

Case Study: Automating USAID Performance Plan and Report (PPR)



Introduction

Accepting Administrator Power's challenge to streamline processes and cut red tape, the USAID Tajikistan Mission pioneered the use of Artificial Intelligence to automate the generation of PPR narratives, reclaiming roughly 1,250 annual staff hours and mitigating the need for extended work days to adhere to critical deadlines. To achieve this, the Mission leveraged DevelopMetrics' advanced technology, known as the Development Evidence Large Learning Model (DEELM), to automate the generation of PPR narratives.

Project Scope & Methodology

The scope of the pilot project was to leverage machine learning technology to draft two PPR narratives. In the initial phase, DEELM underwent extensive training based on policy documents, annual activity reports, narrative guidance, and all USAID documents in the Development Clearing House. The aim was to acquaint the model with the intricate details, context, and content of USAID's programs in the specified areas. Drawing on the knowledge acquired during the training phase, DEELM autonomously generated machine-authored narratives in line with the narrative instruction provided. Lastly, a thorough evaluation was conducted, comparing the machine-generated narrative to the traditionally prepared narratives. This comprehensive review assessed coherence, accuracy, and alignment with the established reporting guidelines to ensure the quality standards expected in the PPR.

Results

USAID/Tajikistan's pilot project showcased the immense potential of machine learning technology in automating the labor-intensive process of drafting PPR narratives. DEELM demonstrated its ability to successfully generate narratives that met the high standards of coherence, accuracy, and adherence to guidelines expected in PPRs. This pioneering initiative not only enhanced efficiency but also paved the way for the application of machine learning in streamlining the reporting processes of other program areas, ultimately benefiting USAID's mission to achieve its development goals while reducing administrative burden.

Large Language Models

Large language models (LLMs) are advanced artificial intelligence systems designed to understand, generate, and sometimes translate human language. By analyzing vast datasets of text, these models identify complex patterns and learn the nuances of language, including grammar, colloquialisms, and even context. LLMs, like, are trained using machine learning techniques on diverse corpuses of text. This training enables them to perform a wide range of tasks, such as answering questions, writing essays, summarizing documents, and engaging in conversation. The "large" in their name reflects the substantial amount of data they're trained on and their extensive neural network architectures that allow them to process and generate language like humans.