



An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí
Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public Expenditure
NDP Delivery and Reform

SFI Public Service Fellowship 2023

1. Name of Governmental Department or Agency
Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform
2. Title of the Project
DPER3 Development of ethical guidelines for the use of Artificial Intelligence in the Irish Public Service
3. Description of the Project
<p>The National AI Strategy, <i>AI: Here for Good</i>, launched in March 2021, aims to position Ireland as a global leader in the development and use of AI for economic, social, and environmental benefits. The strategy identifies several priority areas for AI to help drive industry but also to tackle complex issues for the Irish public, such as healthcare and climate action. The strategy also acknowledges the ethical challenges and risks posed by AI, such as bias, discrimination, privacy, and transparency. Crucially, the strategy emphasises the importance of ensuring that development and use of AI is aligned with ethical principles and values.</p> <p>Developing ethical guidelines for AI in the Irish public service is critical because the public service will be an important user of this technology in the provision of a wide range of services to citizens and businesses, across areas such as taxation, healthcare, education, justice, welfare, and national defence.</p> <p>Consequently, the public service has a significant responsibility to ensure that the use of AI is ethical, transparent, and accountable. Furthermore, the public service is subject to legal and regulatory frameworks that require compliance with ethical and human rights standards, such as the GDPR, the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour, and the Public Sector Duty. Therefore, the Public Service needs clear and practical guidelines that can help officials to navigate the legal and ethical complexities of AI use.</p> <p>Additionally, the public service needs to maintain public trust and confidence in its services, which requires ensuring that AI is used in a fair, responsible, and democratic manner. Ethical guidelines, underpinned by clear and accessible research, will enable greater transparency, accountability, and legitimacy around the application of AI in the Irish Public Service. It is expected that such an approach will increase public trust and participation in government.</p> <p>As outlined in Connecting Government 2030 and the Civil Service Renewal 2030 strategy, Government has set a target of having 90% of applicable public services delivered digitally. While not all services will require AI, it is reasonable to assume that a significant number of them will have AI components.</p>

To this end it is imperative from the outset that all Civil and Public Service organisations engineer ethics into how AI solutions are designed, built, tested, deployed, monitored, maintained and used.

This project seeks to design a comprehensive guide, underpinned by research, to the Public Service on how to understand the ethical considerations specific to the service being delivered and how to document and track the engineering of ethics into the system design, testing, deployment and use.

4. Project Scope

Literature review: A comprehensive review of existing academic and policy literature on AI ethics, standards, and guidelines, as well as the specific ethical implications of AI in the Irish Public Service context.

Stakeholder consultation: Consultation with a range of stakeholders, including public servants, policymakers, academics, civil society groups, and industry representatives, to understand their perspectives on the ethical challenges and opportunities of AI in the Irish Public Service.

Case studies: In-depth analysis of case studies that illustrate the ethical issues and implications of AI in specific public service domains domestically and internationally, such as healthcare, justice, social welfare, or education.

Ethics framework development: The development of a robust and practical ethics framework for AI in the Irish Public Service, which incorporates relevant ethical principles, such as fairness, transparency, accountability, privacy, and human oversight.

Guidelines development: The development of practical guidelines and recommendations for public servants and officials on how to apply the ethics framework to their work with AI, including decision-making, data management, risk assessment, and stakeholder engagement.

Dissemination: The dissemination of the findings, framework, and guidelines to relevant stakeholders, such as public servants, policymakers, academic and research communities, and civil society groups. This may involve developing training materials, workshops, and other forms of knowledge exchange and capacity building.

5. Skills/Expertise Required

1. **Expertise in AI and its ethical implications:** The researcher should have a solid understanding of AI technologies, their capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications. They should be familiar with the existing frameworks, standards, and principles of AI ethics, such as fairness, transparency, accountability, privacy, and human oversight.
2. **Research design and methodology:** The researcher should have a strong background in research design and methodology, including literature review, case study analysis, expert interviews, and stakeholder consultation. They should be able to develop a rigorous and comprehensive research plan that addresses the research objectives and questions.
3. **Data analysis and interpretation:** The researcher should be proficient in data analysis and interpretation, including qualitative and quantitative methods. They should be able to synthesize and analyse data from various sources, such as academic literature, policy documents, case studies, and interviews.

4. **Project management:** The researcher should have excellent project management skills, including planning, organization, time management, and communication. They should be able to manage multiple tasks, meet deadlines, and coordinate with stakeholders and collaborators
5. **Writing and communication:** The researcher should have strong writing and communication skills, including academic writing, report writing, and public communication. They should be able to articulate complex concepts and findings in a clear and concise manner, tailored to different audiences.
6. **Interdisciplinary collaboration:** The researcher should be able to collaborate effectively with interdisciplinary teams, including AI experts, ethicists, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders. They should be able to integrate diverse perspectives and knowledge domains into the research design and analysis.
7. **Ethical awareness and reflexivity:** The researcher should have a strong ethical awareness and reflexivity, including an understanding of the ethical implications and responsibilities of research involving human subjects, sensitive data, and public policy. They should be able to engage with stakeholders and participants in an ethical and respectful manner, and adhere to ethical codes and standards.

6. Expected Outputs of Project

The project will produce a set of ethical guidelines that can help public service officials to assess, design, implement, and monitor AI applications in an ethical, transparent, and accountable manner. The guidelines will be based on the best practices, standards, and principles identified through the literature review, case studies, expert interviews, and stakeholder consultations. The guidelines will cover various aspects of AI ethics, such as fairness, transparency, accountability, privacy, security, human oversight, and stakeholder engagement.

7. Working Arrangements

The successful candidate can work onsite (Dublin), remotely or a hybrid of both. The candidate will be provided with the necessary hardware and access to relevant systems during the fellowship.

8. Expected Timeline

12 months full-time

9. Contact Details

Colin Flaherty