HUMCAP AI Academy – Foundation Series

AI-Powered Quality Proposals

Using Artificial Intelligence to Design, Develop and Review High-Quality Humanitarian Proposals

1. Course Title

AI-Powered Quality Proposals

Using Artificial Intelligence to Design, Develop and Review High-Quality Humanitarian Proposals

2. Course Description

Humanitarian proposal development is becoming increasingly complex. Donors require stronger evidence, greater technical quality, consistent integration of cross-cutting priorities and close adherence to detailed compliance requirements, while programme and grants teams often work under significant time pressure.

Artificial Intelligence can help professionals navigate this complexity, but its effective use requires much more than prompt writing. It depends on sound humanitarian programming knowledge, familiarity with donor expectations, respect for organisational policies, careful management of sensitive information and rigorous professional judgement.

This practical and highly interactive course provides a structured methodology for integrating AI responsibly throughout the humanitarian proposal development process—from analysing funding opportunities and synthesising contextual evidence to designing quality programmes, drafting proposal narratives and conducting structured proposal reviews.

The course demonstrates how AI can serve as a professional co-pilot: supporting analysis, improving consistency, facilitating the use of organisational knowledge and strengthening quality assurance. AI is presented throughout as a decision-support tool that complements—but never replaces—the expertise, accountability and judgement of humanitarian practitioners.

Built around realistic humanitarian scenarios and practical exercises, the course combines established proposal development practices with responsible AI methodologies that participants can apply within their own organisations.

3. Learning Objectives

By the end of the course participants will be able to:

- integrate AI responsibly throughout the humanitarian proposal development process;
- analyse donor calls, funding priorities, evaluation criteria and proposal requirements using structured AI-supported approaches;
- strengthen programme design through AI-assisted evidence gathering, contextual analysis and the use of organisational knowledge;

- develop coherent, evidence-based proposal narratives aligned with donor expectations and programme design;
- systematically integrate humanitarian quality standards, cross-cutting priorities and organisational guidance into proposal development;
- apply responsible AI practices while protecting sensitive information and respecting donor and organisational policies;
- critically review, validate and refine AI-generated outputs before proposal submission.

4. Target Audience

This course is designed for professionals involved in humanitarian programme design, proposal development and grants management across UN agencies, international NGOs and other humanitarian organisations, including:

- Programme Managers
- Proposal Writers
- Grants Managers
- Programme Quality Managers
- Technical Advisors
- Heads of Programme
- Country Office Programme Staff
- Humanitarian consultants involved in proposal development

5. Course Programme

The course is organised into six sequential modules that follow the humanitarian proposal development process, from funding opportunity analysis to final proposal quality assurance.

Module 1 – Understanding the Funding Opportunity

Effective proposal development begins with a clear understanding of the funding opportunity. This module examines how AI can assist programme and grants teams in reviewing donor strategies, funding priorities, proposal guidelines and evaluation criteria before drafting begins.

Participants will work with lengthy donor documentation and use structured approaches to identify mandatory requirements, eligibility conditions, submission instructions, scoring criteria and potential compliance risks. Particular attention is given to distinguishing between explicit requirements, implicit donor expectations and information that requires professional interpretation.

The module also considers emerging donor guidance on the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in funding applications. Through practical exercises, participants will develop a Donor Compliance Matrix that can guide programme design, proposal drafting and internal review throughout the proposal process.

Module 2 – Designing High-Quality Humanitarian Programmes

High-quality proposals begin with strong programme design. This module explores how AI can assist programme teams in gathering evidence, analysing humanitarian contexts and designing interventions while maintaining the analytical rigour, technical quality and professional judgement required in humanitarian programming.

Participants will examine how to identify, retrieve and synthesise information from reliable humanitarian sources, including OCHA, ReliefWeb, FEWS NET, IPC, ACAPS and relevant sector-specific platforms. They will practise transforming large volumes of information into concise context analyses that identify needs, vulnerabilities, priority groups, response gaps and the rationale for intervention.

The module also addresses organisational knowledge management. Participants will explore how previous proposals, evaluations, project reports and lessons learned can be reviewed responsibly to strengthen programme continuity, institutional memory and evidence-informed decision-making.

AI-supported methods will then be applied to stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, Theory of Change, Results Frameworks, Logical Frameworks, indicator development, risk analysis and assumptions. Throughout the module, outputs are tested against field knowledge, technical expertise and organisational experience to ensure that programme design remains realistic, relevant and accountable.

Module 3 – Developing High-Quality Proposal Narratives

This module focuses on translating programme design into clear, coherent and donor-ready proposal narratives. AI is used as a writing and structuring assistant rather than as a substitute for programme knowledge or technical authorship.

Participants will practise developing and refining key proposal sections, including needs statements, intervention rationales, implementation strategies, activity descriptions, coordination arrangements, sustainability and exit approaches, risk mitigation measures and budget narratives.

The module places particular emphasis on coherence across contributions from different departments and technical specialists. Participants will use structured review methods to maintain consistent terminology, eliminate contradictions and verify alignment between the narrative, Theory of Change, logical framework, workplan and budget.

Module 4 – Embedding Humanitarian Quality

High-quality proposals do not simply respond to donor templates; they demonstrate that humanitarian principles, quality standards and organisational commitments have been embedded throughout programme design. This module examines how AI can help teams conduct systematic quality checks while preserving the role of technical specialists and accountable decision-making.

Participants will review the integration of key humanitarian frameworks and cross-cutting priorities, including:

- Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)
- Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)
- Protection Mainstreaming
- Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD)
- Disability Inclusion
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
- Do No Harm
- Conflict Sensitivity
- Localization
- Organisational thematic guidelines and technical policies

Through practical exercises, participants will use AI-supported review techniques to identify omissions, test whether commitments are reflected in programme activities and indicators, and strengthen the consistent integration of quality standards across the proposal. Particular attention is given to avoiding generic or tokenistic references that are not supported by the programme design.

Module 5 – Responsible AI for Humanitarian Proposal Development

This module addresses the ethical, operational and professional considerations associated with using Artificial Intelligence in humanitarian proposal development.

Participants will examine donor guidance on AI, organisational policies, data protection principles, confidentiality, privacy and the responsible management of sensitive or restricted information. Practical scenarios will be used to consider what information can be entered into AI systems, what should be anonymised or excluded, and when organisational approval may be required.

The module also examines the limitations of AI-generated content, including hallucinations, outdated or unverifiable information, bias, false confidence and weak contextual understanding. Participants will apply validation techniques and discuss transparency, accountability and the continuing importance of human oversight at every stage of the proposal process.

Module 6 – Proposal Quality Assurance and Validation

Proposal review is often one of the least structured phases of proposal development, despite its importance for quality, compliance and organisational accountability. This final module demonstrates how AI can function as a structured second reviewer while final responsibility remains with experienced programme, technical and grants professionals.

Rather than focusing only on language correction, participants will validate proposals against donor requirements, evaluation criteria, organisational policies and humanitarian quality standards. AI-supported review methods will be used to examine:

- donor compliance and completion of mandatory requirements;
- consistency between the narrative, logical framework, workplan and budget;
- integration of organisational policies, including safeguarding, PSEA, gender and protection;
- application of humanitarian quality standards and cross-cutting priorities;
- missing information, unsupported claims, internal contradictions and proposal weaknesses;
- the likely perspective of a donor evaluator, including strengths, risks and areas requiring clarification;
- final readiness for internal approval and submission.

The course concludes with a practical proposal validation exercise based on a humanitarian case study. Participants will apply the complete methodology to review a proposal, document findings and prioritise revisions before submission.

6. Methodology

The course combines expert presentations, live AI demonstrations, guided practical exercises, individual and group work, humanitarian case studies and facilitated discussions.

Participants will work with real or realistic donor documentation, humanitarian information platforms, organisational policies, proposal templates and programme quality standards throughout the course. Exercises are designed to reflect the time constraints, collaborative processes and review challenges commonly encountered by programme and grants teams.

The emphasis is on practical application, professional judgement and responsible use. Participants will leave with methods and tools that can be adapted to their organisational context and incorporated into existing proposal development and quality assurance processes.

7. Duration

14 hours

Three live online sessions of four hours each + 2 hours of practice

To maximise learning and allow participants to apply the techniques between sessions, the course is ideally delivered over three consecutive weeks, with one session per week. The schedule may be adapted to organisational requirements.

8. Pre-requisites

Participants should have a basic understanding of humanitarian programming and proposal development.

Completion of the AI Essentials for Humanitarian Professionals course, or equivalent knowledge of Generative AI, is strongly recommended.

9. Materials Included

Participants will receive a comprehensive HUMCAP AI Proposal Toolkit, including:

- Participant Workbook and Exercise Pack
- HUMCAP AI Proposal Framework (including the Review and Validation Process)

- AI Prompt Library for Proposal Development
- Donor Compliance Matrix Template
- Humanitarian Information Sources Guide
- Proposal Quality Integration Checklist
- AI Ethics and Responsible Use Checklist
- Certificate of Completion