AI Statement – Future Communities Fund Round Two

We understand that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful tool that can help organisations to work in more efficient ways. We recognise that AI tools can support individuals who have little to no experience of writing funding applications and can remove barriers for people with disabilities and individuals with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Whilst we will consider applications that have been partially generated using AI, we recommend that you consider the following when completing your application form:

- Applications generated using AI are often generic and fail to capture an organisation's unique knowledge, value, distinctiveness, skills or impact. This can make it difficult for us to understand what is different or special about your organisation and the work that you deliver. Being too generic may disadvantage your application so we recommend that you always adapt AI-generated content to reflect your organisation's expertise and experience.

- AI can generate inaccurate content which can undermine the strength of your application. We recommend that you sense-check your application for factual accuracy and false/misleading information before submitting it. It's important to note that Co-op Foundation reserves the right to reject any AI-generated applications if we have concerns around their factual accuracy.

In addition to this:

- Many existing free AI tools store the data that you enter. For data protection purposes, we would encourage you to avoid entering confidential or sensitive information (including personal data) into free software. If you are using a 'paid-for' AI service, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with the supplier's data protection and retention policies to ensure that your data is safe. When inputting data into AI tools, you should always ensure that you comply with the relevant legislation.

- AI tools present a number of ethical challenges – in relation to both how they're created and how they're used. These challenges include a lack of regulation; use of data and imagery without consent and in-built biases which can reinforce discrimination.

- The water and energy requirements of using AI are significant. Due to the intense computation power needed to train and run these tools, estimates suggest that ChatGPT consumes between 50 to 90 times more energy per query than a traditional search.

  When using AI tools, we would encourage you to consider the impact on the environment. We recommend that you only use AI where it will clearly help you to apply for funding or significantly improve your application.

Co-op Foundation will not use generative AI tools in any part of the assessment or decision-making process for this funding programme.

As a funder, we are still exploring and learning more about the potential implications of AI tools. As such, in the future, we may update our position on the use of these tools.