

Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes:

Delphi Study on Best Practice Governance and Ethics Frameworks

christchurchcall.org

CCIAO – PHASE 2

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Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes:

Delphi Study Report on Best Practice Governance and Ethics

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This Delphi Study and its report were funded as part of the Christchurch Call Foundation's core mission to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) online while upholding human rights and preserving a free, open, and secure internet.

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Introduction

Online radicalisation to real-world violence starts with content. Algorithms shape the information people see online — influencing beliefs, emotions and, sometimes, pushing individuals toward extreme or harmful content. Yet independent research to understand these systems has been prohibitively complex and often confined to a handful of platforms. Without safe, cross-platform research, we cannot build the collective insight or evidence base needed to fully understand the role algorithms play in radicalisation. Nor can we design safer online environments and effective prevention interventions.

The Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes (CCIAO) is tackling this challenge at its source, where algorithmic systems influence online experiences. Once fully implemented, CCIAO will enable accredited researchers to study how algorithms can amplify terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) — and, crucially, how to disrupt those pathways.

CCIAO isn't just studying the problem - it is building the infrastructure to solve it.

The Christchurch Call Initiative on Algorithmic Outcomes (CCIAO) establishes a framework for translating insights on algorithmic influence into practical safeguards over time. This initiative aims to pinpoint platform adjustments that minimize exposure to terrorist and violent extremist content—such as redirecting users to credible, positive alternatives or counter-narratives. As part of the **Christchurch Call Commitments**, it also involves developing multistakeholder reporting mechanisms that protect trade secrets and service providers' operational effectiveness.

Alongside this, CCIAO aims to support collaboration with civil society, researchers, and academic institutions to strengthen community-led prevention efforts and build a shared evidence base on radicalisation pathways. Through trusted information sharing and future research, the initiative is intended to inform the development of effective interventions that can, over time, help reduce the risk of real-world violence.

By enabling independent algorithmic research where it was previously impossible, CCIAO is paving the way for safer digital environments – proving that global multistakeholder collaboration and innovation can turn transparency into real-world impact.

The Importance of Governance and Ethics in TVEC-related Algorithmic Research

Studying how algorithms interact with harmful material such as terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) demands exceptional care and accountability.

When algorithms intersect with TVEC, the stakes rise sharply — extending far beyond privacy or intellectual property concerns to the risk of exposing users and researchers to harmful, distressing and illegal material.

Robust research governance and ethics are not optional – they are the baseline for this work to proceed safely and credibly.

The Christchurch Call Foundation recognises the profound impact this work has on users and researchers. In the context of CCIAO, ensuring researcher safety in emotionally demanding environments while addressing the risks of online vicarious trauma, are key priorities.

While the Delphi Study did not address this issue directly, it is anticipated that the governance and ethics frameworks, once established, will incorporate guardrails to address these challenges and support researcher wellbeing.

The outcome will be a governance framework that enables the study of TVEC-related algorithms to be both scientifically rigorous and ethically sound — ensuring that the pursuit of understanding never becomes a source of harm itself.

Building Multistakeholder Consensus via Delphi Study

The Christchurch Call was founded on the belief that enduring solutions to the complex challenges posed by TVEC can best be achieved through multistakeholder collaboration. Our community — spanning governments, tech companies, academia, and civil society — embodies this principle, bringing together diverse expertise and perspectives to understand and prevent the ways technology can be misused to cause harm online. This approach ensures that governance, ethics, research, and policy development are informed by those most affected and best placed to act.

CCIAO's Delphi Study exemplifies this ethos in action —creating structured ways for diverse voices to contribute meaningfully to shaping the programme's governance and ethical framework.

The Delphi process also reflects the Call's commitment to inclusive, evidence-based dialogue. This approach not only surfaced shared priorities but also respectfully maps where perspectives diverge, providing a foundation for transparent, balanced, and collaborative progress.

By purposefully adopting a Delphi process, CCIAO was able to demonstrate how multistakeholder approaches can successfully guide the development of responsible governance frameworks to address the Call's Commitments and mission.

Why a Delphi Study?

Given the complexity of governance and ethics in a multistakeholder environment — and the sensitivities involved in researching algorithms that interact with TVEC — a Delphi Study was chosen as a deliberate, rigorous method to bring together diverse expertise. It enabled the Call community to move beyond discussion and toward consensus on practical governance solutions for CCIAO.

The Delphi method is recognised internationally as a robust and credible approach for synthesising expert judgment in complex or contested areas. Through an iterative process of anonymised surveys and feedback, participants were able to refine their views and collectively identify well-considered positions without the pressures of direct debate or crowded online meeting spaces. This approach promotes candour, balances influence across sectors and geographies and captures a depth of insight that can be hard to achieve through conventional consultation. For a globally distributed, multistakeholder network like the Christchurch Call, it also provides a fair, transparent, and collaborative way to build consensus and appreciate diverse views - and to ensure that the outcomes reflect the collective wisdom of the community.

Who took part in the Delphi Study?

The Delphi Study convened a diverse and highly qualified group of 37 participants from governments, academia, the not-for-profit sector and civil society across multiple regions. Each was selected for their expertise in areas relevant to CCIAO, including AI governance, ethics, algorithmic research, and the prevention and countering of violent extremism — particularly in understanding how exposure to TVEC can contribute to radicalisation. This diversity ensured that the study reflected a wide range of perspectives and achieved a balanced integration of technical insight, subject matter expertise and governance-oriented viewpoints.

The 37 participants were drawn from a broad cross-section of the Christchurch Call community as well as interested parties, including academia and research (28%), governments (18%), the Christchurch Call Advisory Network (16%), the not-for-profit sector (15%), the Call community (10%), and wider civil society (5%). Participants from 17 countries contributed diverse regional perspectives spanning Europe, North America, Africa, the Asia–Pacific, and the Middle East.

Representatives from social media networks and tech companies were also invited to take part; however, none elected to do so.

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Participants ranged in age from 18 to over 65, with the majority between 35 and 44 years old (46%) and a further 35% aged 25 to 34.

In **Round 1**, 59% of registered participants completed the full survey, and 97% provided at least a partial response.

In **Round 2**, 46% of registered participants completed the full survey.

After two rounds, areas of convergence were well defined and areas of divergence equally clear. In line with Delphi methodological guidance, the study concluded at this point, as a third round was unlikely to produce further meaningful insights.

Methodology

The Delphi Study was conducted using a structured, iterative survey process designed to gather expert insights, identify areas of agreement and divergence, and build consensus across a diverse, multistakeholder group. The method was selected for its ability to combine rigorous analysis with anonymity, enabling participants to express their views freely while contributing asynchronously and globally.

Participants completed two survey rounds. In each round, responses were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to assess the level of agreement and identify themes for further refinement. Summary findings from Round 1 were shared anonymously with participants before Round 2, allowing individuals to review their earlier responses considering the wider group's perspectives.

Consensus was assessed using percentage agreement thresholds:

- **80% or higher:** Strong consensus
- **60–79%:** Moderate consensus
- **50–59%:** Low or emerging consensus
- **Below 50%:** No consensus

Responses that fell within the moderate to strong consensus brackets were deemed to have achieved consensus. Where results fell below that or didn't reach consensus, we looked more closely at the feedback provided to see if common thematic ground could be identified. In cases where common themes were identified, consensus was deemed achieved on that basis. In other instances, where divergence was identified, questions were reframed, supported with additional information and/or re-asked.

This approach provided a transparent and replicable framework for interpreting collective judgments, ensuring that the results reflected both the diversity of views within the group and the strength of agreement on key governance and ethics principles relevant to CCIAO.

Perspectives and Insights

This section summarises the perspectives shared across both Delphi rounds, identifying areas of strong consensus as well as those where views diverged.

Areas Where Participant Perspectives Reached Consensus

The Delphi study identified several areas where participants expressed clear alignment in their views on how governance and ethics frameworks for the CCIAO should be developed and implemented. These points of consensus represent shared priorities and underlying principles that participants considered essential for ensuring trust, transparency, and accountability in the initiative's future design. The following outlines the key insights that emerged:

- In line with the **Christchurch Call Commitments**, participants identified the following top five values as most important for CCIAO's governance and ethics frameworks:
 1. Respect for Human Rights
 2. Transparency
 3. Safety by Design
 4. Harm Prevention and Minimisation, and
 5. Upholding a Free, Open, and Secure Internet.
- Participants agreed that CCIAO governance should reflect the Christchurch Call Commitments by prioritising transparency, equal representation, and equity for those most affected.
- Participants stressed the importance of funding and supporting civil society, building clear governance structures, and developing practical tools for collaboration.
- Other priorities included open dialogue, clear decision-making, efficient organisation, and using the Foundation's NGO role to strengthen platform engagement.
- Given the Call's global scope, participants identified two preferred cross-jurisdictional governance models: a multistakeholder advisory council and a steering committee.
- Participants suggested that the Internet Governance Forum offered a useful model for CCIAO to learn from.
- Participants preferred a governance model combining non-binding advice with strong transparency provisions, viewing it as a potential standard-setting approach.

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- Participants suggested regular online meetings, an online collaboration space, and workshops as the main ways collaboration should occur.
- Participants agreed that the governance group should include 5 to 10 members.
- Participants preferred that technical expertise should be the primary attribute for future group members.
- Participants highlighted the importance of balanced multistakeholder representation, transparent, merit-based appointments, and rotating, fixed-term memberships with staggered turnover to prevent undue influence.
- Participants agreed that managing conflicts of interest proactively is essential, guided by robust policies that include pre-appointment disclosures and agreements, clear terms of reference outlining roles and responsibilities, and independence from funding sources.
- Participants shared the view that data providers should be represented collectively within CCIAO governance and ethics frameworks by one or two designated representatives.
- Participants identified transparency, including the publication of project plans and milestone reports, as key evaluation standards for CCIAO's governance framework.
- Participants favoured a staged **ethics framework**, starting small and expanding as CCIAO grows.
- Participants identified the most critical ethics principles to guide CCIAO's development as:
 - Transparency
 - Human rights protection
 - Accountability
 - Safety by design
 - Harm prevention
 - Fairness
 - Equality
 - Inclusion
 - Collaborative multistakeholder engagement
 - Privacy and data protection
 - Cultural sensitivity, and

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- Cross-cultural competence.
- Participants noted that the ethics framework developed through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) AI Principles Expert Group could provide a useful reference point for CCIAO.
- Participants agreed that an ethics group of 5 to 10 members would be most suitable.
- Participants recommended integrating ethics oversight into CCIAO's ongoing processes through regular ethics reviews aligned with project milestones, applying established ethics frameworks to guide decisions, and embedding ethics impact assessments within project workflows.
- Participants recommended organisational-level membership for any future CCIAO ethics committee, rather than individual appointments.
- Participants agreed that the ethics group should be responsible for updating and amending the ethics charter, leading its development and publication with support from CCIAO and the CCF.

Areas Where Participant Perspectives Diverged

While statistical consensus was reached across the survey's two rounds, there was evidence of thematic divergence reflecting differing perspectives on some topics. These included:

- Perspectives on the size of governance and ethics groups reflected divergent views on the need to balance agility with inclusivity.
- Advisory arrangement perspectives were mixed, with some participants envisaging a formal advisory board model while others preferred routine integration within the governance process itself. This indicated divergent views on the need to balance independence with embedded oversight.
- Views on the participation of data providers in CCIAO governance and ethics frameworks reflected divergent views on managing the tension between the need for positive, multistakeholder collaboration, and clear independence.
- While most participants prioritised technical skills for prospective group members, there was near consensus on the importance of policy expertise and cultural and religious diversity.
- Participants held varied views on the ethics group's composition, emphasising the need to balance specialist expertise with practical operational knowledge.
- Participants expressed differing views on whether the ethics framework should remain advisory or take on a more directive, authoritative role.

Recommendations

The CCIAO Delphi Study has provided clear insights into how context-specific governance and ethics frameworks should be developed to support transparent, responsible research into how algorithmic recommender systems shape user experience and exposure to TVEC.

In line with **Christchurch Call Commitments**, this includes reviewing algorithms and processes that amplify terrorist and violent extremist content to identify intervention points—such as redirects to positive alternatives, counter-narratives, and multi-stakeholder reporting mechanisms that protect trade secrets—while partnering with civil society on community-led counter-extremism efforts. CCIAO also focuses on developing evidence-based interventions through trusted information sharing about algorithmic effects, while supporting research into the online and offline impacts of terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC).

Based on areas of thematic consensus, the following recommendations will be presented to the inaugural CCIAO governance group:

- **Embed Core Values:** Ensure all CCIAO governance and ethics frameworks reflect the Christchurch Call Commitments, prioritising *human rights, transparency, safety by design, harm prevention, and a free, open, and secure internet*.
- **Adopt a Scalable Governance Model:** Begin with a small, multistakeholder advisory group, expanding over time into a broader structure as CCIAO's work and community mature.
- **Civil Society Participation:** Meaningful civil society engagement depends on shared responsibility and coordinated support among partners, underpinned by clearly defined roles.
- **Ensure Transparent and Accountable Membership:** Apply open, merit-based appointments, fixed-term rotating memberships, and clear conflict-of-interest policies with full disclosure and independence from funding sources.
- **Foster Collaboration and Communication:** Encourage open conversations, shared learning, and regular connection between members and across regions, and support practical, effective ways of working together.
- **Integrate Continuous Ethics Oversight:** Integrate ethics and impact reviews into CCIAO's regular reporting and project tracking.
- **Maintain Appropriately Sized and Skilled Governance and Ethics Groups:** Maintain agile groups of 5–10 members that emphasise technical expertise and organisational representation over individual appointments.

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- **Enhance Evaluation Transparency:** Regularly share project plans, progress updates, and governance reports to demonstrate CCIAO's commitment to transparency and accountability.
- **Learn from Proven Models:** Draw on experiences in the *Internet Governance Forum* and similar initiatives to inform CCIAO's governance design, operational practices, and standard-setting role.

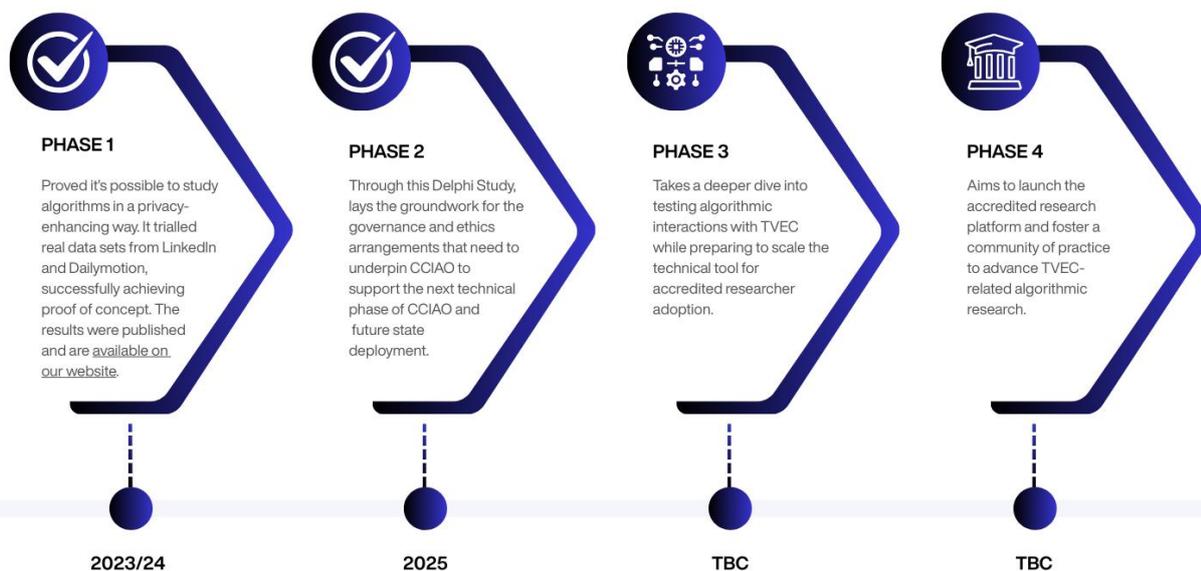
Next Steps

The findings from this Delphi Study will serve as a key input to CCIAO’s next phase of work, supporting the creation of governance and ethics arrangements that support real-world deployment of the technical tool.

In due course, an open call will be made for individuals wishing to participate in CCIAO’s ongoing governance and ethics frameworks. This transparent and inclusive process will ensure that the structures guiding CCIAO’s implementation reflect the collective insights, values and expertise of the wide Call Community.

As CCIAO moves into Phases 3 and 4, operationalising these insights will become increasingly important to ensure they are embedded into practice alongside data access, researcher accreditation and further technological development.

Together, these next steps will position CCIAO to realise its goal: enabling transparent, privacy-preserving, researcher access into how algorithms shape the online journeys of users towards (and away) from TVEC.



About The Christchurch Call

Our mission is clear: to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) online while upholding human rights and preserving a free, open, and secure internet.

The Christchurch Call to Action was born out of the tragedy of the March 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, which was deliberately live-streamed and amplified online.

In the years since, the Call has become a global community, uniting governments, tech companies, and civil society to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) online.

Yet the threat continues to evolve. Violent extremists exploit emerging technologies to spread hate, radicalise vulnerable individuals to violence, and undermine social cohesion.

Today, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence presents both new risks and new opportunities. Generative AI can be weaponized to produce persuasive violent extremist content at scale, while algorithms can be exploited to accelerate radicalisation. At the same time, AI offers powerful tools for detection, intervention, and response.

The urgency of this moment demands renewed commitment and action.

The Christchurch Call Community is focused on the future, working together to ensure that the internet remains a force for good and a place of innovation, safety, and freedom for all.

The Christchurch Call Foundation is a non-partisan, independent not-for-profit, headquartered in New Zealand, with staff across the globe. In addition to core work enabling delivery of the Call's mission, the Foundation leads a range of high impact initiatives on priority areas agreed by Call Community leaders.

Appendix A: Delphi Response Overview

Rounds 1 and 2 of the Delphi Study provided a comprehensive view of stakeholder perspectives on governance and ethics for CCIAO. Round 1 established the foundational areas of consensus and divergence, while Round 2 refined and validated those findings — strengthening agreement on key principles and clarifying where views continue to differ.

Round 1 of the Delphi Study generated valuable insights into the governance and ethics arrangements needed to support CCIAO. Across 20 questions and written contributions, participants identified areas of common ground as well as points of divergence. These are summarised in the table below:

QUESTION		RESULTS
1	In line with the Christchurch Call Commitments, what do you think are the top five values that should guide CCIAO's work?	CONSENSUS
2	The Christchurch Call Commitments emphasize working closely with civil society, governments, and online service providers through a multistakeholder model. How should CCIAO governance ensure meaningful, balanced participation across these groups?	CONSENSUS
3	The Call operates globally. What governance structures could best support CCIAO while coordinating across jurisdictions and respecting local contexts and legal frameworks?	CONSENSUS
4	Are you aware of any governance models already in existence that may be appropriate for CCIAO to adapt or learn from?	CONSENSUS
5*	What do you think is an appropriate size for a CCIAO governance group?	CONSENSUS
6	In your opinion, what mix of skills, backgrounds, and perspectives should be represented in governance arrangements to effectively support CCIAO?	CONSENSUS
7	While the Christchurch Call Foundation will retain oversight and decision-making authority for CCIAO, how might a governance arrangement be structured to support meaningful and effective advisory input?	CONSENSUS
8	What mechanisms or processes would support working closely with civil society, governments, and online service providers?	CONSENSUS
9	What governance features or practices can help a CCIAO governance arrangement maintain independence from, for example, political, commercial, or technological pressures?	CONSENSUS
10	How can governance arrangements manage conflicts of interest effectively without compromising collaboration?	CONSENSUS
11	Depending on the type of governance model adopted, what role should advisory boards, expert panels, or community councils play within the overall governance framework (if any)?	NO CONSENSUS
12	In your view, what role, if any, should data providers have on the governance board?	NO CONSENSUS
13	What indicators or metrics could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of governance arrangements for CCIAO?	CONSENSUS
	Free text question: Is there anything you'd like to suggest, add or query on governance and CCIAO?	CONSENSUS
14	What kinds of ethics arrangements should be stood up to support CCIAO?	NO CONSENSUS

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15	What are the most critical ethical principles that should guide the development and governance of algorithmic systems under the Christchurch Call?	CONSENSUS
16*	Are you aware of any existing ethics arrangements or organisations that may suit CCIAO?	CONSENSUS
17	What do you think is an appropriate size for an Ethics Committee or similar arrangement?	CONSENSUS
18	How should ethics oversight and evaluation be integrated into the ongoing processes of CCIAO?	CONSENSUS
19	What are your views on whether organisational representation should be allowed on the Ethics Committee?	NO CONSENSUS
20	Should the ethics group or committee be responsible for ongoing updates or amendments to the ethics charter (or similar document), or should this be distinct from their role in advising on or overseeing its implementation?	NO CONSENSUS
	Free text question: Is there anything you'd like to suggest, add or query on ethics and CCIAO?	CONSENSUS

Round 2 of the Delphi Study built on the insights gathered in Round 1, further refining perspectives on the governance and ethics arrangements needed to support CCIAO. Through a focused set of follow-up questions and written feedback, participants were invited to revisit earlier findings, test the strength of emerging consensus, and clarify remaining areas of divergence. The results are summarised in the table below:

	QUESTION	RESULTS
1	In Round 1, consensus wasn't reached on the appropriate size for a CCIAO governance group, but the most supported options were: Between 11–15 people (44%) Between 5–10 people (39.5%) For Round 2, please consider the following in your response: An advisory group of 5–10 members is easier to coordinate and more agile, but may limit diversity of perspectives. An advisory group of 11–15 members offer broader representation and expertise but can be harder to manage and slower to reach agreement.	CONSENSUS
2	In Round 1, views on advisory arrangements were divided between establishing a distinct Advisory Board and embedding an advisory function as a routine, standing part of the governance group. Round 1 responses showed: Advisory Board (44%) Structured as a routine/standing part of the governance group (39%) Both approaches have advantages: a dedicated board may provide clearer focus and independence, while integration into the governance group may ensure closer alignment and continuity. For Round 2, considering the above, please indicate your preferred option (as noted 'below' in the survey).	CONSENSUS
3	In Round 1, consensus wasn't reached on the role of data providers as part of governance arrangement, but the most supported options were: Represented collectively by one or two people (57%) Provided with an Observer Seat (26%) For Round 2, please indicate your preferred option below	CONSENSUS
4	In Round 1, participants explored both the form (Advisory Board vs. Oversight Board) and the function (appropriate size) of an ethics arrangement. While no single model reached consensus, two directions emerged: On arrangements, consensus wasn't reached. The most supported options were: - an Ethics Advisory Board (35%) and - an Independent Oversight Board (26%). There was consensus that any such body should be of a workable size (5–10 members), with some support for a smaller, more streamlined group. - between 5–10 people (61% – consensus), - followed by less than 5 people (30%). For Round 2, we invite you to consider these dimensions together. Please select the combined design principles arrangement you believe would provide should shape its size and composition? For example:	CONSENSUS

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5	<p>Responsibility for developing and maintaining the ethics charter will ultimately sit with the governance group. However, we would like to offer them a recommendation for consideration as part of this process. In Round 1, consensus wasn't reached on responsibility for the ethics charter, but the most supported options were: - The Ethics Group should only provide review of drafts and implementation (33%) - The Ethics Group should lead on Charter Development and publication with support from the CCIAO team at CCF (33%) For Round 2, please indicate your preferred option below:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONSENSUS</p>
6	<p>In Round 1, consensus wasn't reached on existing models or organisations, but the most supported options were: -OECD's AI Principles Expert Group (57%) - UK Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (43%) -AI Now Institute (43%) OECD's AI Principles Expert Group (AIGO / ONE AI) - Composition: Mix of government, civil society, academia, technical experts, and industry, nominated by governments or stakeholder groups. - Governance: Co-chaired expert groups supported by OECD Secretariat; members serve renewable terms; advice informs OECD but isn't binding. UK Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI) - Composition: Independent board of experts (technical, legal, ethics, policy) plus staff in government. - Governance: Established under UK government (DSIT); provides reviews and guidance; operates as an advisory unit, not fully independent. AI Now Institute - Composition: Independent non-profit research staff and fellows from law, policy, social sciences, and technical fields; led by co-executive directors. - Governance: Internal governance as a non-profit institute; agenda set by leadership; maintains independence by not taking corporate funding. For Round 2, we invite you to consider which you believe suits best. We'd also welcome your comments on why you've made the choice you have in this question in the 'other' section. Please select the combined design principles arrangement you believe would provide a model that would suit CCIAO.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONSENSUS</p>
	<p>Free text question: Please share any additional comments or suggestions you may wish to contribute:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NO CONSENSUS</p>

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