



Annual Report

2024



Message from the President and Executive Director

Dear Friends of FLI,

2024 will be remembered as the year when the governance of artificial intelligence moved from aspiration to reality; and when FLI's sustained outreach and advocacy began yielding concrete institutional change. The world's first comprehensive AI legislation entered into force in the European Union, marking a historic milestone in technology governance that we helped shape through years of dedicated policy work.

Yet this progress came against a backdrop of accelerating AI development that validated our warnings about the inadequacy of voluntary industry commitments. Our inaugural AI Safety Index delivered a sobering assessment: none of the major AI companies demonstrated quantitative safety guarantees, and those racing toward artificial general intelligence lacked adequate strategies to ensure systems remain under human control. The pressure of profit-driven incentives in the absence of oversight continues to push companies toward cutting corners on safety.

This tension between progress and peril defined our work throughout 2024. While celebrating legislative victories like the EU AI Act, we simultaneously confronted setbacks such as the veto of California's SB 1047, despite unprecedented bipartisan support from

the public, experts, and diverse stakeholders. These experiences reinforced a fundamental truth: sustainable AI governance requires persistent, coordinated effort across multiple fronts.

Our response was characteristically comprehensive. We expanded our military AI work, participating in groundbreaking conferences from Sierra Leone to Vienna that advanced momentum toward an autonomous weapons treaty. We launched the Campaign to Ban Deepfakes, building diverse coalitions to address synthetic media harms. Through our partnership with The Elders, we elevated the concept of long-view leadership, calling on world leaders to prioritize humanity's long-term flourishing over short-term interests.

We also invested in the wider community of efforts to improve the outcomes of AI's development. Our Vitalik Buterin Fellowship program continues to build the technical AI safety field. Our Superintelligence Imagined Contest engaged the broader public with critical questions about advanced AI. And our policy and research grants explored everything from AI's impact on global development to novel governance institutions for artificial general intelligence.

The enthusiastic response to our work, from our AI Act Explorer tool becoming an indispensable resource to our podcast reaching new audiences worldwide, demonstrates growing public recognition that the choices we make about AI development today will determine the trajectory of human civilization.

As we look toward 2025, the stakes continue rising. The race toward AGI shows no signs of slowing, making our mission more urgent than ever. Yet we draw strength from our expanding community of supporters, our talented team, and the increasing number of policymakers, researchers, and citizens who share our commitment to ensuring transformative technologies serve humanity's best interests.

The challenges ahead are immense, but so is our collective capacity to meet them. We remain steadfast in our determination to steer transformative technology toward benefiting life and away from extreme risks because the future of life depends on getting this right.

With resolve and gratitude,



Anthony Aguirre
Executive Director,
Future of Life Institute



Max Tegmark
President,
Future of Life Institute



Mission

The Future of Life Institute’s mission is to steer transformative technology towards benefiting life and away from extreme large-scale risks.

We believe that the way powerful technology is developed and used will be the most important factor in determining the prospects for the future of life. This is why we have made it our mission to ensure that technology continues to improve those prospects. In pursuit of this mission, we support the development of institutions and visions necessary to manage world-driving technologies and enable positive futures. We seek to reduce large-scale harm and existential risk resulting from accidental or intentional misuse of transformative technologies.

How We Work

Towards these aims, FLI engages in a number of initiatives and strategies, including:

Policy

Our **Policy** team strengthens the governance of transformative technologies through research and advocacy. We close the gap between technical experts and public institutions, helping policymakers effectively govern these complex systems.

Futures

Our **Futures** program explores the beneficial outcomes that transformative technologies could unlock. Using storytelling, worldbuilding, scenario planning, research, and forecasting, we investigate possible futures and identify actionable pathways. We then highlight the policies, decisions, and institutions needed to navigate these pathways, while engaging diverse stakeholders across professions, communities, and regions to shape a shared vision of the future.

Communications

Our **Communications** efforts help policymakers, technologists, and the broader public understand the challenges and opportunities of transformative technologies. We collaborate with journalists, media outlets, content creators, and influencers to raise awareness and share solutions. This includes publishing op-eds, giving press commentary, securing speaking opportunities, guesting on [podcasts](#), and producing original content. We are especially proud of our flagship podcast series, where FLI engages leading researchers, policy experts, philosophers, and other influential voices in dialogue about the future.

Grantmaking

Through our **Grantmaking**, we provide financial support for promising work aligned with our mission. Tackling extreme risks requires a strong and diverse community, yet the field remains underfunded. We see significant potential to expand our grantmaking activities in the years ahead, amplifying the impact of researchers and practitioners working toward safer futures.

Policy

Improving the governance of transformative technologies

In 2024, FLI rose to become one of the most significant and established players in the field of AI policy in Europe, the US, and internationally. We contributed to many policy documents and responses, raised our organizational profile, and positively influenced policy development. Here are a few highlighted projects.

Advancing Civilian AI Governance



In August, after years of work, the world's first comprehensive AI legislation entered into force in the European Union. With implementation rolling out over the coming years, the Act is designed to both support European AI innovation, particularly for small companies and startups, and place public safety as the highest priority. To help stakeholders navigate this landmark legislation, we launched the [AI Act Explorer](#) tool, alongside our dedi-

cated [EU AI Act Newsletter](#), which has become a trusted resource leading up to this moment and will remain invaluable throughout the implementation phase.

In May, the governments of the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom co-hosted the **AI Seoul Summit**, a follow-up to the UK AI Safety Summit held in November. The Summit convened governments, civil society, and industry leaders to advance international, multi-stakeholder cooperation on safe AI development. Ahead of the Summit, 16 technology companies announced a voluntary set of AI safety commitments. As our Policy Director, Mark Brakel, emphasized in [Euronews](#), voluntary measures alone are insufficient: "goodwill alone is not sufficient." To strengthen global governance, FLI published [recommendations](#) outlining how this pivotal moment could drive meaningful progress. The Summit concluded with a [declaration](#) signed by 27 states and the European Union, reaffirming their commitment to collaborative, international approaches that maximize AI's benefits while minimizing its risks.

In the United States, our 2024 focus centered on [California's SB 1047](#), the Safe and Secure Innovation for Frontier Artificial Intelligence Models Act. The bill attracted remarkable bipartisan support from the general public to AI experts, labor unions, and high-profile creatives. Despite this momentum, the Governor ultimately vetoed the legislation. Still, the broad coalition of supporters demonstrated that demand for strong AI governance is growing rapidly, and it is only a matter of time before similar efforts succeed.

Evaluation of Company Safety Practices



In 2024, we launched the inaugural [AI Safety Index](#), convening an independent panel of leading AI experts to assess the safety practices of six major AI companies: OpenAI, Anthropic, Meta, Google DeepMind, xAI, and Zhipu AI.

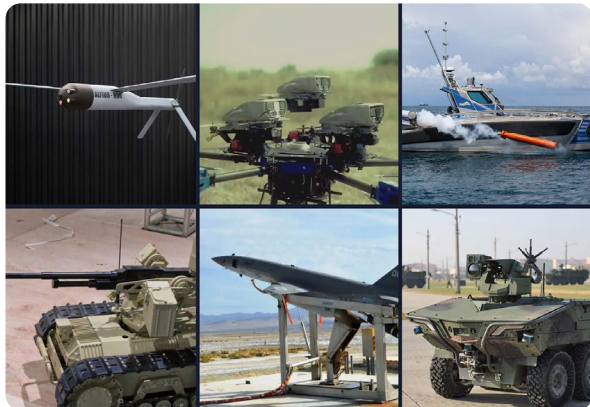
The results were sobering. As panelist and AI pioneer Stuart Russell observed, "none of the current activity provides any kind of quantitative guarantee of safety; nor does it seem possible to provide such guarantees given the current approach to AI via giant black boxes trained on unimaginably vast quantities of data."

While some companies demonstrated promising efforts, such as building early safety frameworks and undertaking risk assessments, others had yet to implement even the most basic safeguards. Across the board, the panel found significant deficiencies in accountability, transparency, and preparedness to address both present and existential risks. Companies that openly aspire to develop artificial general

intelligence (AGI) were judged to lack adequate strategies to ensure systems remain safe and under human control. A consistent theme in the review was the pressure of profit-driven incentives leading companies to cut corners on safety in the absence of independent oversight.

The Index received wide attention and marked a critical step toward building greater accountability in AI development. Given its success, we plan to keep the AI Safety Index current with regular updates.

Military AI Work



Our efforts on autonomous weapons systems (AWS) expanded significantly in 2024. In April, we participated in both the **ECOWAS regional conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone** and the **Vienna Conference hosted by Austria**.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone demonstrated remarkable leadership by convening ECOWAS member states to reach a [common regional position](#) in support of a treaty

on AWS. Foreign Ministers, military officials, diplomats, experts, and civil society representatives gathered to discuss challenges specific to the region, including proliferation, non-state actor use in the Sahel, and the dangers of biased training data sets. President Julius Maada Bio delivered a [powerful keynote](#), urging West African states to “proactively engage in shaping global norms and not be mere recipients, targets or beneficiaries of them.”

Later that month in Vienna, more than 1,000 participants, including representatives from 144 states, alongside civil society, academia, media, and industry, gathered at the Hofburg Palace for the **first-ever state-led global conference on AWS**. The scale of the event reflected the momentum behind global efforts to regulate these systems, as well as broad agreement on the need for a treaty. Importantly, the conference moved beyond the limited framework of the Geneva-based Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), opening space for frank discussion on issues such as the risks of genocide, human-targeting systems, and the potential collapse of deterrence theory if AWS proliferate widely.

To support policymakers navigating this complex issue, FLI produced [A Diplomat’s Guide to Autonomous Weapons Systems](#), which was widely welcomed by participants at the UN General Assembly.

Campaign to Ban Deepfakes



In 2024, we also advanced the [Campaign to Ban Deepfakes](#), a coalition effort to establish liability across the entire deepfake “[supply chain](#).” Working alongside organizations such as Control AI, Encode, and the National Organization for Women, we built a diverse, bipartisan network of allies committed to tackling this urgent issue.

The campaign not only strengthened advocacy on deepfake harms but also played an instrumental role in supporting legislative efforts, including California’s SB 1047 and federal preemption debates in the U.S. Senate. This coalition demonstrates the power of broad, cross-sector collaboration in addressing emerging risks from synthetic media.

Futures

Power of storytelling for social change

The Futures program aims to guide humanity towards the beneficial outcomes made possible by transformative technologies. By employing tools like storytelling, worldbuilding, scenario planning, research, and forecasting, we explore possible futures and determine actionable pathways. We then pinpoint the essential policies, decisions, and institutions needed to navigate these paths, and how best to deliver them. The program seeks to engage a diverse group of stakeholders from different professions, communities, and regions to shape our shared future together.

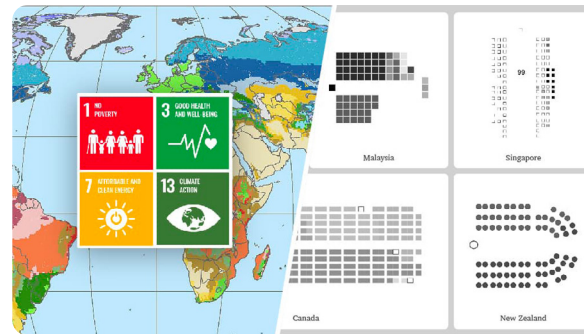
Partnership with The Elders



In 2024, we were proud to launch a new partnership with The Elders, an international organization founded by Nelson Mandela to bring together former world leaders in the pursuit of peace, justice, human rights, and a sustainable planet. Our first joint initiative was

an open letter urging world leaders to take decisive action on the most urgent global threats: uncontrolled AI, the climate crisis, nuclear weapons, and pandemics. The letter called on decision-makers to embrace the principles of long-view leadership, which places long-term human flourishing above short-term interests. The letter was signed by nearly 4,000 individuals, including former leaders, Nobel Laureates, scientists, activists, and artists. The strong response underscored the growing recognition that the world must adopt bold, coordinated strategies to address existential risks.

Grant Requests for Proposals



The promise that AI could one day “eliminate poverty,” “cure disease,” or “solve climate change” has been used to justify a corporate race to develop ever more powerful systems. Yet while AI will undoubtedly

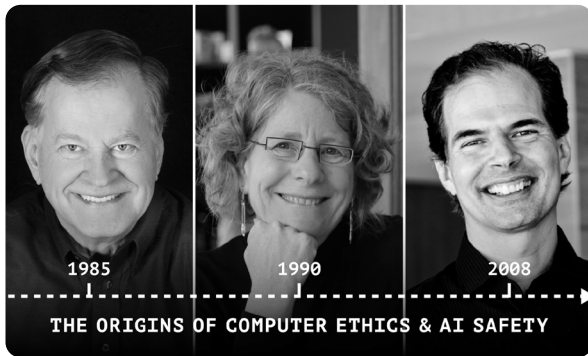
play a role in these domains, the level of capability required—and the pathways to achieve such benefits—remain uncertain.

To explore these questions, FLI issued an [RFP for research proposals to examine how AI may impact the UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) related to poverty, healthcare, energy, and climate change](#). We received over 100 submissions from around the world, with a majority from the Global South. Ten successful applicants were awarded \$15,000 grants for their work, which examined issues ranging from maternal mortality and climate change education to labor markets and poverty reduction. Together, these papers highlight how some of the most exciting and impactful AI applications remain under-recognized and underfunded.

Alongside this track, FLI also launched an [RFP on global institutions for advanced AI governance](#), including artificial general intelligence (AGI). Six proposals were selected for funding, representing diverse ideas from Europe, the United States, and South America. Their designs ranged from a “CERN for AI,” to “Fair Trade AI,” to a Global AGI Agency, each envisioning new ways to build institutions that can ensure advanced AI benefits humanity.

Most of the papers from both RFPs are now available to read on our [website](#).

2024 Future of Life Award



The [Future of Life Award](#) honors those whose contributions have made our continued existence possible, yet who often go unrecognized. In 2024, we celebrated three pioneering researchers for laying the foundations of modern ethics and safety considerations in artificial intelligence and computing:

- **James H. Moor** developed the philosophical framework for understanding AI's ethical implications.
- **Steve Omohundro** identified technical risks and safety concerns inherent in AI systems.
- **Batya Friedman** operationalized these insights through her groundbreaking work embedding ethical considerations directly into design processes.

"We can trace our current ethical and philosophical debates over aligning modern technology with human values to the scholarship of these three individuals,"

noted Emilia Javorsky, Director of the Futures Program. "Their work gave scientists, policymakers, activists, and the public the vocabulary and frameworks to keep pace with advances in AI and computing. We are honored to celebrate them here today."

Communications

FLI continued to use communications and messaging in 2024 to advocate for effective governance of transformative technologies, raise public awareness of their risks and opportunities, and highlight our organizational activities. By building strong relationships across the media landscape, we secured high-value coverage and created original content aligned with our mission.



Superintelligence Imagined

FLI launched the Superintelligence Imagined Contest to engage the public with the profound risks such systems could pose.

Running from May through August, the contest attracted over 180 submissions spanning a wide range of media formats—including videos, games, graphic novels, and short stories—all created with the general public as the intended audience.

A total of \$70,000 in prizes was awarded, including a \$20,000 grand prize to Writing Doom by filmmaker Suzy Shepherd, a short film that reimagines the writers' room of a show like Black Mirror. In addition to the six winning projects, seven honorable mentions were also recognized. All of these works are [now publicly available to explore](#).



Grants

We believe that addressing extreme, large-scale risks from transformative technologies requires a broad and diverse community, yet this field remains significantly underfunded. Through our fellowships, Requests for Proposals, and direct grantmaking, we aim to provide resources that empower researchers, organizations, and thought leaders to advance safety, ethics, and long-view leadership in technology governance.

Vitalik Buterin Fellows in AI Existential Safety

In 2024, FLI announced its third class of Vitalik Buterin Fellows in AI Existential Safety. This year's cohort included two new [PhD Fellows](#)—Luke Bailey and Angira Sharma—and two new [Postdoctoral Fellows](#)—Ekdeep Singh Lubana and Nandi Schoots.

The Fellowship provides full tuition support, a generous stipend, and dedicated research funding throughout the duration of the Fellows' studies. In addition to their research, Fellows had opportunities to connect virtually and in person with one another and with other leading AI safety researchers, fostering collaboration and building a global community dedicated to ensuring AI remains safe and beneficial.

2024 Grant Highlights

In 2024, FLI approved numerous grants through our Requests for Proposals and participated in the Survival and Flourishing Fund's funding round on [Flexible Hardware-Enabled Guarantees](#) (flexHEGs). Highlights include:

Encode \$250,000

General Support. Encode are young people mobilizing policymakers and the public for a future where human-centered artificial intelligence fulfills its transformative potential.

Federation of American Scientists (FAS) \$1,500,000

To investigate the implications of artificial intelligence on global risk. The 18-month project supports FAS's efforts to bring together the world's leading security and technology experts to better understand and inform policy on the nexus between AI and several global issues, including nuclear deterrence and security, bioengineering, autonomy and lethality, and cyber security-related issues. The Federation of American Scientists works to advance progress on a broad suite of contemporary issues where science, technology, and innovation policy can deliver dramatic progress, and seeks to ensure that scientific and technical expertise have a seat at the policymaking table. Established in 1945 by scientists in response to the atomic bomb, FAS continues to work on behalf of a safer, more equitable, and more peaceful world.

International Association for Safe and Ethical AI (IASEAI) \$1,850,000

General support. The International Association for Safe and Ethical AI (IASEAI) is a nonprofit organization founded to address the risks and opportunities associated with rapid advances in AI. Its mission is to ensure that AI systems are guaranteed to operate safely and ethically; and to shape

policy, promote research, and build understanding and community around this goal.

Tarbell \$150,000

Support for Tarbell Grants which funds established journalists to pursue original reporting on current & future harms from AI. Topics may include frontier models, the inner workings of leading AI companies, lobbying efforts shaping AI policy, and explanatory reporting that helps the public understand complicated topics in AI. Tarbell works to build a global community of expert journalists covering artificial intelligence with the scrutiny it deserves.

The Elders \$294,160

Support for the Long-View Leadership project. Long-view leadership means showing the determination to resolve intractable problems not just manage them, the wisdom to make decisions based on scientific evidence and reason, and the humility to listen to all those affected. Long-view leaders must have the moral strength to address both current concerns and long-term risks, often at the expense of vested interests. The Elders was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007. It is an independent group of global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights and a sustainable planet.

University of Virginia \$109,564

To support Professor Anton Korinek's research on the economics of transformative AI. In 1819, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia and inaugurated a bold experiment – a public university designed to advance human knowledge, educate leaders and cultivate an informed citizenry.

Finances

FLI is a mission-driven organization that continually seeks to diversify its funding base to ensure sustainability and independence. Shortly after our founding in 2014, Elon Musk provided seed funding for the world's first academic grant program in AI safety. Since then, we have received more than 1,500 donations of varying sizes from a wide range of donors, enabling us to expand and strengthen our programs. In 2021, Vitalik Buterin made a major unconditional contribution to FLI. This gift, part of which serves as an endowment, provides long-term stability for our work and helps guarantee the independence necessary to pursue our mission without compromise.

Expenditures for FLI activities 2024

Category	2024 Expenditure
Program: Grantmaking	\$8,447,913
Program: Scientific and Technical Education and Outreach Activities	\$2,081,512
Program: Research, Outreach and Advocacy regarding Policy	\$5,316,827
Management and General	\$1,552,798
Total	\$17,399,050

Our income in 2024

FLI only engaged in limited fundraising in 2024 and our total income that year was about \$85,000. The difference between income and expenditure was covered out of our endowment.

Team

Board



Anthony Aguirre
Executive Director and
Board Treasurer



Jaan Tallinn
Board Member



Max Tegmark
President



Meia Chita-Tegmark
Board Secretary



Victoria Krakovna
Board Member

Staff

Alexandra Tsalidis, Policy Researcher

Andrea Berman, Grants Manager

Anna Hehir, Head of Military AI

Anna Yelizarova, Special Projects Lead

Ben Cumming, Communications Director

Ben Eisenpress, Director of Operations

Carlos Ignacio Gutierrez, Policy Researcher

Chase Hardin, US Communications Manager

David Nicholson, Operations Associate

Emilia Javorsky, Director, Futures Program

Gus Docker, Podcast Host & Director

Hamza Tariq Chaudhry, AI and National
Security Lead

Imane Bello, AI Safety Summit Lead

Isabella Hampton, Associate, Futures Program

Landon Klein, Director of U.S. Policy

Maggie Munro, Communications Strategist

Mark Brakel, Director of Policy

Richard Mallah, Principal AI Safety Strategist

Risto Uuk, EU Research

Taylor Jones, Design and Web Manager

Tim Schreier, Policy Researcher & Technical
Standards Advisor

Will Jones, Associate, Futures Program

General inquiries

contact@futureoflife.org

Policy

policy@futureoflife.org

Futures

futures@futureoflife.org

Grants

grants@futureoflife.org

Press

press@futureoflife.org

