



FAQs - Safeguards Accelerator

Translating Global Principles into Local Action

1. What is the core objective of the DPI Safeguards Accelerator?

The Accelerator supports countries and partners to move from framework principles to practical action. It focuses on mobilizing multistakeholder action to identify systemic risks, prioritize safeguard measures, engage civil society, and establish actionable roadmaps or advance specific protections within ongoing, active national DPI deployments.

2. Why care about Safeguards?

As countries rapidly deploy digital building blocks, such as digital identity, payment platforms, and data exchange networks, to deliver services at scale, safeguards become essential. Safeguards are not merely compliance exercises to reduce harm; they are foundational to strengthening institutional trust, ensuring citizen inclusion, mitigating systemic exclusion, and unlocking long-term public value.

3. Who is eligible to apply for the Accelerator?

The inaugural cohort accepts applications from United Nations entities and eligible non-governmental organizations (NGOs/CSOs) currently engaged in an active country-level DPI deployment. While the initial launch is limited to these two institutional pathways, subsequent cohorts are planned to expand to include dedicated tracks for private sector actors, technology vendors, and startups.

4. Can an organization apply to participate in the Accelerator cohort if they do not require financial assistance?

Yes. Organisations with existing funds to advance safeguards work may also be considered for non-funded participation in the Accelerator. They would use their own funding for the work, while accessing peer learning, mentoring support, and relevant networks.

Requests for non-funded participation will be reviewed based on relevance, government collaboration, safeguards focus, and alignment with the Accelerator's objectives and will depend on programme capacity. A limited number (two-three) of non-funded participants may be selected.

5. Can a national government apply directly to the Accelerator?

No. Applications must be submitted by either a United Nations entity or an eligible non-governmental organization (NGO) working in formal collaboration with the host government. The programme is designed to support government-led DPI initiatives through these trusted implementation partners.

6. What types of DPI efforts qualify for support?

The Accelerator is designed to support active, ongoing national DPI initiatives, including:

- **Foundational Systems:** Digital identity, digital payment platforms, and data exchange infrastructure.
- **Sectoral DPI:** Digital building blocks purposefully driving delivery in critical domains, including health, agriculture, climate, financial inclusion, or social protection.

7. What kind of proposals are you seeking?

Applicants must propose country-based safeguards interventions tied directly to an active foundational or sectoral DPI rollout. Applications must target definite deliverables under one of two entry points based on the maturity and needs of the DPI effort:

- System-Level Safeguards Work:** Comprehensive efforts to assess systemic risks (safety, exclusion, structural vulnerabilities) identify gaps, define safeguards priorities, and develop action roadmaps across a DPI system, sector, or country-level DPI effort. This may include developing safeguards recommendations, a time-bound national DPI safeguards action roadmap, establishing a national DPI safeguards framework, and setting up a multistakeholder safeguards coalition.
- Issue-Specific Safeguards Work:** Targeted interventions focused on advancing one or two specific safeguard measures within an ongoing DPI effort, such as grievance redress, offline access or verification, inclusion of excluded communities, gender equity, disability accessibility, responsible data use, consent management, or user recourse.

Across both entry points, proposals should explain how relevant actors will be engaged throughout the safeguards process, including government ministries,

regulators, public agencies, civil society organisations, affected communities or user groups, Digital Public Goods and open source ecosystem actors, and technical partners. The aim is to ensure that safeguards are not only recommended, but understood, prioritised, and advanced through shared ownership.

8. How should Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) be meaningfully integrated into the proposal?

An in-depth, operational civil society engagement approach is a mandatory requirement that must extend beyond superficial or one-off consultations. CSOs must be given a defined, active role within the safeguards process itself.

For example, a UN entity or lead NGO might propose establishing a formal multi-stakeholder safeguards coalition where CSOs act as core participants in identifying systemic risks and monitoring action roadmaps. Alternatively, an expert civil society organization could serve as a direct co-delivery partner leading localized vulnerability assessments or co-designing people-facing safeguards such as grievance redress mechanisms, offline access, or accessibility measures.

In your proposal, please specify: which CSOs or community groups will be engaged, what role they will play, and when they will be involved.

9. What level of government commitment is required to apply?

Because the Accelerator focuses on practical, national-level safeguards action, formal government alignment is required through a two-stage process:

At Stage 1 (Initial Application): Applicants must demonstrate a verified, existing technical collaboration or active working relationship with the relevant national government institution responsible for the DPI deployment.

- **At Stage 2 (Detailed Proposal):** Longlisted applicants will be required to submit formal, written institutional confirmation, such as a commitment letter signed by the head of the collaborating government authority, indicating explicit support for the proposed safeguards intervention and a willingness to participate in the cohort.

10. Where can I find details on timelines, funding limits, tranche disbursements, and legal tracks?

- For exact deadlines and rolling wave dates, see the [\[How to Apply\]](#) section and the [\[Milestones and Selection Timeline\]](#) table.
- For the funding ceiling, see the Why Apply section. For tranche disbursements, and pathway-specific legal instruments, see FAQs 11 and 12 and the Stage 2 guidance shared with longlisted applicants.

11. How are funds disbursed?

To maintain strict administrative and fiduciary accountability across the 6 to 9-month Accelerator cycle, funds will generally be released in three performance-linked tranches tied to agreed programmatic milestones:

- **Tranche 1 (Inception):** 20% upon formal agreement finalization and approved inception plan.
- **Tranche 2 (Mid-term):** 50% upon successful completion of agreed mid-term milestones (e.g., risk mapping or draft roadmap delivery).
- **Tranche 3 (Final Delivery):** 30% upon final delivery, acceptance of agreed outputs (validation of the completed action plan or specific safeguard mechanism).

Please note, all disbursements remain strictly subject to the completion of standard institutional clearance processes.

12. How do the administrative requirements differ between the two application pathways?

To accommodate distinct fiduciary frameworks, the cohort operates via two legal tracks:

- **The UN Entities Pathway:** Financed via the UN-to-UN funding process under the Digital Cooperation Fund / Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) arrangement. Shortlisted entities must be willing to sign or adhere to the Digital Cooperation Fund Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and develop a joint project document.
- **The NGO Pathway:** Administered via the UNDP Low-Value Grant Agreement process. Shortlisted non-profit entities, civil society organizations, and community-based organizations will undergo proportionate organizational registration, legal, financial due diligence, and reputational eligibility checks prior to award finalization. If an applicant has previously received funding from UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), additional checks may be required to confirm whether the organization remains within applicable grant limits.

13. What reporting will selected participants be expected to complete?

Selected participants will be expected to complete the technical and financial reporting linked to agreed milestones and tranche releases. This may include an inception or workplan update, progress reporting, financial reporting, and a final report summarising activities completed, outputs delivered, lessons learned, and

recommended next steps. Participants may also be asked to contribute to light-touch learning moments during the Accelerator cycle, such as peer exchange sessions, progress reflections, or documentation of practical insights that can benefit the wider safeguards ecosystem. Specific reporting requirements will be confirmed in the grant agreement or project documentation.