

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) is committed to using the power of Artificial intelligence (AI) in a responsible and ethical way. We recognise that AI is becoming increasingly embedded in everyday life. Tools like ChatGPT and Copilot are changing the way people work by saving them time and improving accessibility. We understand that the communities we serve will be keen to find ways to use these tools in their own work.

As AI technologies are evolving rapidly, there are both opportunities and risks to consider when using AI. CRT is committed to monitoring developments and will update this guidance when necessary to ensure it remains aligned with responsible and ethical AI practice.

2.0 USING AI

What we expect if you use AI:

If you choose to use AI, please ensure that you:

- are transparent about its use
- check and adapt any AI generated content
- do not include personal or sensitive data
- ensure your application reflects your organisation and community

2.1 AI use in CRT funding applications/programmes

You can use AI tools to help write your funding application; we will not reject an application just because AI was used. We want to ensure that our funding applications are open and inclusive. We recognise that some people, including those with certain disabilities or access requirements, may have been disadvantaged in making an application in the past and we welcome assistive AI technologies in supporting these applicants to complete funding applications. Also, AI tools can support you if English is not your first language or if you're new to writing funding applications.

Although we will not reject an application because AI was used, we do require applicants:

- **to be transparent about the use of any AI (e.g. a statement in the application form); and**
- **to use it within the law.**

Funding applicants and awardees are responsible for ensuring compliance with data protection, intellectual property and copyright laws, including obtaining necessary permissions and consulting with any affected parties. You remain responsible for the accuracy and integrity of your application, including any content supported by AI.

If using AI to assist with your application, please:

- **research the ethical and legal operation of the AI you are using; and**
- **be aware of how AI tools may use the information you put into it.** Some tools may use this information to improve their systems, meaning your content or ideas could potentially be used more widely. For instance, you may find your unique ideas being suggested to other people for their applications if they are using the same AI tool. Equally, AI may suggest ideas that originate from other sources, including copyrighted material.

Please note the majority of our funding programmes are competitive and using AI to complete your application could result in it looking remarkably similar to others. Losing the creative uniqueness of your application may mean it is less likely to stand out within the context of a competitive fund. Other risks that should be considered are detailed in section 3 below.

Using AI appropriately will not give an unfair advantage or disadvantage in the assessment process. Applications are assessed on their quality, relevance and alignment with the fund criteria.

We do not currently use AI to assess applications. While we may consider using AI for very basic eligibility checks in the future, the creative content of the application will always be assessed by human beings using the assessment criteria outlined in the guidelines for each fund.

2.2 Using AI to generate or assist with the delivery of your project

We do not currently have assessment criteria specific to AI in any of our funding guidelines. If you plan to use AI to deliver a part of your project, it will be considered as part of the overall assessment against the specific fund assessment criteria.

You should consider the following questions if you are using AI in your project and ensure that, where relevant, you are noting responses to them in your application:

Legal & Compliance Considerations:

- Does your use of AI adhere to all relevant legal obligations e.g. Data protection?
- Do you know what the AI tool you are using will do with the information you put into it – will it store it, train itself with it or share it with others? With this in mind, do you have the necessary rights to the information or material to input it into the AI?

Transparency & Governance:

- Are you being transparent about your use of AI with:
 - everyone working on your project (including getting consent where necessary)
 - funders
 - audiences

Skills & Capability:

- Do you, or your project staff, have the necessary skills, and governance structures to use AI responsibly and ethically?

Creative & Ethical Considerations:

- Is your use of AI supporting, rather than replacing, human creativity and ensuring that technology enhances storytelling while remaining secondary to artistic integrity?
- Is the use of AI in your project promoting new and diverse creative voices who may otherwise face barriers?
- Has AI enabled you to meaningfully represent diverse cultural perspectives and knowledge systems? If so, have you included safeguards to prevent misrepresentation of cultural elements and included appropriate consultation with the relevant cultural knowledge holders?

Impact & Value for Money:

- Are the cost savings from your use of AI enabling a more ambitious outcome? Is it reducing the need for public funding or enhancing the overall quality and scope of the project?

Risk Management:

- Have you identified any potential risks associated with AI use, such as technical failures or unintended outputs? Have you provided clear mitigation strategies?

3.0 RISKS

Use AI with caution. AI can provide a useful starting point but often what it produces is not as strong as it might appear and can contain misleading information. AI generated content should always be reviewed and verified before it is used. AI supported applications do not tell the unique story of your community and how you want to support it. Being too generic in content may

disadvantage your application. If you are considering using AI, you should be aware of the following risks:

- **Inaccuracies & Misinformation:** Outputs are not 100% accurate; they may provide false information or use sources you would not normally trust. AI tools also cannot reason or understand context. To ensure accuracy use trusted sources for data and research. Always verify AI-sourced content and adapt it with your expertise and experience. AI outputs should always be reviewed and verified before use.

You can ask AI to list the sources it has used so that you can verify the data.

- **Bias:** AI learns from the data inputted, and where there is an imbalance or bias in the data, it may produce outputs, which have discriminatory effects.

Transparency and governance frameworks, including human oversight, can mitigate this risk.

- **Fraud:** Fraudsters can abuse AI by falsifying content such as financial documentation or correspondence, with intent to steal money and identity information.
- **Ownership:** Outputs may include copyright works without permission, as unlicensed content is used to train some AI services, infringing the rights of the creator or rights holder, bringing potential legal claims.
- **Data Breaches:** AI tools, especially free ones, may store data you input. This could compromise confidentiality and breach data protection, where personal data is concerned. AI can expose data, for example, revealing sensitive or confidential information one individual has input, to generate content for another.

If you input your organisation's data into AI tools, ensure that you do so in compliance with relevant legislation.

- **Environmental Impact:** AI tools require large amounts of energy and fresh water to power their data centres. This creates significant environmental impact. For instance estimates suggest that ChatGPT consumes between 50 and 90 times more energy per query than a conventional search.

Environmental impact of AI can be reduced by using simpler or less energy-intensive tools where appropriate, particularly for basic tasks.

4.0 KEY TIPS FOR USING AI

a) Your Voice

AI tools can be helpful, but they often create text that feels generic or full of buzzwords. This can make your application sound less authentic and fail to show what makes your organisation and project unique.

Here's how to make it personal and impactful:

- **Add your voice:** Edit AI-generated content so it reflects your own experiences, skills, and the real needs your community has shared with you.
- **Show real impact:** Include insights from consultations, surveys, or local data to explain why your project matters and how it will improve lives.
- **Keep it authentic:** Use language that feels true to your organisation and community, not just what sounds impressive.

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- **Language:** Specify “English (UK)” to ensure spelling, terminology and tone are appropriate. Some AI tools may default to American English.

b) Be Specific

Be clear and specific. Avoid vague statements - show exactly what you plan to do.

Include these essentials:

- **What:** Describe the activities or services you will deliver.
- **Why:** Explain the need and the difference your project will make.
- **When and Where:** Provide timelines and locations so we understand your plan.

Make it stand out:

- Show what makes your project unique. Use real examples from your community and details from your work—such as stories, feedback, or local data—to demonstrate why your project matters.

c) Project Costs

Applications are assessed on value for money and impact.

Make sure your budget matches your project activities and supports your goals. Don't rely on AI suggested budgets without reviewing them. Ensure they fit your plans and meet the funding criteria.

Check all costs are eligible, reasonable, and offer good value for money.