

FAIR Forward



Artificial Intelligence for All - more open, inclusive and sustainable approach to AI on an international level

At a glance

Artificial intelligence offers new opportunities in developing and emerging countries to overcome obstacles and achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals: For instance, AI-powered apps already support local farmers in Tunisia and India to detect diseases in agriculture in real time. AI also offers digital entrepreneurs new tools to build innovative products.

To date, however, there is often a lack of frameworks, capacities and strategies for responsible and locally appropriate development of AI applications. Today, for example, only 25 out of 54 African countries have data protection legislation, and only a few pioneering countries such as Kenya and India have launched strategies for the use and promotion of AI.

Developing and emerging countries therefore risk being left behind in the use and

development of AI or becoming dependent on leading AI nations. At the same time, there is a risk that inequalities, discrimination and human rights violations will be exacerbated by the new technology.

FAIR Forward – Artificial Intelligence for All
strives for a more open, inclusive and sustainable approach to AI on an international level.

Our main goals

- Improve access to training data and AI technologies for local innovation
- Strengthen local technical know-how on AI in Africa and Asia
- Develop policy frameworks for ethical AI, data protection and privacy

Our approach and goals

The German Development Cooperation initiative “FAIR Forward – Artificial Intelligence for All” strives for a more open, inclusive and sustainable approach to AI on an international level. To achieve this, we are working together with six partner countries: Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and India. Together, we pursue three main goals:

1. Access to Training Data and AI Technologies for Local Innovation

Remove entry barriers to AI: FAIR Forward facilitates the provision of open, non-discriminatory and inclusive training data, models and open-source AI applications. This is done in the fields of open language data and earth observation data to empower marginalized groups, e.g. through voice-based

access to services and information, and access to climate-smart agricultural advice.

2. Strengthen local technical know-how on AI

FAIR Forward supports digital learning and training for the development and use of AI and fosters cooperation with German and European research institutions and businesses.

3. Develop Policy Frameworks for Ethical AI, Data Protection and Privacy

FAIR Forward advocates for value-based AI that is rooted in human rights, international norms such as accountability, transparency of decision-making and privacy, and draws on European experiences such as the EU Proposal for a Regulation on AI and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Current Status

The project is part of the “Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development” program of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ. FAIR Forward closely collaborates with the other flagship projects within this initiative: the global e-learning platform Atingi, the Centres for Digital Transformation in Africa and Asia, the BMZ Digilab, the Data Economy and Data4policy projects as well as the tech-entrepreneurship initiative Make-IT.

Open Voice Technology in Local Languages

Together with the [Mozilla Foundation](#) and local partners in Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya, FAIR Forward contributes to the development of open AI training datasets in the languages of Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili and Luganda – languages spoken by more than 150 million people collectively. The collection of open voice data strengthens the local ecosystem for the development of related technologies and products such as voice assistants. In Rwanda, FAIR Forward has worked with the national health authority and a local tech company to develop the official, national

Rwandan Covid-19 chatbot that provides information on the state of the pandemic in Kinyarwanda.

Global E-Learning Courses on Open AI

Joining forces with Makerere University Uganda, FAIR Forward has developed a 5-part e-learning course on creating open and unbiased datasets for Artificial Intelligence across different domains. The courses are available for free to anyone on the [Atingi e-learning platform](#) and can be customized for local adaptation with the help of a dedicated replication kit.

Expansion of AI training data in the Global South – Lacuna Fund:

In supporting Lacuna Fund, FAIR Forward is part of the first global collaborative effort that addresses the shortage of AI training data in emerging and developing countries. Thereby, the potential of AI can also be unlocked in the Global South. The work of Lacuna Fund creates representative, problem-specific and current data in the Global South. For this purpose, we work closely with The Rockefeller Foundation, Google.org and Canada's International Development Research Centre. FAIR Forward supports Lacuna Fund especially in the area of African language data.

AI and open Satellite Data for sustainable development

Combining the wealth of open Earth Observation (EO) data, i.e. satellite images combined with analysis tools based on Artificial Intelligence, helps to address various development challenges including sustainable agriculture, climate protection and food security. In collaboration with the Radiant Earth Foundation, FAIR Forward develops machine learning datasets that help to classify differing crop types in South Africa. Openly and freely available on the ML Hub of Radiant Earth, local AI-companies and institutions can use the created datasets and models for agricultural monitoring.

AI regulation – policy blueprint with Smart Africa

Smart Africa championed the development of the Pan-African AI policy blueprint “AI for Africa” with the support of FAIR Forward. Smart Africa is a Pan-African digitalisation initiative with 32 member countries and has been a long-term partner of BMZ. Led by the South African government, the “AI for Africa” blueprint was developed through a multi-stakeholder, pan-African process including Smart Africa member countries, civil society, academia and private sector; and will serve as a framework for developing national AI strategies and policies on the African continent.

Further information

- [FAIR Forward: Launching the Africa-Asia Policy Maker Network on Responsible AI](#)
 - [AI for climate change adaptation and mitigation: BMZ supports Lacuna Fund in developing datasets and AI models in the global south](#)
 - [Promoting localized AI training data in Africa and Asia: Open for Good Alliance Website](#)
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#Data for development

Factsheet FAIR Forward English

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Artificial Intelligence for Africa Blueprint

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Data Protection & Privacy Handbook for AI Developers in India

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