CHILDREN ONLINE PROTECTION LABORATORY

Request for Expressions of Interest

GUIDELINES

<u>Subject</u>: Children Online Protection Lab – Experimentations 2024

<u>Issue Date</u>: 5 February 2024

<u>Deadline</u>: 3 March 2024, 11:59 PM EST

<u>Submit Expression of Interest at</u>:

→ **_CALL FOR IDEAS_ - FORM**
→ **_CALL FOR RESOURCES_ - FORM**

The Children Online Protection Laboratory (COPL) is an initiative launched by the President of the French Republic in November 2022 following the launch of the Call to Action to _Stand up for children's rights in the digital environment_ in November 2021. As a multi-stakeholder international initiative with high political support, the Laboratory aims to bring together governments, technology and digital companies, academic experts and civil society actors to share expertise, best practices and to create and test new solutions to better protect children online. The COPL is uniquely positioned to provide a platform for novel ideas to its community of international organizations and policymakers.

Purpose of the Request

The purpose of this Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) is to identify potential ideas and resources from the COPL community, and to develop a better understanding of its priorities. The EOI submitted will help to collectively shape the design of a subsequent Call for Proposal (CfP), through which the next cohort of experimentations will be selected. The forms are short to fill: this is a chance for your organization to contribute to the Laboratory's cycle of experimentations, and a timely moment to suggest work that aligns with your priorities!

There are two possible ways of submitting an answer to this EOI:

CALL FOR IDEAS **–** _Submit an idea for an experimentation_

As per the Charter of the COPL, supporters "_decide to collectively form a Laboratory to explore, promote, develop and evaluate solutions aimed at improving the safety of minors in the digital environment including safety and privacy by designing products and features to minimize the potential harm_". Through this EOI – _Call for ideas_, supporters are invited to submit **experimentation ideas** to answer the Lab's priorities. Supporters are encouraged to share the EOI throughout their national networks and invite organizations to propose ideas. As part of the form, organizations will be invited to share the types of support they would need to successfully develop their experimentation. The results of the EOI will help adapt the design of the subsequent CfP, based on actual needs of the community.

CALL FOR RESOURCES **–** _Submit the types of resources and supports your organization could provide_

As per the Charter of the COPL, one of the commitments taken by supporters of the COPL is to "_support some relevant experiments by directly or indirectly providing resources in the appropriate form such as expertise, facilitation or funding, on the basis of a voluntarily_

determined evaluation protocol established in conformity to the Laboratory's processes, subject to the availability of resources". This call for resources aims to identify official supporters' **priorities**, as well as **financial** and **non-financial resources** that could be earmarked to support experimentations. Answers submitted as part of the EOI will be reviewed by the Secretariat and Safe Online, and serve as a way to start a conversation around matching resources to project proposals. They do not constitute a formal commitment to the provision of these resources.

As a key partner of the COPL, Safe Online supports the Secretariat in the development of its programs. The COPL is working to mobilise resources that could be landed at Safe Online with its established grant-making infrastructure. Safe Online will provide support for the operationalisation of a Fund through its centralised pooled funding mechanism, where it will be able to receive financial contributions from donors. With its robust grant-making and investment infrastructure, Safe Online will support the development of the subsequent Call for Proposals, selection and evaluation of experimentation projects.

What we are looking for through this EOI request

CALL FOR IDEAS

Submissions should include:

- A description of the project explaining how it could address one of the priority areas, as well as how it could be evaluated (more comprehensive descriptions and a protocol to evaluate efficacy and impact will only be required for the CfP submission).
- A list of needs and resources that would help the lead-organization run the experiment, including the scale of funding needed to implement the idea.

CALL FOR RESOURCES

Submissions should include:

- Any priorities your organization wishes to address, or solutions you are looking for, to address a specific issue in your country / organization.
- What your organization could potentially contribute, financially (grants) and non-financially (expertise, in-kind tech contributions, advice...) to support experimentations.
- Mechanisms used to provide support, and if there are specific conditions attached to that support.

Priorities for 2024

The Children Online Protection Lab community has expressed wanting to address emerging risks and existing gaps in the protection of children online. The COPL is looking for ideas that will respond to pressing needs, in order to support the prototyping and testing of solutions.

Solutions can be at a national, regional or global level. Please specify the reach of the project.There is no restriction in the nature of projects proposed to the Laboratory. Experimentations can be technological tools at various stages of development:

- **Design of a proof of concept** that demonstrates an innovative use of technology to address a specific challenge with clear plans for further research and testing.
- **Development of new prototypes or products** – including hardware/software/content components – or of new features within existing products or tools.
- **Adaptation or combination of existing tools** to address current gaps, increase efficacy and/or effectiveness, or apply to new use cases.

- **Test and validation of an early-stage pilot project** to test the efficacy of the solution in a specific context, and generate evidence and lessons-learned for future implementation.

Since the request for EOI is in the early stage of the experimentation cycle, and is aimed at gathering information about the COPL community's priorities, it is possible to submit proposals focusing on any area of work with significance for child online protection. This may include, but is not limited to topics such as: *intersections of generative AI and children's digital lives, cyberbullying and harassment, defining 'good' and 'age-appropriate' design and features, mental health and impact of screens on children, content curation and age-appropriate content, age assurance, etc.*

Eligibility

CALL FOR IDEAS – At this stage, we are actively seeking submissions. All organizations are invited to submit ideas – whether they are official supporters of the Laboratory or not. Official supporters may invite organisations from their networks to respond to the EOI.

More restrictions would apply for the subsequent CfP: Non-profit organisations, such as research institutes and academic institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international organisations, and private companies are eligible to receive funding through Safe Online. Organizations must be legally registered and follow relevant ethical and regulatory compliance. Governments are not eligible to apply as the lead organization. Consortia are also encouraged to apply; however, the organisation submitting the application will be considered the main grantee, bearing all the contractual responsibilities *vis-à-vis* the funding entity.

CALL FOR RESOURCES – All supporter organizations are encouraged to submit a list of resources they could make available to support experimentations.

It is possible to submit more than one form for this EOI.

Process of the Request for Expressions of Interest

Interested and eligible entities are invited to complete and submit the Expression of Interest Application Forms online and provide the information indicated in the form. All submissions must be made in English. Expressions of Interest will be reviewed after the close of the request. The last day for submissions of EOIs is **3 MARCH 3 2024 11:59 PM EST**.

Submissions to this Request for EOI will be reviewed by the COPL Secretariat, Safe Online, and selected experts. Potential, specificity and clarity of the submissions will be assessed, however, they will not be scored. It is not expected that EOIs will cover in depth or provide full details of the project - this form should be relatively quick to fill, however **please provide as much information as you can to facilitate synergies among the COPL community.** Feedback on the community's priorities and potential synergies between organizations will be provided collectively during a meeting of the COPL, and ahead of the launch of the CfP. Responses to the EOI submissions cannot be provided to all applicants, but feedback may be provided upon request.

In the future CfP, solutions are expected to be scored with criteria such as: novelty of the experimentation, feasibility of the experimentation, implementation & scaling potential (including organizational capacity and partnerships), ethics and respect of principles (balance of rights, inclusion), impact, rigor of the proposed evaluation process, alignment between budget and project goals. Selection criteria will be shared in more detail as part of the CfP application process.

This Request for Expressions of Interest does not constitute a call for proposals and/or solicitation. The COPL does not require proposals or bids at this stage; this EOI request is seeking ideas and resources to support the design of the 2024 Call for Proposals. A response to this request for EOI does not bind the submitting entities to the concepts or ideas proposed for the subsequent CfP. A response to the request for EOI is not required, but encouraged prior to submitting a proposal to the CfP.

If you have any questions about this request for EOI, please reach out to:
Laboratoire.protection-enfance@diplomatie.gouv.fr.

Terms & Conditions

Please read these terms carefully before proceeding.

- By submitting this EOI, you are authorising the Children Online Protection Lab (COPL) Secretariat to evaluate the EOI for a potential invitation for a full proposal, and you agree to the terms herein.
- You agree and acknowledge that personal data submitted as part of the Expression of Interest, including name, mailing address, phone number, and email address in the EOI may be collected, processed, stored and otherwise used by the COPL Secretariat and Safe Online for the purposes of implementing the initiative and evaluating the contents of the EOI.
- You acknowledge that neither party is obligated to enter into any official agreement as a result of the EOI submission, the COPL Secretariat is under no obligation to review or consider the EOI, and neither party acquires any intellectual property rights as a result of submitting the proposal.
- Applicants represent and warrant that they have authority to submit an EOI in connection with this Request for EOI and grant the rights set forth herein on behalf of their organisation. Any problems that arise related to IP or data privacy are solely the responsibility of the applicant.