

MEDIA RELEASE

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iRAP receives Google support to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Road Safety

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), iRAP's Star Rating for Schools and AiRAP partnerships will be scaled up to provide 3-star or better journeys to school and address road traffic crashes that are the leading cause of death among children and young people worldwide.

United Kingdom, September 12, 2023 – The [International Road Assessment Programme \(iRAP\)](#) is receiving USD\$2 million in grant funding and additional support from Google's philanthropic arm, [Google.org](#), to provide children with a safer journey to school.

Road traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among children and young people worldwide. Over 100,000 people are killed or suffer life-changing injuries on the world's roads every day. To address this issue the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3.6 strives to halve road deaths and injuries by 2030 and Member States have agreed on voluntary targets to improve road infrastructure safety to the iRAP 3-star or better global standard.

"The AI enabled [Star Rating for Schools](#) partnership with Google.org is a global game-changer that will support sustainable mobility for youth and contribute to at least eight of the UN Global Goals," **iRAP CEO, Rob McNerney said**. "We know that children are approximately 20 times more likely to be killed or injured on a 1-star road compared to a 5-star road. By using artificial intelligence to identify high-risk 1- and 2-star roads that children use on their journey to school we can identify known hazards and mobilise evidence-based upgrades that will save children's lives."

Using AI, satellite imagery and Street-View images to detect road safety risks, iRAP, together with partners AIP Foundation, Anditi and the University of Zagreb (FPZ, FER), will provide a country-wide star rating evaluation of road infrastructure around schools in Vietnam and support the upgrades at the highest-risk schools. The [YEA Youth Engagement App](#) will also be used to capture student perceptions of the risks they face to inform decision-making.

"Road safety is not only an under-represented public health crisis, it also impacts peoples' ability to access education, health, well-being and job opportunities," says **James Bradford, iRAP's Global Technical Director**. "With AI and big data, we maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the Star Rating process to allow governments to save time and resources."

As a charity, iRAP's vision is for a world free of high-risk roads for all road users. Through iRAP's global Star Rating for Schools and AiRAP partnerships the project has the potential to scale to other countries and inform new policies and investment in pedestrian-friendly roads that will minimize preventable harm.

"Our ultimate dream is to Star Rate every road on earth and ensure every journey is safer. Achieving the UN target for more than 75% of travel on 3-star or better roads will help save over 100 million deaths and injuries over the life of the upgrades. The Google.org partnership is a big safe step in that direction," Mr McNerney said.

[Google.org's AI for the Global Goals Impact Challenge](#) is part of Google's company-wide commitment to help accelerate progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. iRAP is one of 15 organizations receiving support through the \$25 million philanthropy challenge for projects that use artificial intelligence (AI) to accelerate progress towards these goals. Out of many submitted proposals, 15 were selected for funding. Importantly, all of the projects will be open-sourced, so other organizations can build upon the work.

The **International Road Assessment Programme** is a global registered charity with a vision for a world free of high-risk roads.

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“Each of the 15 selected organizations share our vision for using AI to accelerate progress on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, and each organization brings their own expertise to help move the needle,” said **James Manyika, Google’s SVP of Research, Technology and Society**. “We are inspired by the possibilities they see for how AI can be harnessed to help people solve societal problems, and are excited about the collective impact they will have over the next three years.”

To stay abreast of progress in this exciting project, subscribe for news [here](#).

For more information:

- On iRAP, [click here](#)
- On Star Rating for Schools, [click here](#).
- On iRAP’s AiRAP Initiative and Innovation Partnerships, [click here](#).
- On AIP Foundation, [click here](#)
- On Anditi, [click here](#)
- On University of Zagreb, FPZ ([click here](#)) and FER ([click here](#))
- On Google’s AI for the Global Goals, [click here](#).

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About the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP)

iRAP is a registered charity with a vision for a world free of high-risk roads, influencing road infrastructure safety in more than 170 countries. iRAP and its partners work with governments, development banks, mobility clubs, industry, research organisations, road safety NGOs, the United Nations and research organisations to provide evidence-based tools, training and support to help them make their roads safe. iRAP’s road safety Star Rating Methodology is free to use and provides a simple and objective measure of the level of safety which is ‘built-in’ to the road for vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians. A 1-star road is the least safe and a 5-star road is the safest. iRAP works with partners to: inspect high-risk roads and develop Star Ratings, Risk Maps and Safer Roads Investment Plans; provide training, tools, and support that will build and sustain national, regional, and local capability; and track road safety performance so that funding agencies can assess the life-saving and economic benefits of their investments. iRAP and its partners have Star Rated nearly 1.5 million kilometres of roads and designs, and 1,229 schools, influencing the safety of USD\$100 billion of infrastructure investment. Nearly 1.8 million km have been risk mapped and over 63,350 people have been trained globally. iRAP Safety Insights Explorer (<https://irap.org/safety-insights-explorer/>) sheds a light on the human and economic impact of road crashes, how safe our roads are, and the Business Case for Safer Roads in countries and the world. www.irap.org

About Google AI for the Global Goals

In 2015, the UN set the Sustainable Development Goals, ambitious targets for a better and more sustainable future by 2030. As we near the halfway point of the goals, it's clear that the global community has made great strides. But the COVID-19 pandemic set back progress in many ways, and we still have a long way to go. In our work with nonprofits, universities, governments and others, we've seen that AI can reduce the time and resources needed to make progress against some of the world's toughest challenges. To advance these Global Goals, Google.org is committing to bring the best of its research, advanced technology, and \$25M in funding to accelerate progress. Google.org opened a call for funding applications that meet the criteria of impact. Scalability and sustainability, feasibility, data and responsibility. Successful applicants were announced on 12 September and based on the type of project, Google.org will provide support through a combination of funding, product donations and technical expertise.

<https://globalgoals.withgoogle.com/globalgoals/resources>