Annual Report

2025

centre
for future
generations

A transformative year for CFG

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Centre for Future Generations. We describe ourselves as a 'think and do tank' – an organisation committed to help policymakers anticipate and govern rapid technological change.

2025 was a transformative year for CFG. I joined in March, attracted by the emphasis the organisation had placed on making an impact by combining deep technological, governance and foresight expertise with a focus on translating insights into independent and practical support for policy makers.

In my first year we made a number of significant changes - integrating the practice of governance and foresight into our core programmes - Advanced AI, Neurotech, Biotech and Climate Interventions, and launching an Incubator to develop new work.

We also began the transition to a more diversified funding base to ensure CFG remains sustainable in the long run.

This short overview aims to provide a concise update on CFG's activities from 2025, as well as a sense of our future direction.

None of this would have happened without the vision and generosity of our co- founders and early donors,who have brought this organisation into being and creating something genuinely new and much needed in the tech think tank landscape. That we were cited as one of the Top 100 Think Tanks to watch in 2025 illustrates that we are charting the right course.

CFG is no longer at the very beginning of its journey, but there is no doubt these are still early days. I am very proud of the quality of our work, depth of relationships we have built with key stakeholders, and the critical position we have carved out in a crowded and highly contested policy ecosystem. These are strong foundations to build on in the years to come - but we are well aware of the scale of the challenge in front of us.

It is clear that questions of how and why to govern emerging technologies will be a critical thread running through the most important discussions of our age: defence and security, climate, economic prosperity, and democracy.

Our team of researchers, scientists, advocates, and policy experts are committed to building a world where powerful technologies are used to help tackle the challenges of our time while protecting human life, autonomy, rights and freedoms.

Thomas Lingard, CEO
Centre for Future Generations,
July 2026

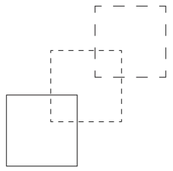
We work as a back office to policymakers

Our vision

A world where powerful technologies are used to help tackle the challenges of our time, while protecting human life, autonomy, rights and freedoms.

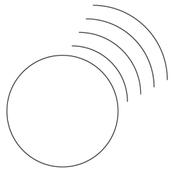
Our mission

To help policymakers anticipate and govern rapid technological change.



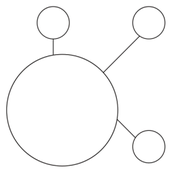
Anticipate

We use foresight methods to identify emerging scenarios and risks — before they arrive on the legislative agenda.



Inform

We close the information gap between technology developers and the people regulating them, translating complex science into clear, independent analysis.



Influence

We propose solutions to policy challenges and advocate for their implementation — across the full policy lifecycle.

OUR VALUES

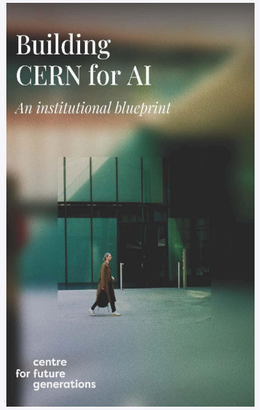
- Intellectual humility
- Collaboration
- Compassion

2025 impact showcase

Q1: Setting the agenda

January 2025

A blueprint for a CERN for AI
We published *Building CERN for AI: an institutional blueprint*, our second report on the idea Commission President von der Leyen floated in 2024. At a Euractiv stakeholder workshop the same month, we asked what a European AI Research Council would actually take to build.



March 2025

New leadership
Thomas Lingard joined as CEO from Unilever, where he was global head of sustainability. He was drawn by CFG's mix of technology, governance and foresight expertise, and its focus on practical help for policymakers.

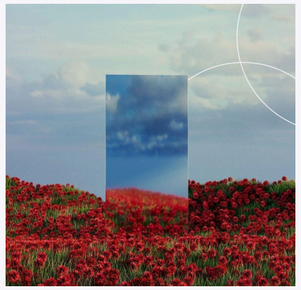
Q2: Taking the stage

May 2025

Centre stage in Copenhagen
As the first content partner of the Copenhagen Democracy Summit, we co-hosted a day on technology and democracy. To mark it, we launched *Strategic innovation for European security*, naming 10 technologies the EU should back to stay both secure and competitive.

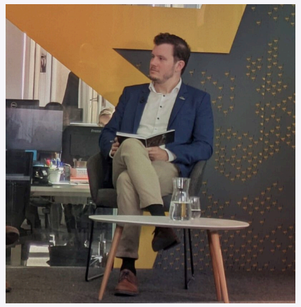
June 2025

Imagining the AI transition
We published *Advanced AI: possible futures*, five interactive scenarios for how the AI transition could reshape society. Some of the thinking around labour impacts of AI was later referenced by the European Commission's 2025 Strategic Foresight Report.



June 2025

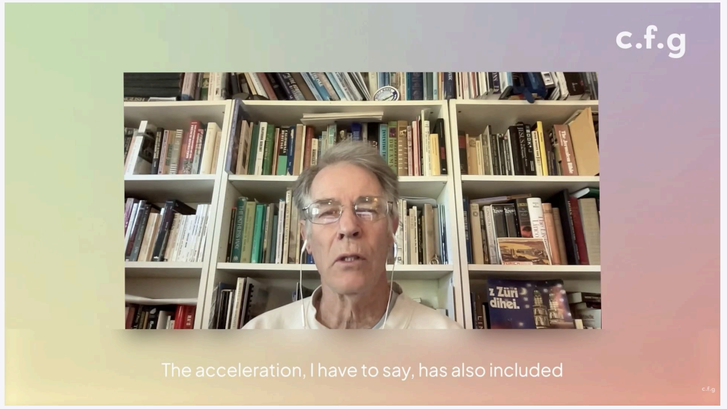
Governing technologies of desperation
Our climate interventions team began SAFEGEOGOV, a project with UK researchers and the OECD, funded by the UK's Advanced Research and Invention Agency. It maps how solar radiation modification (SRM) — cooling the planet by reflecting sunlight — could be governed responsibly in the messy world of the 2030s.



Q3: New frontiers

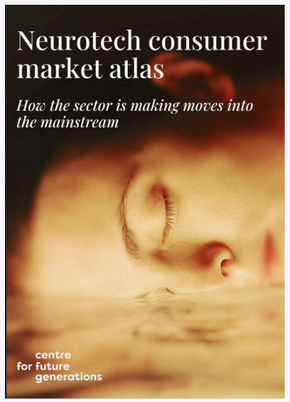
August 2025

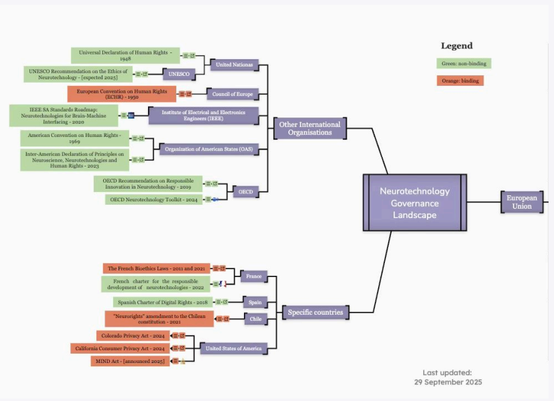
Science fiction meets policy
We released our conversation with Kim Stanley Robinson, author of The Ministry for the Future. He sees the 2020s as a race where the good and the bad both accelerate: AI could let citizens help co-write policy, or let bad actors capture democracy from the top.



September 2025

Making the brain a governance question
In the Neurotech consumer market atlas, we mapped 271 neurotech companies and found the market tipping from medicine to consumers, with brain-sensing wearables sold as wellness gadgets outside medical rules. Our governance map and the kick-off publication to our Tech & the brain project - set to release in 2026 - set out what Europe still needs to answer.





Q4: Recognition & reach

October 2025

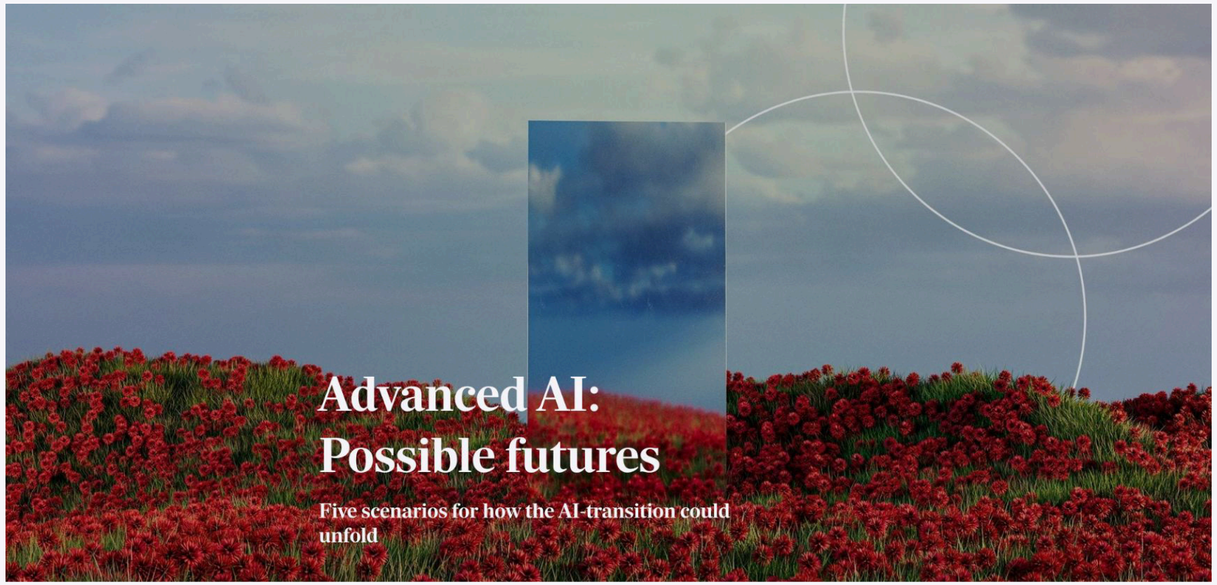
Our biggest stage yet
More than 250 people joined Think & Do 2025: Control / Alt / Lead in Brussels, with speakers including Anu Bradford. The day before, peers named us one of the 100 Think Tanks to Watch in 2025, alongside Bruegel and the European Policy Centre.

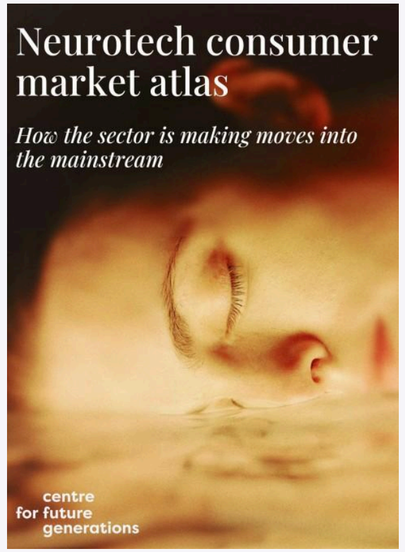
November 2025

Boosting bioliteracy
We released the Emerging biotechnology atlas, a guide through a fast-moving field, and filed our response to the European Biotech Act consultation — closing a thread we opened in spring with our workshop on biosecurity and competitiveness.

January 2026

A new home for CFG
We moved into Norrsken House in Brussels, a hub for people working on big societal challenges.

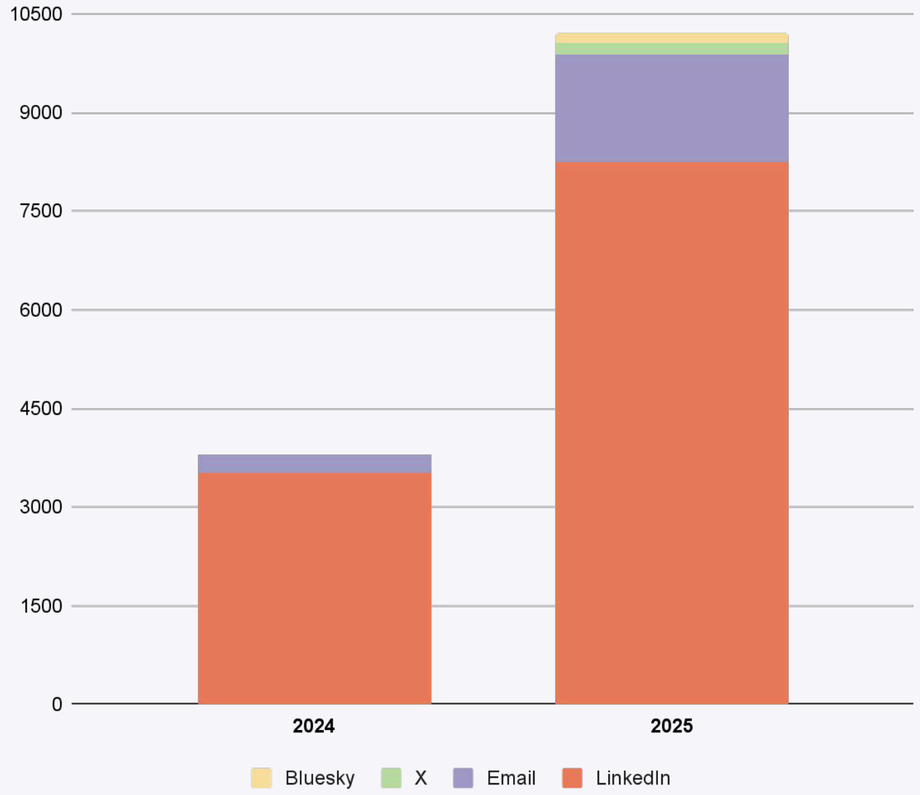




Selected publications 2025

Reach beyond our years

Multichannel audience growth



35

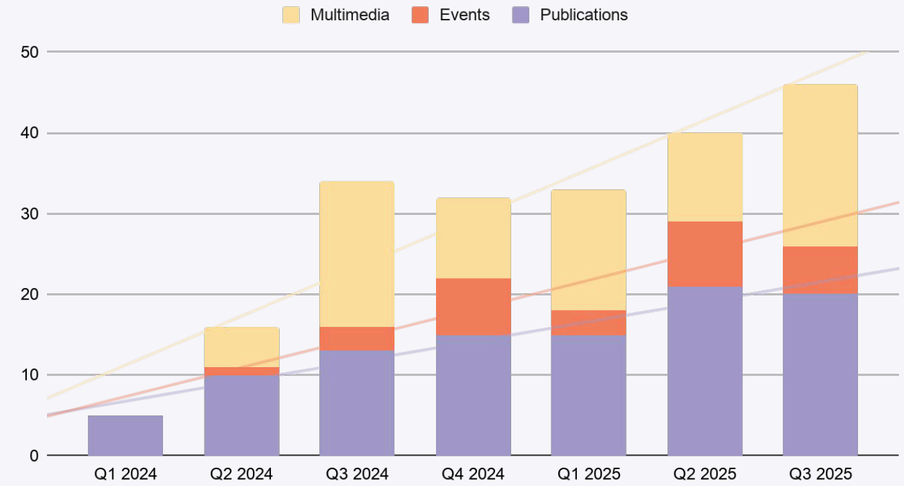
annualised full-time equivalent staff

1290

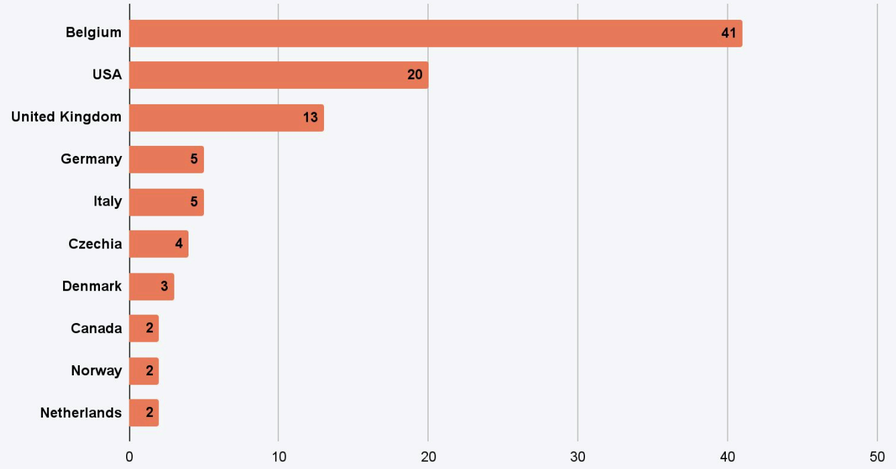
Registered guests for CFG events

951%

Annual increase in traffic to the CFG website, 2024–2025



An expanding library of outputs



97 media mentions in 10 countries

Selected 2025 media highlights

EU urged to consider DNA order screening to prevent an engineered pandemic

January 16, 2025

CFG included in this article covering biosecurity concerns being raised with the European Commission.

This outlet is primarily designed to connect European research centres, labs, and universities with the Brussels policy discussions.

From superchips to energy: this is how much it would cost to start Cern for AI

February 20, 2025

Full feature coverage of CFG's research on what it would take to make the CERN for AI idea a reality.

Published by Italy's equivalent to the Financial Times.

Why EU Policy Must Catch Up to the Neurotechnology Boom

July 7, 2025

Op-ed supporting the launch of the first comprehensive overview of the emergence of consumer-oriented neurotech companies.

Authored by CFG's Neurotech Director, this piece was placed in the insider's go-to source for tech policy analysis.

Scientists Warn Against Plans to Artificially Cool Polar Regions

September 9, 2025

Coverage of the ongoing debate within the scientific community on the merits of researching climate cooling technologies.

CFG's Climate Interventions Director was quoted - the only non-academic voice included.

Beyond Brussels

CFG and its supporters see the EU as the best available lever for achieving oversight of emerging technologies – but not the only one.

While Brussels remains a critical lever for impact - not only as the foremost legislator for global issues but also as the heart of one of the world's most important markets - the CFG team thinks beyond 'the bubble', engaging with both policymakers and strategic partners around the world.

Selected 2025 global engagements:

- **AI+ Expo for National Competitiveness.** Our Advanced AI team spoke at this Washington DC event, promoting the prospect of a globally integrated CERN for AI.
- **Degrees Global Forum.** Held in South Africa, our Climate Interventions team participated in the largest conference to date on solar radiation modification.
- **London Climate Action Week.** Our Governance team organised a highly praised side event focusing on the connections between compute resource construction and grid decarbonisation.
- **NATO's 76th Summit.** Members of our Biotech team joined discussions at this critical international summit in the Netherlands, with the team speaking at an exclusive Biosecurity event hosted by Foreign Policy.
- **New York Climate Week**. This whirlwind of panels, networking, and roundtables drew Senior Fellows from our Neurotech and Climate Interventions teams who spoke at various partner-hosted events.
- **Open Government Partnership Summit.** Held in Spain, this event welcomed 2000 guests including over 60 ministers and multiple heads of state, with CFG leadership appearing on a high-level panel focused on technology.
- **Summit on European Digital Sovereignty**. Our CCO was present at this Franco-German summit in Berlin, participating in the launch of the European Network for Technological Resilience and Sovereignty.

Endorsements & affiliations

"I really found your insights and level of acumen, experience amazing—I honestly need more high-quality input of this nature on all my projects relating to emerging tech."
Jon Andrews, Senior Coordinator, UNHCR

"No one else is using foresight for digital policymaking—and we desperately need it."
Kai Zenner, political advisor to MEP Axel Voss

"This is the first document that synthesizes all the global initiatives for the governance of neurotechnologies. So it is useful and relevant. Public authorities must support an emerging technology that is needed for economic and above all therapeutic reasons while protecting patients and consumers from possible abuse. Complex situation."
Pascal Maigne, French Ministry of Health

"In my 12 years as an MP, I have never learned so much about a new topic in one meeting, as I just did in the last 30 minutes"
Peter Frølich, Member of Parliament, Norway

"One of the biggest areas omitted by and large from the climate conversation is how we manage the role of tech in the transition. Not just how governments like the UK's square the desire to be leaders in AI with sustainability commitments, but what governance we need to ensure emerging technologies are used in the best interests of humanity. That's what Centre for Future Generations exists to do, and thank you for a mind-blowing roundtable on a subject that needs a much higher profile."
Andy Last, UK Sustainability Advisor

"We read through your Emerging Biotech Atlas. It was really cool to see the framings of biotech tools that we know, but then you guys added new ones for emerging tech. It was cool to see this explained so clearly."
Policy Officer, European Commission

"The magnitude of the speed of new technologies and the challenges it poses to society I believe lays the ground for a new social contract to be struck between the public, private and civil society sector. I believe organisations such as the Centre for Future Generations are very well placed to be those holding discussions and in crafting that new way of collaboration."
Eva Maydell, Member of the European Parliament

"We usually push back when we hear 'forecasting' because we want to emphasise that we are thinking about different futures. But you really showed, through examples, that doing so is too quick and that this is a chance for foresight and forecasting to work together."
EU Joint Research Committee member

"CFG is onto something important that is nevertheless difficult to explain. It's creating public trust - and that's an important project right now."
Kim Stanley Robinson, world-renowned author

European Commission

Part of expert advisory groups:
- Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Civil Society Forum.
- Responsible Innovation & Technology Coalition under the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy.

International Association for Safe & Ethical AI

One of the first 50 affiliate members.

Named by *On Think Tanks* as one of the 100 Think Tanks to Watch 2025.

CEPS friends of europe

Member of two of the largest networks of think tanks, research centres and nonprofits in Brussels.

Finances

Financial overview

Centre for Future Generations is a nonprofit organisation whose work is made possible through the generous support of its donors.

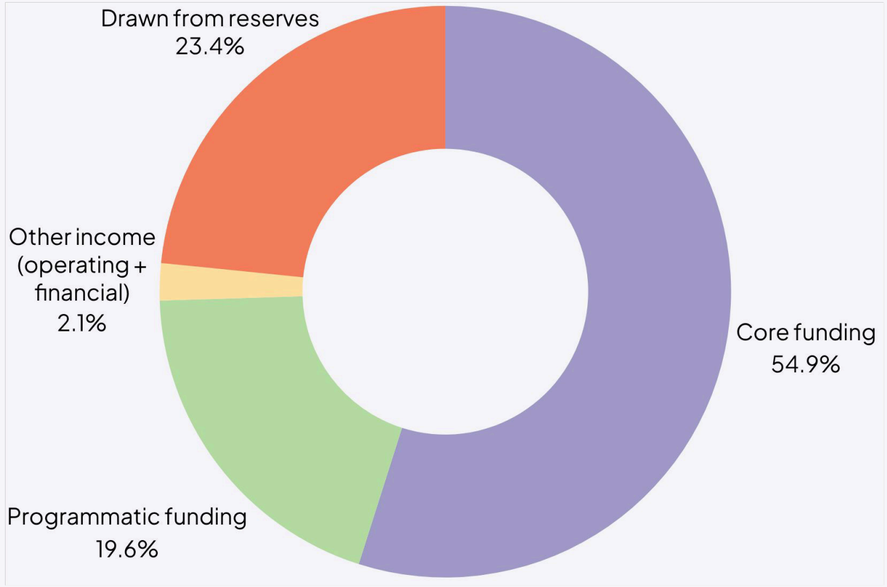
Our seed funding came from two philanthropic foundations, and we are now growing and diversifying our funding model to include donations and grants from foundations, research agencies and public institutions. We do not accept primary funding from governments or corporations, nor do we accept funding from political parties or groups who exist to further party political interests.

In 2025 we deployed €7.28 million across our programmes and overheads. Income for the year covered €5.58 million of this, with the balance drawn from reserves built up through our earlier core funding — a planned use of our continuity reserve to grow activity ahead of confirmed income.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE in 2025

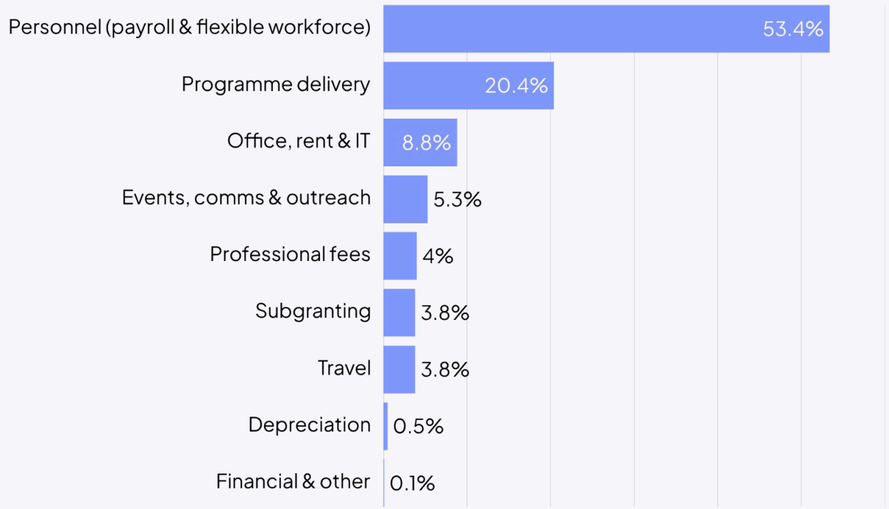
€7,282,136

How it was funded



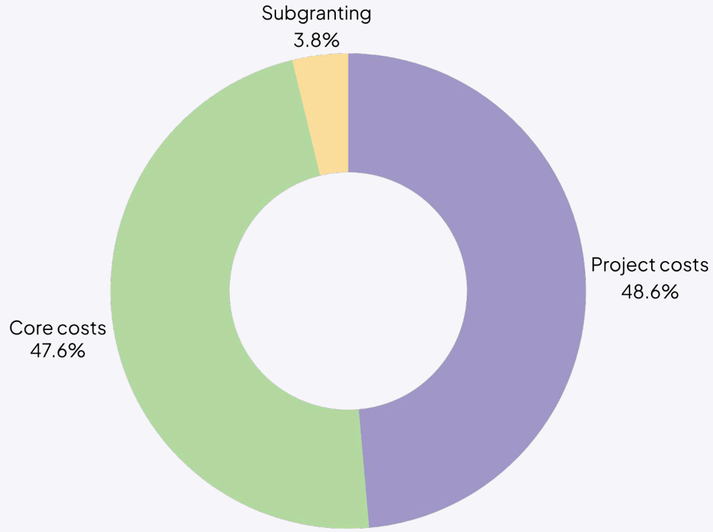
The shape of our spending

Total expenditure 2025 – by category



Cost category: Personnel is our largest cost, reflecting our model of in-house expertise: €3.9M (53%) went to staff salaries, contractor fees and EOR employees. Programme delivery accounted for a further €1.5M (20%). The remainder covers support functions and other costs.

Total expenditure 2025 – by type



Cost type: Just under half of every euro is a direct project costs, including the time of staff working on our research, advocacy and convening work. A similar share covers core costs: leadership, finance, people & culture, operations, communications, public affairs, and the office and infrastructure that supports the programmes.

An incredible selection of supporters

We are extremely grateful to our supporters for believing in CFG's mission and promise, even at such an early stage of our development.

GIVING GREEN.earth

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Quadrature Climate Foundation

Funded by Advanced Research + Invention Agency ARIA

AISTOF

SVCF SILICON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

LAD FUND CLIMATE

LONG TERM PEOPLE + PLANET FOUNDATION

THE dreamery FOUNDATION

TANKA FOUNDATION

powoki

Financial outlook for 2026

CFG is moving from reliance on reserves to a more diversified income base that underpins our ongoing activities.

Our current focus is on growing the funding base and stabilizing at our present organizational size, ensuring that we are well positioned for the next period of growth and improvement.

We express our sincere gratitude to the philanthropic institutions and individuals who support our work.

Key links

CFG's Annual Financial Report
ANBI form (PDF)

CFG's Policy Plan 2026–2028
Strategic Outlook (PDF)

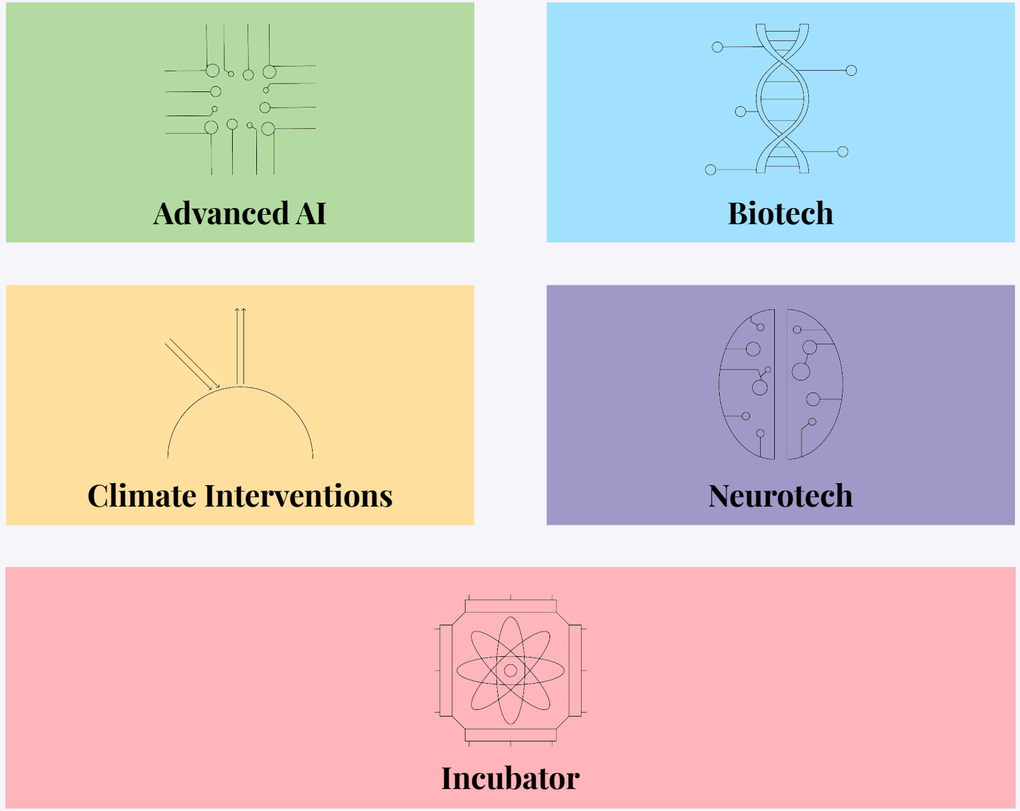
Understanding our work

At a glance

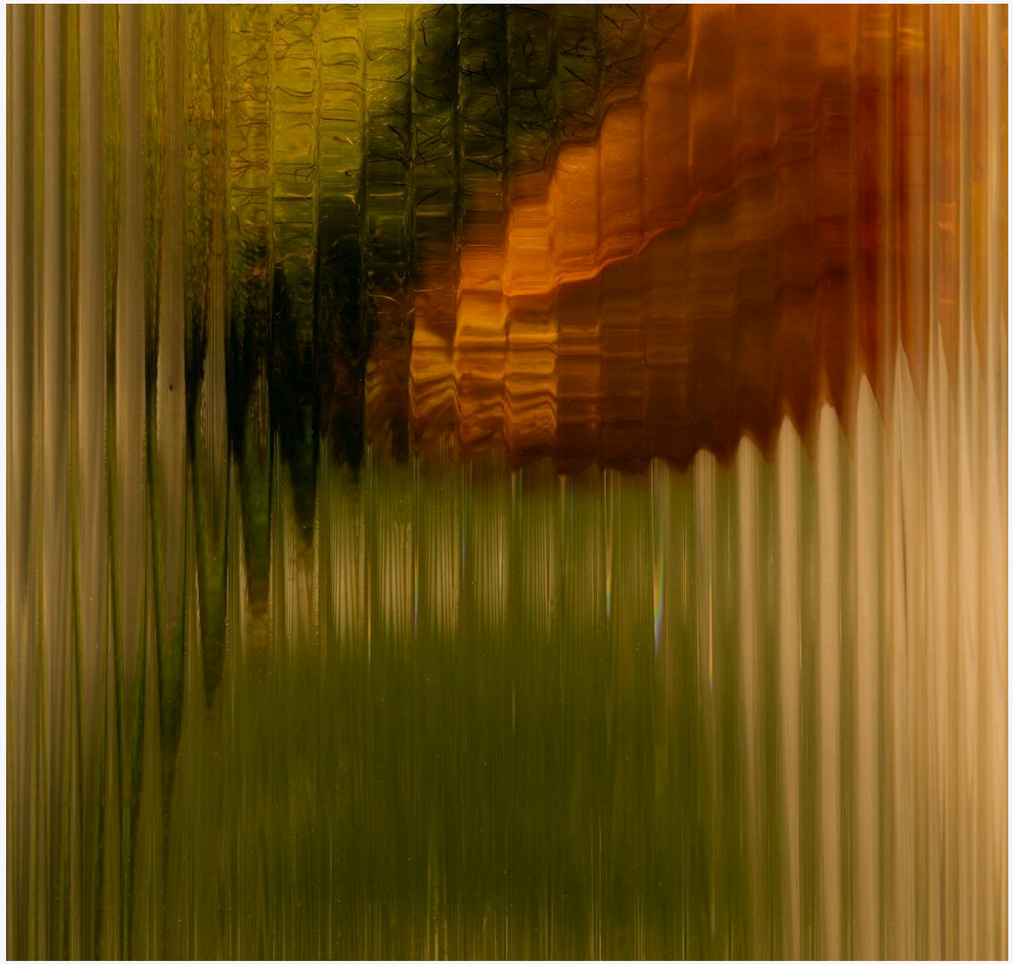
Four technology focused programmes supported by an Incubator.

We mainstreamed governance and foresight practices across our four technology focus areas and launched the CFG Incubator as a flexible space to host short term, high impact, fundable programmes. The Incubator supports a culture of policy innovation and creates a pathway for future programmes and targeted funder engagement.

Our programmes focus on specific technology areas and aspects of technology governance. We think about these as the most pressing and under-served challenges of the future.



Get to know our programmes



The technologies we work on could offer countless benefits.

However, unfettered development and use – or misuse – can exacerbate inequalities, disrupt democracies, and inflict other harms.

We consider emerging technologies key pillars of the economies of the future and essential part of the lives and livelihoods of future generations.

We believe in governance and policymaking as tools to implement the necessary mechanisms to deliver public good and to prevent harm.

Advanced AI

Advancing trustworthy AI

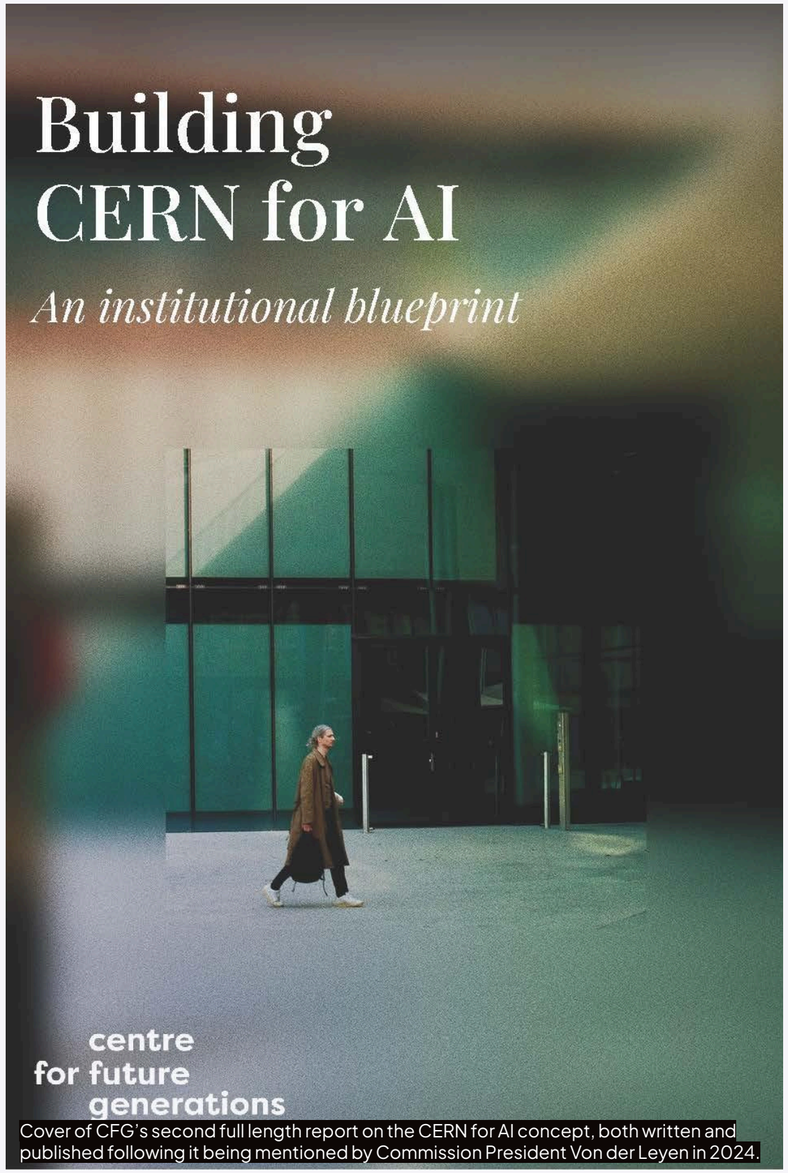
In 2025 our Advanced AI team worked alongside the European institutions as they built a vision for AI in real time.

We pressed the case for an institutional approach to trustworthy AI through *Building CERN for AI: an institutional blueprint*, published in January 2025 — the report that helped move the idea to the top of the EU agenda. We followed the question into the future, modelling how AI could reshape Europe's strategic position through our geopolitics of AGI work, and setting out the choices that would decide whether Europe shapes that transition or is shaped by it.

We engaged directly with policymakers at political and technical levels on the need for a CERN for AI, with media appearances in Brussels and in the national and international press, and by organising high-profile public and technical private events.

AI systems are increasingly handed decisions that used to need human judgement, from welfare eligibility to military targeting. Our work asks a sharper question than most AI governance does: how much should a given system decide for itself, in what context, and who keeps that delegation in check? Through the Enforcement Tracker, we built an evidence base for how the EU's digital and data laws — GDPR, the DSA, the DMA, and the AI Act — are actually enforced, showing where the rules bite and where gaps remain.

The work ahead is to get the right decisionmakers around a shared frame before the policy hardens: turning agenda-setting into institutional reality, and keeping human control on the agenda as these laws face their first real test.



Cover of CFG's second full length report on the CERN for AI concept, both written and published following it being mentioned by Commission President Von der Leyen in 2024.

Biotech

Shaping our biotech future

The primary focus for the Biotech team has been to sharpen minds and hearts around what could be a massive European advantage: carving out an area of emerging tech where the EU could not just compete, but potentially win across the entire value chain - securing and safeguarding key tech in the process, and ensuring Europeans have access to capabilities in a crisis.

As policymakers are often very distant from these breakthroughs, they need practical intelligence on what is emerging, where, and how, in order to make decisions to shape a competitive future for Europe. For example, our Emerging Biotechnology Atlas maps fast-moving biotechnologies across six pillars.

Our team connects science, industry, and policy expertise to help Europe harness emerging biotechnologies and drive safe, strategic innovation.

In 2025 we helped EU policymakers weigh the promise of new biotechnologies against present and future biothreats, pressing for biosecurity to be built into strategies like the EU Preparedness Union and the Medical Countermeasures Strategy. We met the cabinet of Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis on the coming Biotech Act, and hosted a Tech & Tonic evening on governing synthetic biology with speakers from the OECD and industry. Our advocacy helped move biosecurity from a peripheral concern to a recognised priority the EU Biotech Act.

Looking ahead, we will keep pressing for the biosecurity safeguards in our Biotech Act submission, and for an Act that treats biotech as a strategic pillar, not a health file alone.

Registrations at our Tech & Tonic event on shaping Europe's synthetic biology future. Held in Brussels, September 2025.

Climate interventions

Governing the technologies of desperation

CFG's work on Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) strengthens governance based on science and inclusive discussion – to prevent unwise quick decisions with global and long-term consequences.

This team is working on decoupling questions of research of SRM - technologies that are still only theoretical at this stage - from questions about whether and how to deploy them.

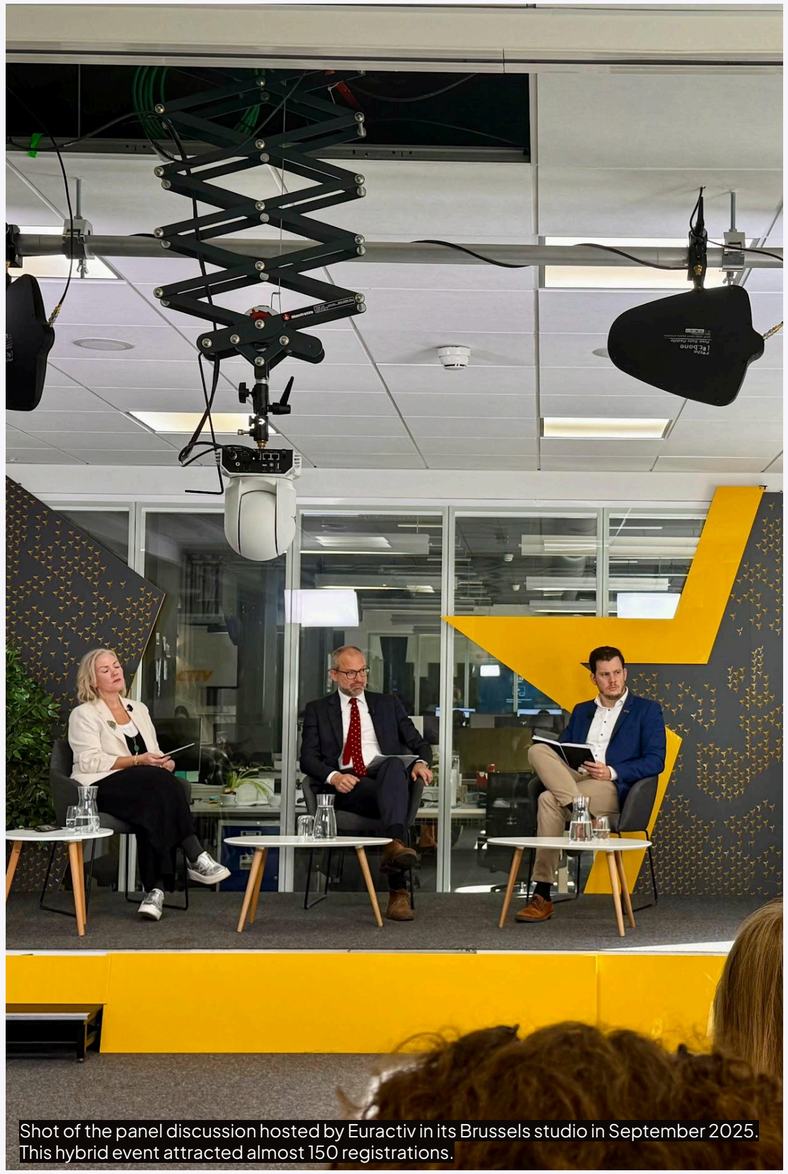
Worsening climate impacts raise the question: might humanity stop the heating and erratic weather with a planetary sunshade made of invisible droplets?

In the absence of a robust, international and transparent research agenda and international governance, their emergence could disrupt both international relations and the climate system.

Our work on SRM has focused on raising awareness among policymakers, both in Brussels and at the member state level. Our team has secured and been invited to high-level briefings with officials in several member states and at the EU level, discussing both the governance and climate security implications of this technology of desperation.

In September, the team hosted the first high profile Brussels event to discuss the governance of SRM as well as high level workshops with experts from EU institutions and scientists and lawyers.

Building on this, we launched SAFEGEOGOV, a foresight project with the University of Leeds and the OECD that builds SRM governance scenarios out to 2035 — giving policymakers an evidence base before security and commercial interests settle the question for them.



Shot of the panel discussion hosted by Euractiv in its Brussels studio in September 2025. This hybrid event attracted almost 150 registrations.

Neurotech

Bridging minds and machines

Our Neurotech work is an early warning system built to flag the rapidly approaching concerns and opportunities that come from technology that interfaces with our neural pathways.

There is a wave of commercialised neurotech products entering the market, with companies looking to leverage this technology to find profits all across the map - from defence to office work to transportation.

Even in these early days, it is clear that there are complex questions to be answered around data governance, rights and autonomy, as well consent and manipulation in the information ecosystem. Right now, nobody has the answers - but there is a window of opportunity for policymakers to get ahead of these issues before they become mainstream concerns.

In 2025, we conducted the first-ever comprehensive mapping of the rapidly growing consumer neurotechnology landscape, spotlighting how brain-sensing wearable technologies will likely soon be embedded into everyday life. We have been anticipating emerging regulatory and ethical challenges and generating insights for policy-makers to take action before the sector becomes fully mainstream, subsequently highlighted at high profile policy events, such as the European Health Forum in Gastein.

We also conducted a comprehensive mapping of the governance landscape for neurotechnologies, highlighting gaps and inconsistencies that must be addressed to ensure these technologies develop

Neurotech Programme Director, Virginia Mahieu, speaking at the European Health Forum in Gastein.

Incubator

A sandbox for future programmes

CFG's Incubator was launched to house limited-term projects exploring new and underexplored challenges in emerging technologies governance beyond CFG's established programmes.

It develops solutions to policy problems before they make it to the mainstream and provides a space to test new approaches to technology foresight and governance.

The Incubator reinforces CFG's commitment to anticipatory governance. While much of Brussels is rightly focused on implementing landmark legislation like the AI Act and DSA, decisionmakers still need independent analysis on what comes next. Helping policymakers prepare for the next generation of governance challenges *before* they become something that has to be solved yesterday.

'Tech & the Planet' is CFG's inaugural Incubator project. It was launched to help the EU pursue its AI targets and climate goals at the same time.

Data centres are becoming one of Europe's fastest-growing sources of electricity demand, yet multi-decade decisions on AI infrastructure, grids and energy are being made without the tools to see where these two agendas collide.

Tech & the Planet builds that missing capacity. We are developing foresight scenarios and practical guidance for how AI can meet its energy demand without locking Europe into fossil fuels. And because these costs fall locally and unevenly, on water, land and energy, T&P treats this as a question of intergenerational fairness, not just policy: keeping in view both the communities that bear the burden today and the generations who will inherit these decisions.

Namita Kambli, our Project Lead for Tech & the Planet, hosting a roundtable at London Climate Action Week alongside colleagues at E3G.

People & governance

The CFG Board

CFG's board brings together senior leaders from technology, philanthropy, science, and policy, chosen for their expertise in the questions at the heart of our work.

Steven Schuurman

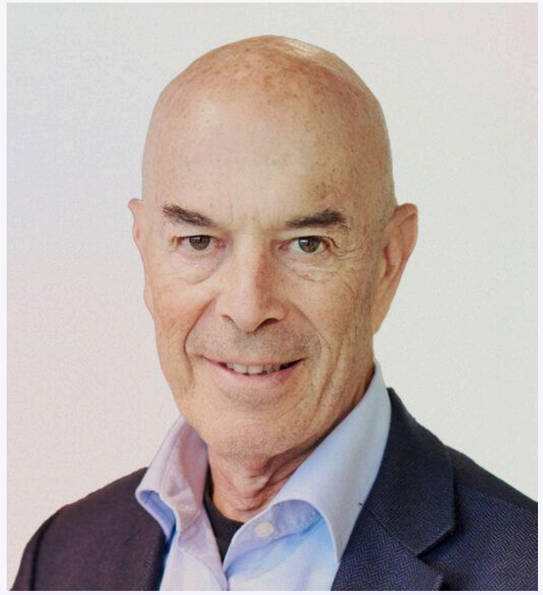
Co-founder & Chairman

Laurens de Groot

Co-founder & Board Director

Cressida Pollock

Board Director



Prof. Ian Goldin

Board Director

In 2025 we began a formal search for a new Board member. The search was concluded successfully in 2026 and an announcement is forthcoming.

CFG’s Executive Team

CFG's executive leads the organisation day to day, supported by a wider leadership team of programme and functional directors who steer our research, public affairs, and operations.

Thomas Lingard

Chief Executive Officer

Britte de Herdt

Chief Finance & Operations Officer

Since March 2026

Rowan Emslie

Chief Communications Officer

Lara Natale

Chief Impact Officer

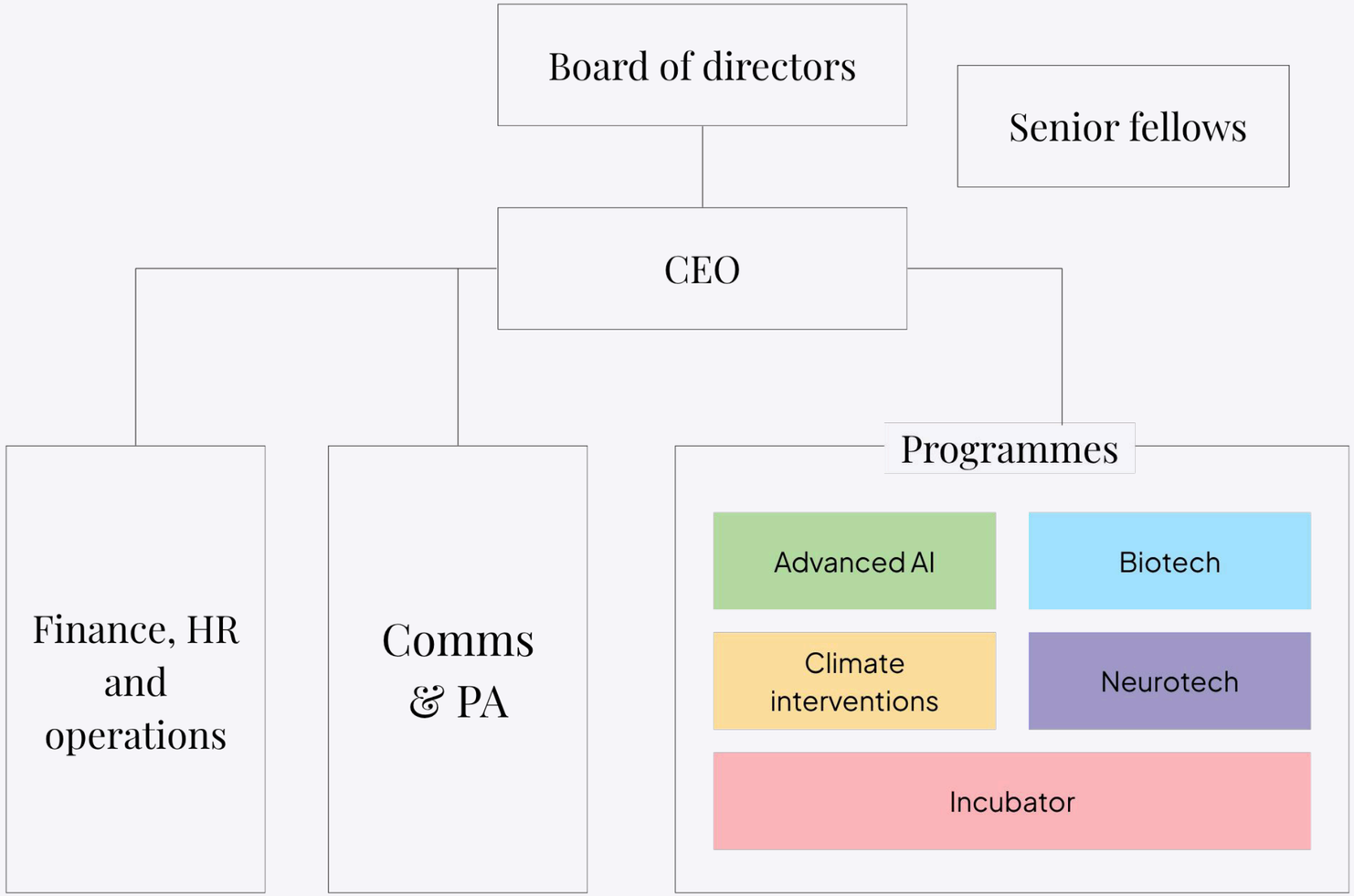
Since June 2026

Velislava Petrova

Chief Programme Officer

Until May 2026

How we're organised



We are a team of researchers, scientists, advocates and policy experts.

CFG is made up of an interdisciplinary team comprised of different nationalities, backgrounds, and viewpoints. What brings us together is a shared concern about humanity's ability to harness powerful emerging technologies, and our willingness to make a difference.

The future will be strange

It will surprise all of us, including the people who imagine that they control it.

There is nothing preordained about how technology will transform society. It is up to us to shape it, collectively, so we can use these powerful tools to tackle the biggest problems - from climate to inequality to human autonomy.

We know that powerful emerging technologies need legislative oversight to ensure they benefit both present and future generations, but that won't happen without anticipatory, science-backed research that connects to the here-and-now demands of our political moment.

The future is accelerating and policymakers are not prepared to deal with it - and that's why CFG exists.

centre for future generations

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