



Case Study - AI Readiness Assessment & Roadmap for a Global NGO

Snapshot

- **Client:** Global NGO (international humanitarian data nonprofit)
- **Industry:** Humanitarian data, crisis analytics, climate resilience
- **Engagement Lead:** Scott Turnbull, Tech Tavern (serving as CTO in residence)
- **Timeline:** 10 months (readiness assessment through roadmap activation)
- **Focus:** AI readiness, workforce enablement, governance, responsible adoption
- **Highlights:** Organization-wide AI playbook, policy-backed experimentation, rapid lift in funding outreach and analyst throughput

"We had brilliant people experimenting in silos. Turning that curiosity into a shared system is what unlocked scale without sacrificing ethics."

— NGO CTO

Client Context

Global NGO operates at the intersection of humanitarian response and advanced analytics. From headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, the organization coordinates more than 85 specialists who support 100+ partner agencies across 40 countries. Their portfolio spans displacement monitoring, gender-based violence response, and climate action initiatives that help frontline responders act on trusted insights.

The organization was founded to close the gap between private-sector data innovation and humanitarian realities. Flagship offerings, like crisis intelligence platforms and open-source analysis tools, made Global NGO a go-to partner for agencies such as UNHCR, IFRC, USAID, and the Danish Refugee Council. Yet, despite its technical reputation, the nonprofit lacked a cohesive approach to responsible AI: analysts, engineers, and program managers were exploring different tools without shared guardrails or a unified roadmap.

The Challenge

Three converging pressures demanded a structured transformation:

- **Missed growth opportunities:** Competing firms signaled AI-enabled scalability during bids, while Global NGO struggled to prove repeatable AI impact beyond individual champions.

- **Siloed experiments:** Developers tinkered with APIs and consumer AI tools, but discoveries rarely spread beyond personal workflows, stalling institutional learning.
- **Governance anxiety:** Leadership and donor partners needed reassurance that AI experimentation would protect sensitive data, uphold humanitarian principles, and safeguard jobs.

Without a shared plan, the organization risked losing competitive ground, slowing innovation, and eroding staff trust in AI-assisted delivery.

Tech Tavern's Mandate

Scott Turnbull partnered with Global NGO to architect an AI readiness assessment and roadmap that met their mission-driven standards:

1. **Assessment & Discovery** — Conducted stakeholder interviews across technical, analytic, and executive cohorts; inventoried live projects; and benchmarked AI maturity against Tech Tavern's humanitarian readiness model.
2. **Capability Audit** — Evaluated data pipelines, tooling, and documentation habits; captured ad-hoc AI use cases; and analyzed ethical risk scenarios tied to sensitive humanitarian data.
3. **Roadmap Design** — Built a phased adoption plan covering workforce development, pilot selection, tool governance, and measurement cadences anchored in humanitarian principles.
4. **Implementation Kickstart** — Facilitated hands-on workshops, codified prompt templates, launched peer mentoring circles, and introduced decision frameworks for selecting and monitoring AI tools.

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Technical teams** were early adopters. By pairing their prototypes with vetted prompt libraries and review checkpoints, Tech Tavern transformed isolated wins into reusable accelerators.
- **Data analysts** gained confidence through an "AI analysis assistant" that amplified their subject-matter expertise, increasing visibility with partner agencies while preserving human oversight.
- **Leadership and frontline program teams** received tailored playbooks aligned to funding outreach, strategic planning, and incident reporting workflows, showing AI as an augmentor rather than a replacement.
- **Global offices** collaborated asynchronously via structured collaboration boards (Jira, Monday.com), shrinking the gap between regions with limited time-zone overlap.

These engagements built momentum, proving that responsible AI adoption could respect context, maintain accountability, and drive mission outcomes.

Deliverables

- **AI Readiness Assessment Report** summarizing maturity findings, opportunity areas, and prioritized pilots.
- **Responsible AI Policy & Usage Framework** defining acceptable use, data protection standards, and quality assurance practices tailored to humanitarian mandates.
- **AI Playbook & Prompt Library** with reusable templates for analytics, grant writing, stakeholder reporting, and strategic planning.
- **Training & Community Enablement Plan** featuring cohort-based enablement, peer mentoring, and measurable upskilling paths.
- **Governance Operating Model** specifying decision rights, escalation paths, and integration with existing project management tooling.

Outcomes & Impact

- **Operational lift:** Prompt-guided workflows cut analyst turnaround from weeks to hours, while fundraising outreach volume effectively doubled due to repeatable content templates and shared QA gates.
- **Governance maturity:** A comprehensive AI policy anchored to Tech Tavern's ethical guardrails reduced internal skepticism, reassured donors, and set the stage for ongoing audits.
- **Platform innovation:** Internal adoption insights informed development of GANNET, Global NGO's humanitarian AI assistant, ensuring the product reflected real analyst needs before external release.
- **Culture shift:** Peer mentoring and transparent guardrails reframed AI as a co-pilot, easing job displacement fears and rallying staff around structured experimentation.
- **Scalable processes:** Adoption of Jira and Monday.com created the organization's first holistic project lifecycle, aligning AI initiatives with broader program delivery.

While historical baselines were limited, the organization's new measurement dashboards now track adoption, quality, and ethical compliance, making AI performance visible for the first time.

Lessons for Mission-Driven AI Programs

- **Centralize stewardship:** Assigning a single accountable owner turns scattered experiments into a coordinated portfolio.
- **Lead with policy-backed enablement:** Combining governance with hands-on training accelerates adoption without sacrificing trust.

- **Celebrate quick wins:** Spotlighting early adopters and sharing their assets accelerates diffusion across global teams.
- **Design for scale and ethics together:** Mission-driven organizations can compete on speed while honoring humanitarian obligations when frameworks and tools evolve in tandem.

About Tech Tavern

Tech Tavern helps mission-driven organizations harness AI responsibly. From readiness assessments and governance frameworks to agent development and fractional CIO advisory, we turn high-stakes technology initiatives into repeatable successes.

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"Build with Intelligence. Amplify Your Impact."