ROSETTA

Career Development Plan

Project

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Project Name	Navigating the Frontiers of Governing Artificial Intelligence in Africa
Project Acronym	AfroGAIN
Project Number	101126578
Supervisor Name	Dr Rónán Kennedy

1. INTRODUCTION

This Career Development Plan (CDP) outlines the roadmap to support the fellow's aspiration of becoming a Lecturer/Assistant Professor and an internationally recognised research leader in AI Governance. It aligns closely with the ROSETTA MSCA PF, especially the European Skills Agenda, and the European Research Careers Framework, as mentioned in the 2024 MSCA PF Call Handbook.[1] This plan will guide personal, professional, and academic development throughout the fellowship and beyond, with milestones for growth, training, mentorship, and engagement in teaching, leadership, and grant activities.

2. LONG-TERM CAREER GOAL

The fellow's long-term goal is to secure a full-time, tenure-track academic position in a European university, preferably in Ireland, in fields such as AI governance, ethics, and regulation. Full-time research and teaching positions in Irish Universities require a collection of publications and a compilation of scientific activities to demonstrate the candidate's maturity and ability to conduct future research. This includes the ability to (i) teach undergraduate and postgraduate courses; (ii) conduct world-class research in the subject area; (iii) mentor early-career researchers; (iv) develop and secure competitive grant funding, and (v) engage with public policy and debates.

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[1] Read more about it here: https://msca-net.eu/2024/07/04/handbook-for-msca-pf-call-2024/

3. SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The skills assessment, based on the Researcher Development Centre's (RDC)[2] Vitae Researcher Development Framework,[3] provides an overview of the fellow's current skills and strengths, areas requiring development, a detailed plan for addressing those needs, and alignment with the European Skills Agenda. It supports continuous professional development by identifying core competencies, including knowledge and intellectual abilities, personal effectiveness, research governance, organisation, engagement, influence, and impact.

3.1 Current Skills and Strengths

Skills	Details
Research Specialism	- Epistemology and politics of AI and algorithmic culture - Technology ethics, digital privacy, justice, and political economy - Tradition and modernity discourse
Involvement in Key Projects	-AI Ethics & Auditing Course (UCD): Designed and delivered online courses for 50+ professionals. -European Interdisciplinary Project (UCD): Collaborated with institutions (Sciences Po, Turing College, Eticas, etc.) to explore algorithmic/systemic bias. -ConflictNet (Oxford): Designed ethnographic research tools, led fieldwork, analysis, and team supervision.
Research Outputs	- 16 academic publications (books, chapters, journal articles, policy briefs) - Currently have three outputs under various stages of completion including an edited volume on Africa's role in the digital value chain
Teaching Experience	- Designed and taught micro-credentials on AI Ethics and Auditing (UCD, 2024)

[2] The Researcher Development Centre (RDC) was set up in 2018 by the Office of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation to provide a wide-range of training opportunities aligned to the principles of EU Charter for Researchers. Staff at the RDC are trained in career coaching to support researchers to identify personal career pathways within and beyond academia. The Researcher Development Centre coordinates a range of seminars and workshops to foster Continuing Professional Development (CPD), using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to map the courses provided. Training provided by the RDC has been designed to cover the following four key areas in the professional development of researchers: 1. Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities, 2. Personal Effectiveness, 3. Research Governance and Organization and 4. Engagement, Influence and Impact. Each researcher has access to an online portal that records their individual portfolio of training activities throughout their time at the University of Galway. All training completed is tracked and each researcher has their own training log to map to their Personal Development Plan. Researchers have dedicated training time within their employment contracts to facilitate ongoing professional development.

[3] For more information, see here: https://vitae.ac.uk/vitae-researcher-development-framework/

	- Delivered lectures to 400+ students (2023–2025) on digital policy, AI ethics, race and migration - Known for engaging delivery of complex concepts
Supervision and Mentorship	- Supervised 30+ graduate students, RAs, and early-career researchers with mentees progressing to scholarships, academic and policy roles
Academic & Public Service	- Speaker at Oxford Media Policy Institute, ECAS, German Institute of African Studies - Organiser of policy workshops (e.g., *Re-Thinking Digital Justice*) - Interviewed by UCD Centre for Digital Policy on AI governance and ethics

3.2 Developmental Needs

While the fellow possesses a strong foundation in the competencies necessary for academic leadership in AI governance, achieving his full potential hinges on deliberate, targeted development. Specific focus areas include (i) advanced knowledge of AI governance and methodologies, (ii) grant writing and project management, (iii) scientific communication, (iv) leadership and networking, and (v) pedagogy skills.

The MSCA provides a platform for this growth by offering a structured and supportive environment for two years. The fellow will gain practical and theoretical skills essential to a successful academic career through tailored mentorship, formal training programs, hands-on teaching responsibilities, and meaningful international collaboration. This approach ensures that he can contribute significantly to Africa's AI governance landscape and lead innovative, cross-continental initiatives in the long term.

3.3 Detailed Plan

Based on the skills assessment above, the fellow will initiate the following steps to achieve his career goals.

Skill Area	What is Missing (Developmental Needs)	Where Training will be Received	When	Remarks
Advanced Research Methodology	Mastery of mixed methods, ethical data collection,	Research Data Management by RDC	07/25	Completed
		Ethical Research by RDC	08/25	

		Undertaking a Literature Review by RDC	09/25	
	interdisciplinary analysis	Principles of Research Methods by RDC	09/25	
		Research Methods in Practice: Social Sciences by RDC	10/25	
Grant Writing & Project Management	Writing competitive grants, managing budgets/timelines, ethical compliance	Introduction to Applying for funding by RDC	07/25	Completed
		Apply for at least two small grants (New Foundation and College grant)	07/25 - 09/25	
		Project Management from RDC	TBD	
Scientific Communication	Engaging non-specialist and policy audiences; writing for public impact	Conference Presentation and networking by RDC	08/25	
		Lero dissemination forums	TTP	
		writing 2+ blogs/op-eds/white papers online	TTP	
		Presentations at ACET seminars	12/25 - 03/26	
Leadership & Networking	Leading discussions, academic governance, and building professional collaborations	Leading discussion groups at School of Law, Lero & ACET	TTP	
		Support early career researchers in MSCA and RI postdoc applications	08/25 - 09/25	
		Participation in Galway AI, and Lero's AI for Good	TTP	
		Attend Doing Research in Africa Events	TTP	
		Roles in Lero/university outreach programmes	TTP	
Teaching & Pedagogy	Ongoing curriculum development, engaging large classes, receiving	Enrol in a teaching module (Microcredit) including one of these each term: (i) Learning Technologies (ii) Supporting Student	01/26 - 01/27	

		Learning and (iii) Teaching online at CELT		
		Teaching 1 module/semester (e.g., Digital Media, Race and Migration at Galway or UCD)	TTP	
Supervision	Experience mentoring postgraduate and doctoral researchers in core research domains	Enrol in Research Supervision and Development Microcredit from CELT	TBD	
		Supervise 4 students on topics like AI trustworthiness and ethics; building a mentoring pipeline	TTP	

> **Key**
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> ACET – Africa Centre for Economic Transformation
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> CELT – Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
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> RDC – Research Development Centre
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> TBD – To be decided
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> TTP – Throughout the Project

3.4. Alignment with European Skills Agenda

This CDP advances the goals of the European Skills Agenda[4] by fostering international mobility, interdisciplinary collaboration, and researcher development. Through AfroGAIN, the fellow will engage in cross-border academic work that further aligns with the Osnabrück Declaration's[5] emphasis on strengthening cooperation across the European research landscapes. Structured exchanges with institutions and researchers in Ireland and beyond will promote mobility and support the co-creation of knowledge that bridges regional, disciplinary, and cultural divides. This exposure will build the fellow's capacity to contribute to high-impact research projects addressing global AI governance challenges.

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[4] https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/european-skills-agenda_en

[5] http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23216&langId=en

4. POST-FELLOWSHIP CAREER STRATEGY

Upon completing the MSCA fellowship, the fellow will be well-positioned to pursue a tenure-track Lecturer or Assistant Professor role at a European university, with a strong preference for institutions in Ireland. Equipped with advanced research, teaching, and leadership competencies, he will demonstrate readiness to contribute meaningfully to academic departments focused on law, ethics, and emerging technologies. He will continue to publish in peer-reviewed journals while contributing to policy forums and public discourse on AI governance. These scholarly outputs will reflect a deepened expertise and solidify his academic standing within European and global research communities.

The fellow will also pursue competitive research funding to establish and lead independent projects. A key focus will be preparing and submitting a proposal for the ERC Starting Grant, capitalising on the foundational skills developed during the fellowship. Additionally, he will expand his teaching profile and take on greater supervision responsibilities for doctoral students, strengthening his pedagogical leadership. As his visibility grows through publications, collaborative networks, and policy engagement, the fellow will emerge as a thought leader in AI governance and regulation. This strategic combination of research excellence, funding success, and academic service will mark a successful transition from a recognised researcher (R2) to an established researcher (R3), laying a strong foundation for future promotion to a full professorship.

The fellow will also develop specialised knowledge and skills that are highly sought after in non-academic positions such as public policy, international organisations, and other multilateral fields. For instance, the insights from studying Africa's uniqueness and the pieces of training in project management and scientific communication will provide a distinctive perspective that can be applied to global AI governance, making him a valuable asset as a senior researcher in a think tank, a consultant with an NGO or a policy advisor for governments either in Europe or Africa. This is in keeping with the European Commission's goal towards building the skills and competencies of researchers beyond the traditional academic job market.[6]

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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[6] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/ec_rtd_research-competence-presentation.pdf

Deliverables: The fellow's career development will be tracked through three structured deliverables submitted at key milestones: D5.1 (July 2025 – completion of the Career Development Plan), D5.2 (July 2026), and D5.3 (May 2027 – reporting to Dr Kennedy on training and knowledge transfer activities). The reports will document completed training activities, skill acquisition, teaching milestones, and research outputs. They will serve as checkpoints to ensure alignment between planned objectives and progress.

Supervisor's review meetings every month: In addition to the formal deliverables, the fellow will engage in monthly review meetings with his supervisor to evaluate development across teaching, research, and leadership domains. These sessions will provide real-time, qualitative feedback on performance and offer a space to troubleshoot challenges or reframe goals based on evolving opportunities. This consistent engagement with the supervisor will foster an adaptive learning environment, reinforce mentorship, and ensure that the fellow remains on track to meet the competencies required to transition to R3 researcher.

Mid-point adjustment of goals and activities based on self-assessment and feedback: At the halfway point of the fellowship (around July 2026), the fellow will undertake a self-assessment to evaluate personal progress, reflect on any unforeseen challenges, and recalibrate priorities as needed. This introspective exercise, combined with feedback from the supervisor and peers, will allow for the flexible adjustment of training activities and timelines. The ability to adapt the plan midstream ensures that the fellow remains responsive to both internal development needs and external academic opportunities, strengthening the effectiveness of the overall career trajectory.

6. CONCLUSION

This CPD provides a clear, structured, and forward-thinking roadmap for the fellow's journey toward becoming a Lecturer/Assistant Professor and a globally recognised leader in AI Governance. It outlines a coherent progression from recognised researcher (R2) to established researcher (R3) by integrating training, research, teaching, mentorship, and leadership into a unified strategy. This plan is designed to remain adaptive, allowing flexibility, self-assessment, and recalibration in response to emerging opportunities and challenges. It promotes reflective growth while maintaining alignment with broader research and policy frameworks, including Lero and the University of Galway's strategies, the European Research Area goals, and the guiding principles of the AfroGAIN and ROSETTA MSCA programs.