

THE
FUTURE
SOCIETY

2023

Annual

Report

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*The Fifth Edition of The Athens Roundtable on AI and the Rule of Law, organized by
The Future Society in Washington, D.C., December 2023*

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2023 was a year of significant growth for The Future Society (TFS). After rolling out [our new operational model and strategy](#) in 2022, we worked to systematize our impact at scale. We knew a sharper focus on general-purpose AI and on methods in which we excel would [make us stronger](#), but the results have surpassed our expectations:

- Our research on the European AI Act, notably on [why](#) the European AI Office is important, [how to make it work](#), and on [rules for general-purpose AI](#), has significantly strengthened the surrounding debate and received a positive response from relevant stakeholders.
- Our nascent work on U.S. AI governance has yielded interesting conversations and results, including our responses to official [consultations](#), [requests for information](#), [requests for comments](#), and [technical work](#) on Electronically Stored Information. It culminated with hosting our flagship event The Athens Roundtable on AI and the Rule of Law [in Washington, D.C.](#) in December 2023, with senior officials [engaging in dialogue on how to govern generative AI](#), gathering more than 200 people in person and nearly 1,000 people online.
- In global AI governance, we successfully [contributed](#) to the G7 Hiroshima Process and participated actively in the development and inter-operationalization of the “Bletchley” AI governance structure (including safety institutes and commitments). Moreover, 2023 saw our work on National AI policies end on a high note, with the Rwandan government’s [approval of the National AI policy](#) that TFS supported drafting in 2022.

These successes do not undermine the extent of the work ahead. After the proliferation of image generation models and chatbots in late 2022, we saw a reckless boom in generative

AI. This resulted notably in the first documented suicide [following advice from a chatbot](#), and a flurry of other harms, mental health issues, and economic and security implications that affect hundreds of millions of users.



**AI governance is needed
now more than ever.**

This is why on January 1, 2024 I was honored to be entrusted with the leadership of TFS. As I said [then](#), there is no better role for someone committed to the proper governance of AI: TFS is a unique organization in the space of AI governance, working since 2014 to research policymakers’ relevant questions, convening stakeholders, and advocating for better governance of AI. We have managed to do so while remaining strategically and tactically agile, enabling us to seize impactful opportunities and inform decision-makers in a relevant timeframe, crucial in a space evolving so quickly.

The next stage of TFS will require us to preserve this balance between thoughtful analyses and agility, as we scale our reach and impact to match the prominence that AI governance has taken on world leaders’ agendas, and the geopoliticization of the discussion. I hope you will support us on this journey, by [donating](#) or amplifying our work.

Sincerely,

Nicolas Moës

Nicolas Moës
Executive Director
The Future Society



About The Future Society

At The Future Society, we work to align artificial intelligence through better governance. With the capabilities and use of AI expanding rapidly, we know that this is a critical moment for governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and civil society to collectively ensure a safer, fairer future for all of us.

As an independent U.S.-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we analyze and propose sound AI policy recommendations, build relationships across the spectrum of decision-makers, and facilitate action-oriented dialogue to address risks and uphold fundamental rights.

Established in 2014, The Future Society has been working on how to govern powerful technologies since before concerns about their consequences became mainstream. We are uniquely positioned to advance AI governance in the United States, the European Union, and at the global level, with a trusted, high-performing team.

Our Board of Directors in 2023

Dr. Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler, Julien Merceron, De Kai, Nicolas Miallhe, Simon Mueller Stansbury, Nicolas Moës, Sarah Pierce

Our Team in 2023

Nicolas Miallhe, Yolanda Lannquist, Nicolas Moës, Niki Iliadis, Bell Arden, Samuel Curtis, Felicity Reddel, Amanda Leal, Toni Lorente, Frank Ryan, Fabian Ulmer, Nicolas Economou (Volunteer Chair, AI & the Rule of Law)

Our current team is listed [here](#) and our current Board of Directors is [here](#).

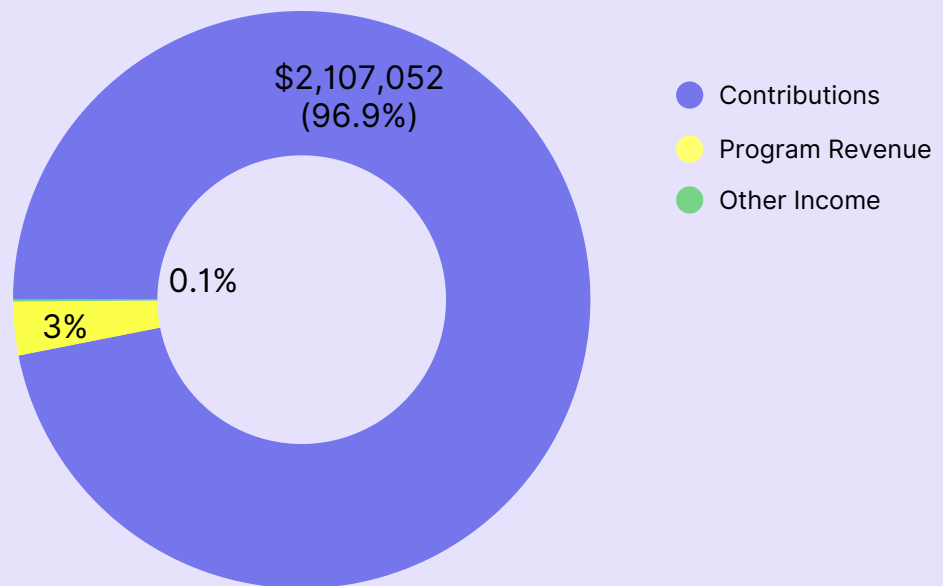


Finances

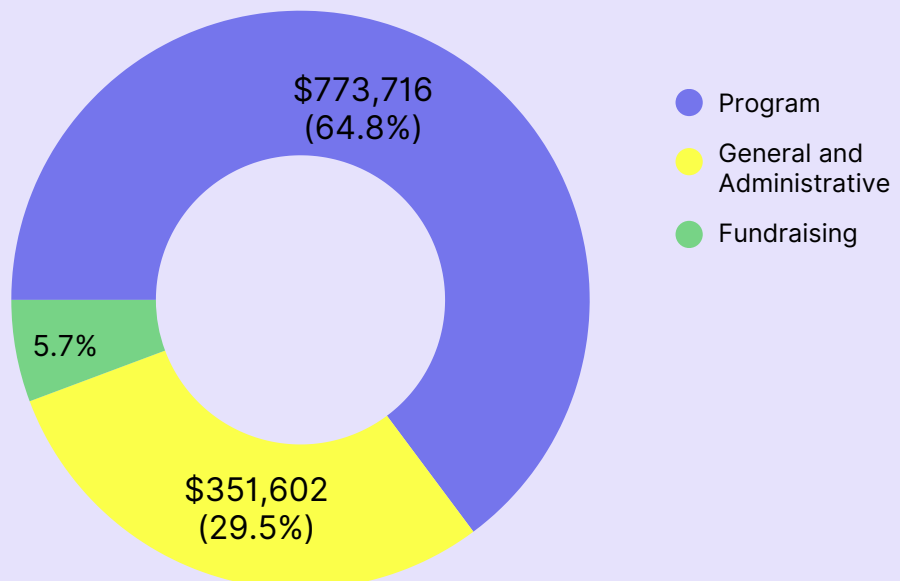
The Future Society is an independent 501(c)(3) organization primarily supported by contributions from philanthropic organizations, and funded in part through donations and service-based contracts with IGOs, governments, and private organizations. Our net assets at the end of 2023 were \$2,151,982.

The two graphs below summarize our audited financial statements. More details can be found in our form 990, available at: thefuturesociety.org/our-independence

2023 Revenue: \$2,173,381



2023 Expenditures: \$1,193,671



2023 Highlights

INPUT TO THE EU AI ACT ON GENERAL-PURPOSE AI & FOUNDATION MODELS GOVERNANCE

1.

Through policy research, multi-stakeholder convenings, and meetings, we provided concrete recommendations on drafts of the EU AI Act—the world’s first comprehensive AI legislation—to protect fundamental human values and uphold human rights and safety. Policymakers welcomed many of our recommendations, which included a special governance regime for general-purpose AI/foundation models, a central authority in the form of the European AI Office dedicated to enforcement of rules on GPAI models, and a dialogue mechanism between developers and authorities, with participation from civil society, to update Codes of Practice on an ongoing basis.

2. ENGAGED 1,150+ AI ACTORS AT THE ATHENS ROUNDTABLE ON AI AND THE RULE OF LAW

We organized the [Fifth Edition of The Athens Roundtable on AI and the Rule of Law](#) in Washington, D.C., for two days of action-oriented dialogue on key AI challenges. Participants included U.S. Senators, Representatives, Members of the European Parliament, Member of Parliament of Tanzania, U.S. Federal Agencies, NIST, NSF, OECD, UNESCO, IEEE, World Bank, Google DeepMind, Anthropic, GitHub, Hugging Face, civil society organizations (e.g. Lawyers Hub Kenya, FLI, CSET, CAIDP), and academia (e.g. Stanford HAI, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Institute for Protein Design). Recordings are [here](#).

3. ADVISED POLICYMAKERS THROUGH 100+ CONVERSATIONS

We facilitated bilateral meetings, emails, and conversations with policymakers and other stakeholders regarding AI governance. We also gave 10+ capacity-building briefings for international and development organizations working in the Global South.

4. PRODUCED 20+ PUBLICATIONS

We shared reports, briefings, and memos, and responded to requests for information by public institutions. This year, many of our publications outline recommendations for setting guardrails on the development of general-purpose AI and foundation models, and were coupled with outreach campaigns with policymakers, AI developers, and deployers. See publications on our [Resources](#) page.

5. PARTICIPATED IN 20+ EXPERT WORKING GROUPS

Our staff took part in expert working groups, including those organized by OECD.AI, UNESCO, Global Partnership on AI, Partnership on AI (PAI), World Economic Forum, Council of Europe, IEEE, NIST, CEN-CENELEC, UC Berkeley, and Working and Reflection Groups for The Athens Roundtable.

6. ADVOCATED FOR TRUSTWORTHY AI AT 25+ CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND COMMUNITY COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

We provided thought leadership at major AI policy conferences and workshops in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Additionally, we improved coordination with other AI policy, safety, and ethics nonprofits by engaging in 10+ Slack and Signal channels, 8+ U.S. and 3+ EU AI-focused workshops, and by organizing San Francisco AI Policy Happy Hours.

7. RAISED PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH 20+ MEDIA INTERACTIONS

We shared insights with Le Monde, ZEIT Digital, Die Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Expressions, WSJ, Time, Wired, The Economist, Al Jazeera, TRT World, The Innovator, Tech Monitor, Radio France International, and Global News Canada, as well as various podcasts.

Our References

"The Future Society has emerged as a pioneer in this space, building bridges across diverse communities of AI experts and practitioners around the world."

-Amandeep Singh Gill, Under-Secretary-General and UNSG's Tech Envoy, United Nations

"The Future Society's contributions to OECD.AI's work over the past six years have been invaluable. They helped give shape to our most relevant contributions to trustworthy AI, including the OECD AI Principles and the OECD Framework for the Classification of AI Systems."

-Karine Perset, Head, OECD.AI Policy Observatory

"Their talented team has exhibited a unique understanding of the AI governance landscape, as well as a keen ability to identify, deconstruct, and tackle significant and tractable issues ... TFS brings an innovative and much-needed civil society voice to our field."

-Konstantinos Karachalios, Managing Director, IEEE-Standards Association

"Unlocking AI requires balancing innovation with responsibility. The Future Society supports this through forward-looking leadership in intergovernmental institutions, convenings, and dialogues that advance AI governance. TFS plays a key role in shaping a future in which AI serves, rather than threatens, our collective well-being."

-Stuart Russell, Founder, Center for Human-Compatible AI, and Professor of Computer Science, UC Berkeley

"Their pioneer work with strategic foresight on general-purpose AI systems and regulatory sandboxes is a great example that can positively influence the safeguarding of fundamental rights in the age of AI. At UNESCO, we are proud to partner with them."

-Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO

Why is AI Governance Important?

The situation today is challenging. No one knows how to control powerful AI models and their capabilities, AI developers are competing to roll out ever more powerful models in order to maximize their market share, and the few checks and balances predominantly self-imposed by developers themselves are ineffective.

That's why the work of The Future Society is essential. We envision a future in which artificial intelligence is safe, trustworthy, and responsible, its developers are held accountable, and collective governance upholds fundamental rights. To get there, we need to establish guardrails and guidance to ensure that people are prioritized over profits.

Why Support The Future Society?

The coming years will be important for establishing rules for the development and deployment of AI. In these momentous times, we are doubling down on efforts to provide policymakers with better advice and research. Here are a handful of reasons to consider funding our work in order to make a difference in advancing AI governance:

- 1. AI governance is vital.** AI is an important technology, but our future will be the result of human decisions about how to govern AI.
- 2. AI systems are already causing harm.** The consequences are widespread and documented.
- 3. AI governance is tractable.** Better rules for AI will result in better AI.
- 4. Investing in AI governance now helps us today and tomorrow.** Because rules have a compound effect over time, improving these rules now increases the returns in terms of impact.
- 5. We take a prioritized, portfolio-based approach.** There are many ways to align AI, but we methodically make evidence-informed assessments in order to focus on the most effective interventions.
- 6. We are independent.** As an organization not beholden to companies or governments, we work toward AI governance that prioritizes people over profits.
- 7. Funding gaps limit our impact.** We have a number of potential activities queued up, but are currently unable to launch them due to funding constraints.
- 8. The playing field isn't level.** Corporations are lobbying for their own interests with billions of dollars. Your support is crucial for independent nonprofits like us to serve the public interest.

**SCAN QR CODE
TO DONATE**



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