

Application: Digital Impact Alliance Fellowship Program

The Digital Impact Alliance Fellowship Program provides an opportunity for curious, passionate mid-career researchers and practitioners to explore frontier questions related to digital public infrastructure and data governance.

Fellows are invited to bring their own knowledge and research agenda to the Fellowship while contributing to our goals of improving the design, deployment, and governance of foundational digital systems, services, and data sharing innovations. We are eager to support work aligned with our core thematic priorities: 1) creating more value for more people from data; 2) understanding the ways in which digital systems and services impact people, including and especially the most marginalized; and 3) accelerating the adoption of data sharing and governance practices that fuel innovation and empower people.

Our Fellows complete their research over 6-8 months and are supported with a stipend of \$5,000 USD. We encourage applications from passionate professionals from academia, the private sector, and civil society.

We're seeking innovative, curious experts in the field of digital transformation.

Objectives:

As experts and thought leaders, our fellows will contribute important insights, supporting and furthering our work in digital transformation. During their tenure, our fellows can expect to:

- Generate innovative research and insights on emerging themes and trends
- Foster collaboration between experts and DIAL's existing teams
- Contribute to our mission of promoting positive digital impact
- Develop and share best practices in digital development
- Build a community of scholars and practice around digital public infrastructure and data governance

Selection criteria:

We're seeking professionals who will bring specific expertise and unique perspective to our work at the intersection of digital technology and development. Strong candidates will have:

- 8-15 years of experience in digital development, policy, or research

- Demonstrated interest and work experience at the intersection of technology and society, focusing on topics including (but not limited to) digital public infrastructure and data governance
- A track record of producing high-quality writing, research, or policy briefs
- Experience working in or with global majority countries
- Strong analytical and communication skills

Program benefits:

In addition to a \$5,000 stipend, our Research Fellows will have access to our community of experienced digital transformation experts, benefitting from:

- Mentorship and guidance from Digital Impact Alliance staff and industry experts
- Access to our extensive network and resources
- Opportunities for collaboration with partner organizations
- Support in communicating and amplifying their work
- Participation in our events and knowledge-sharing platform

Illustrative Research Topics:

As an international organization, we encourage our fellows to consider global contexts in their research, particularly examining how digital systems and digital public infrastructure (DPI) adoption vary across countries. With this in mind, potential research questions could include (but are not limited to):

1. What are the key drivers of successful DPI adoption in countries with varying levels of economic development, and how can these insights be applied to accelerate adoption in Africa?
2. How can rapid, low-cost research methods be employed across different countries to better understand citizens' perceptions, behaviors, and expectations with respect to their personal data?
3. How do social and economic disparities within and between countries influence the adoption and impact of digital public infrastructure, and what strategies can bridge these gaps?

Outputs:

We recognize that each of our fellows will bring diverse knowledge, skills, and expertise in the field of digital transformation. As such, we welcome a variety of ideas – and formats – when it comes to their research. Each fellow is expected to produce 1) two preliminary pieces and 2) a final, more extensive piece. Past formats have included (but are not limited to) the following:

- Comprehensive research papers or reports (case studies, spotlight papers)
- Policy briefs or recommendations
- Series of expert comments or articles
- Actionable insights to inform our future initiatives and policy recommendations

Timeline:

The fellowship will follow a 6-month timeline:

- Month 1: Research blueprint development and refinement
- Months 2-4: In-depth research and data collection
- Month 3: Preliminary publication 1 - expert comment, video, etc.
- Month 4: Draft compilation and internal review
- Month 5: Preliminary publication 2 - expert comment, video, etc.
- Month 6: Presentation to Digital Impact Alliance team and a DDX session in addition to editing and publication of final report, policy brief, etc.
- Months 7-8 (if applicable): Outreach and dissemination activities

Interested in applying? Here's what we need from you.

We welcome proposals **on a rolling basis**. To apply, please submit the following materials:

- CV/Resume: Provide a current CV or resume that highlights your relevant experience and qualifications.
- Writing Sample or Portfolio: Include a writing sample or portfolio that demonstrates your expertise, particularly in areas relevant to the fellowship.
- Research Proposal (1,500 words maximum): Submit a detailed research proposal outlining your proposed project, including key questions, methodology, expected outcomes, and alignment with our thematic priorities.

Submission Guidelines:

- Document Format: Submit all materials as PDFs.
- Font: Use a standard, professional font like Times New Roman or Arial, size 12.
- File Naming: Name each file as [Your Last Name]_[Document Type].pdf (e.g., Smith_CV.pdf, Smith_Proposal.pdf).
- Applicants will be notified within four weeks if their applications are selected to move forward in the process.
- Please send your completed proposal to fellows@dial.global. We look forward to reviewing your submission!

Evaluation Process:

We will review all written proposals and may request a phone interview or additional information to address questions or provide clarification. The selection committee will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Analytical Approach: The research proposal must effectively communicate the research ideas.

- Subject Matter Expertise: Candidates should have a strong understanding of relevant trends, stakeholders, and dynamics.
- Project Management: Ability to develop a clear, actionable plan with effective coordination and consistency throughout the project.
- Capabilities and Experience: Demonstrated experience, including writing high-quality reports, policy briefs, or research papers, relevant to the project's scope.
- Mission Alignment: Preference for individuals who believe in our values of creating a positive digital future, where data is leveraged for the benefit of people.

Intent and Disclaimer

This RFP is made with the intent to identify a consultant to deliver results as described in this RFP. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate DIAL to award a resulting contract and any costs incurred in preparation of a proposal are the sole responsibility of the respondent.

In submitting a proposal, the respondent certifies that information contained therein is truthful and accurate to the best of the respondent's ability. Should any information later be found to not be in-line with this certification, DIAL reserves the right to terminate any resulting contract(s) and/or select an alternative contractor. DIAL assumes it can be confident in the Consultant's ability to deliver the product(s) and/or service(s) proposed in response to this RFP.

If DIAL amends the RFP, copies of any such amendments will be sent to all respondents.

Contract Terms

The UN Foundation/DIAL will negotiate contract terms upon selection. A copy of the contract terms and conditions will be provided upon pre-selection. All contracts are subject to review by the UN Foundation's Agreements and Compliance (A&C) team. The project will start upon the execution of the contract. The contract will outline terms and conditions, scope, budget, and applicable flow-down terms proscribed by the funding partners and the UN Foundation.

Release

Consultant understands that DIAL has chosen to solicit an RFP for consulting services, and that consultant's response does not guarantee that DIAL will enter into a new contract with Consultant or continue any current contract(s) with Consultant.

Consultant agrees that DIAL may, in its sole discretion:

- Amend or cancel the RFP, in whole or in part, at any time
- Extend the deadline for submitting responses

- Determine whether a response does or does not substantially comply with the requirements of the RFP
- Waive any minor irregularity, informality or nonconformance with the provisions or procedures of the RFP
- Negotiate with all consultants UNF deems acceptable
- Issue multiple awards
- Copy the responses

This RFP is not an offer to contract. DIAL assumes no responsibility for Consultant's cost to respond to this RFP. All responses become the property of DIAL.

The Consultant, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all right to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFP.

Consultant represents that it has responded to the RFP with complete honesty and accuracy. If facts provided in Consultant's response change, Consultant agrees to supplement its response in writing with any deletions, additions, or changes within ten (10) days of the changes. Consultant will do this, as necessary, throughout the selection process. Consultant understands that any material misrepresentation, including omissions, may disqualify it from consideration for a contract award.

Consultant understands it may receive proprietary and confidential information from DIAL during the RFP process ("Confidential Information"). Consultant agrees to not use Confidential Information for any purpose other than its participation in the RFP process and to not reveal Confidential Information directly or indirectly to any other person, entity, or organization without the prior written consent of DIAL. Consultant further agrees to exercise all reasonable precautions to maintain the proprietary and confidential nature of Confidential Information where it can best demonstrate its value and capacity to deliver ecosystem-wide, meaningful value.

Intellectual Property (IP) Considerations

DIAL's mission is to create public goods that enable a more efficient digital economy for everyone's common benefit. To serve this goal in partnership with other organizations and individuals, DIAL funds the development of important hardware and software, databases, computer protocols, research and useful industry standards.

Intellectual property ("IP") is at the heart of all things creative and inventive. DIAL's IP policy is shaped by our key funders' (i.e., the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) policies. DIAL's work products thus must comply with BMGF's "Open Access" policy. Further, any IP DIAL funds should be licensed for free use worldwide. This is accomplished through open source and Creative Commons licensing and by open standards, unencumbered by restrictive copyrights and patents.

The scope of work for this project and deliverables will, as such, abide by DIAL's intellectual property (IP) policy and its donor' compliance requirements. If special considerations are required, DIAL will negotiate those on a case-by-case basis with selected vendors.

As required by its donors, DIAL is committed to "Global Access". As such, DIAL will ensure that knowledge and information gained from any project and any deliverable produced will be prompt and broadly disseminated under a creative commons license, and any funded developments will be made available at an affordable price to:

- People most in need within developing countries and /or
- In support of the U.S. educational system and public libraries, as applicable

DIAL will take into consideration consultants' intellectual property issues as part of the selection process.

Have questions? Let us know.

For any questions regarding the Fellowship program, email us at fellows@dial.global