clear interest in applying AI to address specific challenges within their organizations and hold a position that allows them to champion the initiative and foster internal adoption.

Applications should describe how AI technology could be applied to a well-defined challenge. Given the urgency of global issues and the rapid pace of AI developments, special interest will be placed on projects capable of demonstrating a short time to impact.

## Thematic areas

The initiative welcomes applications from organizations active in any domain, including (but not limited to):

- Humanitarian aid and crisis response
- Human rights and social justice
- Environmental protection and climate change
- Public health and well-being
- Economic and social development
- Peace and security
- Education and capacity building

## Program

The program supports organizations in advancing their AI maturity and developing strong, fundable projects through three steps.

### Step 1: AI Fundamentals Course (DASHI)

Data Science for Humanitarian Impact (DASHI) is a four-day continuing-education course tailored to the humanitarian and international sector. It combines theory, strategy, and applied examples.

#### Objectives:

- Understand the foundational principles and techniques of data science within the broader context of AI and machine learning.
- Assess the complexity and scalability of potential AI use cases.
- Gain practical tools for managing AI projects from scoping to minimum viable product (MVP).
- Explore real-world examples through hands-on assignments.
- Connect and exchange with other professionals working at the intersection of data, AI, and humanitarian action.

#### Course dates:

22 + 23 January 2026 and 29 + 30 January 2026 (on EPFL campus).

**Participants are expected to attend the entire course on site.** Non-attendance may result in termination of participation in the overall program.

## **Step 2: Project Scoping and Proposal Development**

Participants who complete the DASHI course will receive tailored support in defining a project they wish to pursue within their organization.

They are encouraged to develop proposals that can move forward to Step 3: Project Funding.

Guidance includes:

- Project scoping (1-2 h): Together with an EPFL / SDSC expert, participants identify a concrete need and define key aspects of a potential AI use case (AI Canvas).
- AMLD workshop (12 February 2026): AI canvases are presented at the AMLD Intelligence Summit 2026 in a private session with AI experts and humanitarian peers.
- Proposal development (5-10 h): Following the workshop, the assigned AI expert supports the participant in preparing a complete project proposal, focusing on technical soundness, feasibility, and impact.

Guidance will begin right after the end of DASHI, and will continue until the submission deadline for project proposals (April 30, 2026).

## **Step 3: Call for Projects**

A committee of AI and domain experts will review all submitted proposals and select those eligible for funding.

The program will fund projects of up to 12 months in duration. **Only participants who complete the DASHI course and the scoping phase are eligible to apply.**

#### Eligible expenses:

- Personnel (project-specific staff, researchers, data scientists, technical support)
- Equipment and specialized software
- Research costs (data acquisition, cloud resources, AI tools)
- Travel and meetings directly related to the project
- Dissemination (e.g., publications, presentations)

The grant *cannot* cover existing administrative services or the salary of the main applicant.

Subcontracting must be clearly justified. Most work should be carried out by the applying organization in collaboration with EPFL / SDSC or partners identified through the Geneva AI Initiative.

All costs must be directly related to the project and incurred within the 12-month duration. Industry partners are welcome but not fundable under this program.

## Eligibility and Requirements

Applicants must represent NGOs or IOs operationally based in Geneva.

Each proposal must designate a main applicant who will attend the entire program and manage the proposal and project.

The main applicant must be employed by the applying organization for the full duration of the program and hold a position enabling them to champion the initiative (confirmed by a letter of internal support).

The main applicant need not have a technical background in AI; however, final project proposals must include a partner with AI expertise from EPFL, SDSC, or another qualified institution.

## Timeline

| Milestone                    | Date                         |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Call opens                   | 8 October 2025               |
| Online information session   | Second half October (TBD)    |
| Application deadline         | 7 November 2025 (17:00 CET)  |
| Notification of acceptance   | Early December 2025          |
| DASHI course                 | 22+23 and 29+30 January 2026 |
| AMLD workshop                | 12 February 2026             |
| Proposal submission deadline | 30 April 2026                |
| Funding decision             | 31 May 2026                  |
| Project start                | within 2 months after award  |

## Funding and Duration

Up to 25 organizations will be selected to participate in the program.

Participation in the course and mentoring program is free of charge (travel expenses not included).

Project funding is available for projects of up to 12 months.

# Application Procedure

Program Application (Deadline 7 November 2025 at 17:00 CET)

Applications must be submitted via the online form:

👉 <https://go.epfl.ch/geneva-ai-2025-application>

The committee may contact applicants for a short (15-minute) clarification call.