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# Building Trustworthy AI Solutions: A Case for Practical Solutions for Small Businesses

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**Abstract**—Building trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI) solutions, whether in academia or industry, must take into consideration a number of dimensions including legal, social, ethical, public opinion, and environmental aspects. A plethora of guidelines, principles, and toolkits have been published globally, but have seen limited grassroots implementation, especially among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), mainly due to the lack of knowledge, skills, and resources. In this article, we report on qualitative SME consultations over two events to establish their understanding of both data and AI ethical principles and to identify the key barriers SMEs face in their adoption of ethical AI approaches. We then use independent experts to review and code 77 published toolkits designed to build and support ethical and responsible AI practices, based on 33 evaluation criteria. The toolkits were evaluated considering their scope to address the identified SME barriers to adoption, human-centric AI principles, AI life cycle stages, and key themes around responsible AI and practical usability. Toolkits were ranked on the basis of criteria coverage and expert intercoder agreement. Results show that there is not a one-size-fits-all toolkit that addresses all criteria suitable for SMEs. Our findings show few exemplars of practical application, little guidance on how to use/apply the toolkits, and very low uptake by SMEs. Our analysis provides a mechanism for SMEs to select their own toolkits based on their current capacity, resources, and ethical awareness levels – focusing initially at the conceptualization stage of the AI life cycle and then extending throughout.

**Impact Statement**—In parallel to the recent acceleration in development and adoption of artificial intelligence, there has been intense and worldwide discourse around the ethics of such systems. This debate has highlighted that without good governance, transparency and monitoring, indiscriminate use of AI could lead to significant harms, discrimination, and injustice. Consensus has settled on a broad set of overarching principles for ethical AI; now myriad resources and toolkits exist to assist with embedding ethical practices along the research-development-deployment value chain. Our evaluation of 77 toolkits reveals the breadth and depth of the themes they cover and barriers to their use, including a lack of adoption case studies. We provide organizations, especially SMEs, with an easy-to-use lookup table (Table V) to help them select a set of

toolkits to ensure that as well as addressing all key ethical themes, they can also match their resources, skills and priority areas for implementing ethical best practice.

**Index Terms**—Artificial intelligence (AI), business, ethics, responsible, toolkits, trustworthy.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE ethical, social, and legal landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) driven systems is rapidly changing. Since the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 [1], stakeholders developing AI systems have faced numerous challenges in the interpretation and implementation of Article 22, specifically concerning an individual’s rights in the context of automated decision-making, the ability to explain AI decisions, explanation of the logic involved, and the development of models using only “correct” data. This has caused major challenges because of the lack of legal guidance, case law, and ethical principles about the use of AI in different contexts. For small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), these challenges are even greater due to a lack of specific skills, budget, and human resource. The international policy and impact landscape of AI is still fragmented in approaches to regulation, frameworks, guidelines, and standards (i.e., P7000), with numerous ethical principles being circulated which all convey broadly similar messages [2]–[15].

These “guidelines” often focus on the AI technology or service rather than organizational processes and human behaviors, providing little to no mechanisms for accountability and compliance (audit), and ignore the benefits of coproduction and public scrutiny [16]. From an SME perspective, practical implementation is difficult if not impossible. There has been significant “bad press” around poor design, poor rationale, and unethical applications of AI, which has fueled public mistrust. Pownall [17] provides an excellent, regularly updated repository of news stories that challenge whether the use of AI is ethical, for example, the use of face tracking tablets which profile customers and deliver relevant advertisements in UBER. As the public gains knowledge and understanding of issues around the use and application of AI (including bias, fairness, accountability, responsibility, etc.) coupled with an increased awareness of data privacy, both public services and the private sector will have to become more accountable if they win public trust and secure the vital public “license to operate.” Reputational damage as a result of insufficient or ineffective data and AI governance can cause significant harm to a business, with greater impact on SMEs [17]. There is still a significant gap between top-down theory

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and practical adoption of robust ethical practices across the entire AI value chain [15], [18], [19], but our research suggests that this is more prevalent in SMEs.

In this article, we adopt the European Commission’s definition of an SME which is an enterprise with fewer than 250 employees, a turnover below €50 million or a balanced sheet total below €43 million [20]. A small business has fewer than 50 employees and a micro business fewer than ten employees [20]. Global business will have different definitions on the size of SMEs, for example, in USA, an SME may have up to 500 employees dependent on the sector [21]. The World Bank states that globally, SMEs represent 90% of businesses and account for over 50% of employment, and in emerging markets, seven out of ten jobs are created by SMEs [22]. In many countries, SMEs are able to access competitive public funding to support growth acceleration and drive innovation in the AI space, but to date there has been little to no focus on responsible innovation. These programs have generally ignored the need for strong AI and data governance, and not provided training and upskilling in the domains. Fortunately, over the past few years numerous organizations and academics have published “ethical toolkits” to help organizations adopt and embed processes and practices that mitigate risks and “do AI ethically.” These toolkits help organizations ensure their innovative systems adhere to the key pillars of “ethical tech” around beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, and explicability [19].

The overall aim of this article is to evaluate the thematic and AI life cycle coverage of these toolkits. We also assess the usability of the toolkits from an SME perspective and identify which toolkits are least onerous to adopt and address the barriers to adoption highlighted by SMEs. By categorizing the toolkits against ethical AI themes and adoption/usability, we provide organizations of all sizes, but especially SMEs, with an easy way to identify the most suitable tools, methods, and processes to implement. Our study is divided into two parts. First, we conducted qualitative SME consultations over two events to establish their understanding of both data and AI ethical principles and to identify the key barriers SMEs face in their adoption. As the collaboration between business and universities is a highly important mechanism for R&D activities and for stimulating innovation, it is important that academics make the good ethical research practices from within their institutions integral to contract research and knowledge exchange activities. Second, we conducted a review of available toolkits (published in academic, organizational, government, and gray literature) that support ethical and responsible AI practices. We evaluated these toolkits using criteria partly informed by our SME consultations across four aspects of ethical AI: 1) human-centric ethical principles; 2) applicability across the AI development life cycle; 3) barriers to adoption; and 4) key ethics themes covered.

In this article, we define a toolkit as a document or resource including guidelines (provided the described methods, techniques, or instructions for implementation), checklists, methodologies, activities, processes, frameworks, workflows, or approaches where the content focus is on responsible or ethical data (data ethics) or AI (ethical/responsible/trustworthy/trusted AI). We expand the definition of toolkit defined by Morley *et al.* [23]

which focuses only on technical toolkits designed for data scientists and developers up to 2018.

This research aims to address the following research questions.

- 1) What are the barriers to ethical AI adoption by SMEs?
- 2) What is the current state of the market in practical toolkits for embedding AI ethical frameworks and governance into an SME culture?

The main contributions of this article are as follows.

- 1) An analysis of the viewpoints of SMEs on ethical data and AI practices established through two engagement events which are useful to those organizations which are developing toolkits.
- 2) Identification of barriers to adoption of ethical principles, practices, and toolkits for SMEs.
- 3) A review and evaluation of recent toolkits against four groups of criteria (common ethical principles, stages of the AI product life cycle, responsible AI aspects and practical application aspects) designed to facilitate practical application of data and AI ethical practices.
- 4) An easy-to-use lookup table of ranked toolkits based on expert intercoder agreements of criteria coverage – suitable for SMEs to use.
- 5) Recommendations to the research community on the role of data and AI ethics in business knowledge exchange.

The rest of this article is organized as follows. Section II presents a summary of the core risk factors associated with AI and an overview of the latest legal frameworks and current ethical guidelines and principles. In Section III, we present our two-part methodology; first, describing two SME events leading to the identification of barriers to adoption of ethical toolkits and second, our method for conducting a review and coding of the state-of-the-art toolkits against a range of criteria. We perform an analysis of these toolkits and SME events in Section IV, which leads to a series of recommendations, conclusions, and the wider implications of findings in Section V.

## II. BACKGROUND

### A. Risk Factors in AI

When conceptualizing, creating, and implementing an AI system, it is important to consider the risk factors associated with the data used, the model(s) built, and the life span of the model [18], [19]. Furthermore, the societal outcomes and impacts (negative or positive; helpful or harmful) arising during the life span of application should also be considered. From a business perspective, there is a clear relationship between perceived risk in an AI system in a given context and how much trust users have in the decisions it makes [24], [25]. The majority of risk factors are well documented. *Bias* is one of the most complex factors as consideration must be given to bias that is embedded into organizational or industrial cultures, personal, unconscious, and human bias and data representation bias [26], [27]. For example, data that have been labeled by humans for training a model may be subjective, even among experts. Different models may need to be developed for different genders, cultures, etc., as it is rarely possible to generalize models to an entire human population

200 based on limited training data. *Fairness* is about treating people  
 201 equally through developing models that encapsulate moral stan-  
 202 dards in the decision-making process. *Explainability* is required,  
 203 so all stakeholders, including people impacted by the decisions  
 204 of automated systems, can understand how a decision is made  
 205 and the user knows why a system has made a decision [28],  
 206 [29]. *Societal impacts* (potential benefits and harms) must be  
 207 considered by a business, not only just to mitigate reputational  
 208 damage in case of legal complaints but also to meet or exceed  
 209 minimum standards of business ethics. Businesses must question  
 210 where *responsibility* (tasks and obligations) lies within their AI  
 211 governance framework and define *accountability* (oversight and  
 212 liability) to roles across the design/development/ deployment  
 213 life cycle. With AI legislation changes on the horizon, deep  
 214 thinking and consensus surrounding these risk factors is required  
 215 by both academics and industry regardless of size to assess  
 216 the risk of an AI solution to both individuals and society. The  
 217 problem is now bridging the gap between principles and practice,  
 218 so there is some assurance that AI systems comply with the  
 219 agreed principles.

## 220 B. Principles and Guidelines

221 Over the past five years, governments, corporations, and inter-  
 222 national bodies have produced a significant amount of guidance  
 223 on the ethical dimensions of AI and data driven technologies.  
 224 To understand how crowded this space is and the difficulty  
 225 of choice for SMEs with regard to which guidelines to follow,  
 226 this section provides a brief overview. In 2019, Jobin *et al.* [4]  
 227 conducted a survey of global ethical guidelines comprised of 84  
 228 documents and analyzed their thematic coverage over 11 ethical  
 229 principles identified by keywords. This work provides a good  
 230 understanding of the coverage of ethical AI principles and guide-  
 231 lines between 2011 and April 2019. However, the landscape  
 232 is very dynamic. In 2019, the Beijing Academy of Artificial  
 233 Intelligence published the Beijing AI Principles advocating eth-  
 234 ical AI [5], OECD proposed five value-based principles for the  
 235 responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI [7], and the European  
 236 Commission issued ethical guidelines for Trustworthy AI [2]. In  
 237 2020, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget issued Guid-  
 238 ance for Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Applications [11].  
 239 In June 2021, The General Conference of the United Nations  
 240 Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
 241 presented the Draft Text of the Recommendation on the Ethics  
 242 of Artificial Intelligence, which focuses on a human-centered  
 243 approach to AI, recommending that “AI must be for the greater  
 244 interest of the people, not the other way around” [8]. The  
 245 U.K. government provided an updated summary of data and AI  
 246 ethical principles developed by both the public sector and the  
 247 government in 2020 [9], which included a joint publication on  
 248 AI procurement guidelines developed with the World Economic  
 249 Forum [30], and specific guidelines and a checklist for using AI  
 250 in health care [31]. In 2021, the U.K. AI Council published an AI  
 251 road map [32], further “guidance” on procurement [33] and its  
 252 national data strategy [34]. A brief analysis of the commonality  
 253 of ethical principles can be found as shown by Crockett [35],  
 254 from which a subset of our toolkit evaluation criteria is derived.

## C. Legal Frameworks

255 Legal frameworks in the space of AI and data driven technolo-  
 256 gies are relatively new and rapidly emerging. The GDPR 2018  
 257 [1] first introduced Article 22, a series of safeguards and infor-  
 258 mation obligations in relation to automated decision-making.  
 259 These included empowering the data subject as stated in Recital  
 260 71 “*not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated*  
 261 *processing, including profiling, which produces legal effects*  
 262 *concerning him or her or similarly significantly affects him or*  
 263 *her”* [1], the right to ask for human intervention, explanation  
 264 of how the automated decision was made “*the logic involved.*”  
 265 Recital 71 states that the data controller should use appropriate  
 266 mathematical and statistical procedures for profiling and that  
 267 data should be accurate in order to minimize the risk of errors [1].  
 268 In 2018, the EU also published its AI strategy which promoted a  
 269 human-centric approach, which focused on respecting European  
 270 values and human rights. Recently, the EU has published the  
 271 proposed Regulatory Framework on AI [36], which contains  
 272 a framework to assess the risk of any AI product, service, or  
 273 system. Four risk levels are defined as follows. 274

- 275 1) *Unacceptable risk*: AI systems considered a clear threat to  
 276 the safety, livelihoods, and rights of people will be banned.
- 277 2) *High risk*: AI systems identified as high risk (including law  
 278 enforcement, credit scoring, and border control manage-  
 279 ment) are subject to a deep risk assessment, mitigation  
 280 strategy, high quality datasets, traceability, documenta-  
 281 tion, clear explainability protocols to the user, and a high  
 282 level of robustness, security, and accuracy.
- 283 3) *Limited risk*: This includes chatbots where human-  
 284 machine transparency is a requirement.
- 285 4) *Minimal risk*: This includes applications such as AI-  
 286 enabled video games or spam filters [36].

287 An excellent primer on the principles and priorities required  
 288 for a legal framework can be found in [37], produced by the  
 289 Council of Europe’s Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelli-  
 290 gence. Leslie *et al.* [37] also provide suggestions on options for a  
 291 legal framework and a mapping between substantive human and  
 292 legal rights and key obligations of AI developers when building  
 293 AI systems and services. 294

## III. METHODOLOGY

295 This article comprises a two-part methodology. The first part  
 296 is an analysis of a series of practical SME engagement events.  
 297 These events took place between July 2020 and June 2021 and  
 298 were designed to capture the “SME voice” on their understand-  
 299 ing of ethical AI, its practical implementation, awareness of eth-  
 300 ical toolkits, and the barriers to adopting good ethical practices.  
 301 The aim of the analysis was to establish which themes associated  
 302 with ethical AI that SMEs are most aware of, and the perceived  
 303 barriers to ethical AI adoption. Part two is a review of a range  
 304 of practical toolkits designed to support the implementing into  
 305 practice of ethical AI principles. These toolkits were evaluated  
 306 and coded against the common themes and barriers from the  
 307 SME events and against a range of criteria relating to coverage  
 308 of the AI life cycle, and general ethics themes.

### 309 A. Part 1: SME Engagement and Consultation Study

310 This section outlines the methodologies for two distinct SME  
311 engagement events which explored the need for and barriers to  
312 ethical AI.

313 1) *Event 1: Our Place Our Data:* To understand the land-  
314 scape for local businesses and local authorities in ethical AI  
315 understanding and practice, a qualitative research study took  
316 place in June and July 2020, comprising two roundtables and  
317 follow-up interviews. The study was initiated by Manchester  
318 Metropolitan University (MMU), designed in collaboration with  
319 an independent think tank and with the support of the U.K.'s  
320 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Data Analytics (APPGDA).  
321 During the roundtables, participants were provided with an  
322 overview of a proposed model for place-based support for ethical  
323 AI to build a local ecosystem in which ethical and responsible AI  
324 development could be nurtured and thrive. The theme for the first  
325 roundtable ( $n = 20$ ) was "Data and Public: Creating a data-driven  
326 future for Greater Manchester" and sought to capture responses  
327 to a series of key questions, which included the following.

- 328 1) How can the public be better engaged with policies around  
329 ethical data use?
- 330 2) What are the current challenges and shortcomings associ-  
331 ated with ethical guidelines and principles for the use of  
332 data by public and private-sector bodies?
- 333 3) What does an effective local data ecosystem looks like?

334 The second roundtable was at U.K. national level, featuring  
335 not only local SMEs and Policy Makers but also Members of  
336 Parliament and the House of Lords, and key national stakehold-  
337 ers such as the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI),  
338 Visa, British Standards Institute, and the Greater Manchester  
339 Combined Authority (GMCA). The second roundtable ( $n =$   
340 18) focused on how parliament and government could work to  
341 develop local data strategies as part of a wider effort to make the  
342 U.K. a world leader in ethical, data-driven technologies. It also  
343 analyzed current links between central government, regulators,  
344 local and combined authorities, and industry, and considered  
345 how those links could be developed over the coming years. The  
346 discussion focused on how to develop place-based approaches  
347 to data ethics; the role for regulators and government bodies;  
348 the feasibility of an "Ethical AI kitemark," which organizations  
349 should lead on ethical AI policies at the national and regional  
350 level; and what challenges exist with regard to bringing these  
351 bodies together.

352 Following the roundtables (between August 2020 and March  
353 2021), a series of supplementary follow-up interviews were  
354 conducted by Policy Connect with selected participants to ex-  
355 plore some of the emergent themes in greater depth. Summary  
356 reports from both roundtable events and the interviews were  
357 produced by Policy Connect and cross-checked by this study's  
358 authors (Crockett and Colyer) for accuracy, identified emergent  
359 themes, and indicators of agreement, disagreement, and consen-  
360 sus among participants.

361 2) *Event 2. Greater Manchester AI Foundry:* The Greater  
362 Manchester AI Foundry [41], with £3 million ERDF funding, is  
363 a three-year research and innovation project which commenced  
364 in July 2020. The aim of the Foundry is to increase SME  
365 performance by placing AI research and innovation at the center

of business growth through practical knowledge transfer from AI 366  
academic research into industry. SMEs go through two phases: 367  
1) Phase 1 is a series of workshops on AI development from 368  
a business perspective and 2) Phase 2 is a technical assist to 369  
develop a prototype AI solution. The objective is that research 370  
acts as a technology accelerator for new products and services 371  
based on AI. Given the importance of the development of ethical 372  
technology, a pilot workshop was given in early 2021 to the 373  
first cohort of SME participants ( $n = 20$ ) to enable SMEs to 374  
gain an understanding of ethical, social, and legal perspectives 375  
of AI and data privacy, and also to facilitate practical ethics 376  
into the technical assists. The workshop was not intended to 377  
provide any legal advice, rather it was designed to showcase 378  
best practice in ethics and regulatory compliance. The first 379  
workshop was positively received and a full workshop was 380  
developed and embedded with a second cohort in June 2021. 381  
In the full workshop, SMEs were actively encouraged to look at 382  
the impact and assess the risks of their AI product or service in 383  
light of the newly proposed EU regulation [36]. The workshops 384  
introduced a variety of ethical toolkits and activities with SMEs 385  
including datasheets for datasets [42], consequence scanning 386  
[43], conducting a data privacy impact assessment [44], and 387  
examining the risk to stakeholders of an AI recruitment tool 388  
using padlet [45]. Feedback on adoption of potential tools and 389  
barriers to use was obtained through Q and A and discussion 390  
during and after the workshop. Workshop members were also 391  
asked to complete a longitudinal ethical AI practice survey [46]. 392  
Feedback was anonymized and collated and thematic coding 393  
was undertaken to identify ethical concerns and barriers. 394

### 395 B. Part 2: Review of Practical "Ethical" Toolkits

Our review of toolkits covers academic, organizational, gov- 396  
ernment, and gray literature sources. The search strategy em- 397  
ployed the following primary keywords: (*toolkit, resource,* 398  
*guidelines, guidance, checklist, methodology, method, activity,* 399  
*process, framework, workflow, approach*); (*ethical, responsible,* 400  
*trustworthy, trusted, data, data ethics, tech ethics*); and [*artificial* 401  
*intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML)*]. Our toolkit dataset 402  
was created by using the primary keywords to perform searches 403  
on Google Scholar and Scopus and gray online literature on 404  
Google from 2017 to July 5th, 2021. Our toolkit dataset was 405  
also cross-checked with work published by Morley *et al.* [23] 406  
and Moltzau [38], who produced a full typology of identified 407  
methods and tools (up to mid-July 2019) which were limited 408  
to helping developers, engineers, and designers of ML apply 409  
ethics within their roles. In comparison, our review takes on a 410  
more holistic view in analyzing toolkits that are also used to 411  
initiate engagement with wider public stakeholders to explain 412  
decisions and build trust. *Inclusion criteria* were documents 413  
(checklists, guidelines, activities) including those published by 414  
public and private sectors, governments, and international bodies 415  
and the toolkit language was English. *Exclusion criteria* were 416  
legal frameworks, opinion articles and speeches. Once a list of 417  
toolkits that met the inclusion criteria was obtained (referred to 418  
as the EAI toolkit dataset), each toolkit was evaluated and coded 419  
independently by expert researchers in the field of AI and ethics 420

TABLE I  
GROUP B: COMMON ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Criterion No	Ethical Principal
$B_1$	AI should not be used to harm or kill any human and respect human rights
$B_2$	AI must always be fair, unbiased and transparent in the decision-making process
$B_3$	AI systems and solutions should always operate within the law and have human accountability
$B_4$	Data Governance and Data Privacy should be incorporated into the AI life cycle
$B_5$	Humans should always know when they have interactions with an AI system
$B_6$	AI systems should be inclusive to all human-centered AI design
$B_7$	Appropriate levels of explainability should always be provided on AI decision making
$B_8$	Humans must always be in the loop when an AI is making a decision that affect other humans
$B_9$	Humans responsible for designing, developing and operating AI systems should be competent in the skills and knowledge required
$B_{10}$	AI systems should be sustainable and work to benefit humans, the society and the environment
$B_{11}$	AI systems should be inclusive to all

TABLE II  
GROUP C: STAGES OF THE AI PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE

Criterion No	Criterion Name/Description
$C_1$	<b>Conceptualization:</b> includes imagineering, defining aims, objectives, desiderata, cost/benefit of new AI products and services and conducting a risk assessment
$C_2$	<b>Data Preparation and Exploration:</b> e.g., collection, curation, feature engineering, cleaning, feature selection, and sampling
$C_3$	<b>Model Building and Evaluation</b>
$C_4$	<b>Deployment and Monitoring</b>

based on four groups of criteria, shown in Tables I–IV. For each toolkit, its source (academic, organizational, business, and gray) was recorded, along with publication year, whether it was open source, and the country of origin.

Criteria in Group E were determined on the basis of the findings of the two SME engagement events reported in Section IV – analysis of SME engagement events.

A modified nominal group approach to coding was adopted [39], [40]. The first round of coding involved three experts in the fields of AI, ethics, and business engagement, independently evaluating two-thirds of the EAI toolkit dataset with each toolkit being evaluated by two experts initially. A structured spreadsheet containing links to the toolkits and the 33 criteria for coding was given to each expert to evaluate and code independently. Each criterion was coded according to a three-point Likert scale with values in (0, 1, 2) indicating, respectively, *weak*, *moderate*, and *strong* levels of support by a toolkit for a given criterion. For example, if a toolkit strongly addressed  $B_{10}$  – AI systems should be sustainable and work to benefit humans, the society, and the environment – then it was scored as 2; if it moderately or partially addressed that criterion, it was scored 1; and if support

TABLE III  
GROUP D: RESPONSIBLE AI THEMES

Criteria No	Criterion Name/Description
$D_1$	<b>Robustness</b>
$D_2$	<b>Fairness</b> (includes bias)
$D_3$	<b>Transparency</b>
$D_4$	<b>Accountability</b>
$D_5$	<b>Explainability</b>
$D_6$	<b>Privacy</b>
$D_7$	<b>Safety</b>
$D_8$	<b>Impact</b> (both positive and negative, on society)
$D_9$	<b>Inclusivity of the toolkit (in general):</b> incorporation of needs from stakeholders with different roles (e.g., managerial, data protection officer), motivations, technical expertise (e.g., machine learning engineers, senior management), and cognitive equity (for example, that it was inclusive to people with varying levels of educational attainment)
$D_{10}$	<b>Inclusivity w.r.t to General Public:</b> as $D_9$ but, more specifically, the extent to which the conception of the toolkits included and offered consultation with the general public

TABLE IV  
GROUP E: PRACTICAL APPLICATION ASPECTS

Criteria No	Criterion Name/Description
$E_1$	<b>Exemplars:</b> case studies, examples of what-good-looks-like, among others.
$E_2$	Quick Read e.g. too-long-didn't-read; short, accessible, practical, quick-start type of guidance for application of the principles.
$E_3$	<b>Stakeholders Inclusivity:</b> does the toolkit address different types of stakeholders such as technical, managerial, and end user (e.g., customer)?
$E_4$	<b>Feasibility</b> of applying the toolkit with respect to a <b>typical SME skillset</b> .
$E_5$	<b>Feasibility</b> of applying the toolkit with respect to <b>resources</b> such as workload, personnel, budget at SMEs.
$E_6$	<b>Recommendations of AI Techniques:</b> e.g., does the toolkit make concrete recommendations for data management and machine learning methods?
$E_7$	<b>Recommendations on Personnel Training</b>
$E_8$	<b>Evidence of adoption</b> of the toolkit by an SME

for the criterion was largely or completely absent, then it was scored as 0.

The first round of independent coding revealed a 72% agreement across 33 criteria; 18% of criteria indicated that there was a disagreement with one expert coding 0 and another scoring 1 or 2; in 10% of cases, both experts agreed that the toolkit contained at least some evidence of the criteria, but the experts disagreed on how much (scoring 1 or 2). When adopting a percentage agreement approach [39] there is no agreed threshold for consensus, and it is up to the researchers to judge what represents acceptable agreement for a particular study. A second round of independent expert coding was then instigated for all toolkits where there was significant disagreement for any criteria, defined as when one expert scored 0 and the other expert either 1 or 2; these toolkits were fully coded by a third expert in an attempt to establish majority agreement. The level of agreement between the three experts was then recorded in a

459 structured spreadsheet for 77 toolkits. There was a good majority  
 460 agreement between the two experts for 89% of the 33 criteria  
 461 scored across the 77 toolkits. Experts were unable to reach a  
 462 majority agreement on all criteria across all toolkits in only 1% of  
 463 cases. The most common disagreement between the coders was  
 464 on the interpretation of  $B_{10}$  – AI systems should be sustainable  
 465 and work to benefit humans, the society, and the environment (6  
 466 out of 77 toolkits) and on the toolkit coverage of  $C_4$  – deployment  
 467 and monitoring (6 out of 77 toolkits).

#### 468 IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

##### 469 A. Analysis of SME Engagement Events

470 *Event 1:* For event 1, analysis of the first roundtable revealed  
 471 that ethical and legal issues surrounding “data” and not “AI”  
 472 needed to be resolved first before the wider ethical aspects  
 473 of AI could be addressed. This was true for both public and  
 474 private sector organizations. The key themes emerging from the  
 475 roundtables were as follows:

- 476 1) ethical guidelines and principles should be simple and  
 477 flexible and should be much more than a checklist;
- 478 2) practical guidance on how to apply data and ethical AI  
 479 principles should be usable;
- 480 3) mechanisms were needed to support practical guidance  
 481 (training, resource support) in partnership with local au-  
 482 thorities;
- 483 4) data-driven technology strategies should be developed in  
 484 partnership with all stakeholders;
- 485 5) SMEs should have access to “resource knowledge shar-  
 486 ing” to make effective and ethical use of AI and ML.

487 The main output of the Event 1 study was a report *Our Place,*  
 488 *Our Data: Involving Local People in Data and AI-Based Recov-*  
 489 *ery* [47], which made five recommendations to the U.K. govern-  
 490 ment, including that local authorities should work in partnership  
 491 with businesses (including SMEs) and academic institutions to  
 492 develop data-driven technology strategies to develop innovative  
 493 AI services and products which have citizen engagement at the  
 494 heart of the creation process.

495 *Event 2:* The analysis of Event 2 was based on Q and A  
 496 during the two cohort sessions and follow-ups in 1:1 virtual  
 497 meetings. SMEs referred to the following Information Commis-  
 498 sioner’s Office (ICO) guidance: What are the accountability and  
 499 governance implications of AI? [48], guidance on AI and data  
 500 protection [44], data protection impact assessments [44], what  
 501 do we need to do to ensure lawfulness, fairness, and transparency  
 502 in AI systems? [45], and how do we ensure individual rights in  
 503 our AI systems? [49]. They noted these documents as long and  
 504 complicated, and provided no practical advice or methods on  
 505 how to apply them. The key message was that toolkits/guidance  
 506 needed to be simpler. One SME data scientist stated that they  
 507 “*did not know some of this existed*” emphasizing the general lack  
 508 of awareness. SMEs thought that training or free consultancy  
 509 was required to help them understand and apply legal guidance  
 510 in relation to AI and data. Three SMEs also thought that in  
 511 general, ICO guidance was “*subject to interpretation.*” Positive  
 512 feedback was received about the use of consequence scanning  
 513 [43] as a useful way to think about harms and risks of a product at

conceptualization, but in general SMEs said whether they would  
 be used in practice was based on whether they had available  
 resource. They had no strong opinion about the benefits of  
 involving the public, for example, as a stakeholder in an activity  
 such as consequence scanning. Despite growing consensus on  
 the benefits of public involvement to build trust in AI tech [50],  
 [51], SMEs indicated that they were not sure how to involve  
 the public and that the real benefits of consulting with the  
 public was not clear. Two SMEs suggested that successful case  
 studies would benefit them. The SMEs thought that the toolkits  
 presented were useful, but they needed time to learn how to use  
 them – not only just one-off training but also how to practically  
 apply them in their own business.

*Summary:* From these two events, the barriers to SMEs adopt-  
 ing toolkits were identified as follows.

- 529 1) Availability of resources to SMEs (people and time), cur-  
 530 rent skills, and training requirements.
- 531 2) Skepticism about the benefits of public stakeholder in-  
 532 volvement in the design of new products and services.
- 533 3) Lack of understanding around governance of responsi-  
 534 bility and accountability regarding AI development and  
 535 implementation outcomes.
- 536 4) The lack of audit and compliance and legal frameworks.
- 537 5) Need for practical training and upskilling regarding ethics,  
 538 data and legal frameworks, and managing liabilities.
- 539 6) Challenges associated with communication with users –  
 540 different language for different stakeholders.
- 541 7) Serious implications for a business in terms of liability.  
 542 What are the consequences of noncompliance?

##### 543 B. Toolkit Analysis

544 Following the methodology described in Section III, a total of  
 545 77 toolkits were identified which met the inclusion criteria. 30 of  
 546 these toolkits were from 2021, while the earliest was from 2017.  
 547 A total of 51% of toolkits were from the US, 23% were from the  
 548 U.K. and there was representation from South America, China,  
 549 Denmark, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Ireland, in addition to  
 550 three toolkits which were classed as global. The process for  
 551 analyzing toolkits can be defined as follows.

- 552 1) All toolkits were scored using the groups of criteria  $B$   
 553 to  $E$  (see Tables I to IV) according to a three-point Likert  
 554 scale with values in (0, 1, 2) indicating, respectively, weak,  
 555 moderate, and strong level of support by a toolkit for  
 556 a given criterion. As explained in Section III, these are  
 557 the combined scores from the interannotator coding and  
 558 agreement process.
- 559 2) For the analysis of the criteria, we derived an  $n$  by  $m$  matrix  
 560  $R$  (see supplementary material), where  $n$  is the number of  
 561 toolkits ( $n = 77$ ) and  $m$  is the number of criteria considered  
 562 ( $m = 33$ ).
- 563 3) Each cell in  $R$  contains one of (0, 1, 2,  $D$ ), with  $D$  standing  
 564 for a disagreement among coders.
- 565 4) From  $R$ , we derive a mean score for a toolkit (i.e., a  
 566 row) or a criterion (i.e., a column) by taking the mean  
 567 of its empirical probability distribution (epdf) (excluding  
 568 disagreements). More specifically, let  $X$  be either a row or

a column in  $M$ , which is assumed to be a discrete random variable. Then,  $\text{epdf}(X) = (p_0, p_1, p_2)$ , where  $p_i$  is the probability of the score  $i$  in  $(0, 1, 2)$ .

Table V located in the appendix, displays the statistical summary of scores across the 77 toolkits, ranked on the basis of their coverage of criteria groups  $C$ ,  $D$ , and  $E$ , where  $p_0$ ,  $p_1$ , and  $p_2$  are the values of the epdf, shown as percentages, of the Likert scores on the criteria, and  $m$  is the number of criteria assessed. Group  $B$  is not included in Table V as it considerably overlaps with responsible AI themes in Group  $D$ . We opted for the latter, given that it provides a more fine-grained analysis of tool coverage. For example,  $B_2$  – AI must always be fair, unbiased, and transparent in the decision-making process – is covered by  $D_2$  – fairness (including bias) and  $D_3$  (transparency).

The top-ranking toolkit was Microsoft’s *Responsible Innovation: A Best Practices Toolkit* [111]. While this toolkit was targeted at developers, it had a strong focus on identifying potential negative consequences of technology on humans. The toolkit features three elements. The first, judgment call – a game and team-based activity that explores all of Microsoft’s AI principles [128] through scenario imagining where the aim is for participants to write product reviews for different stakeholders accessing the impact and harms. Harms modeling – a framework for product teams based on the four pillars of responsible innovation (“injuries, denial of consequential services, infringement on human rights, and erosion of democratic and societal structures”[111]) – is designed for teams to look at real world impacts of technology. Finally, community jury, defined as an adaptation of the citizen jury [111] brings together the product team and user stakeholders to discuss various product artifacts, deliberate and cocreate new technologies over a 2–3-h session. This toolkit had moderate to strong coverage across all criteria  $B$ ,  $C$ , and  $D$ . However, it did not contain any exemplars  $E_1$ , and had no training guides  $E_7$ , which is a key requirement for SMEs. That said, its uniqueness is its ability to engage the public, seek consensus, and opinion, and it is forward-thinking in terms of providing practical guidance that is applicable to a wide range of businesses/organizations. Ranked second was the U.K. government’s *Data Ethics Framework Guidance*, published in 2020, which focuses on responsible and ethical use of data in the public sector [114]. While the emphasis is on the public sector, the guidance is targeted at all stakeholders who use or interact with data, including policy makers and data scientists. Similar to [111], the emphasis is on defining and understanding the public benefit of any “data project” including human rights, understanding potential consequences, compliance with law and diversity in the development team. The toolkit provides a set of questions which are scored on a Likert scale based on clarity and understanding with respect to a specific project. The framework also covers algorithms and outputs in relation to AI and is applicable to all stages of the AI life cycle. This toolkit also did not provide any examples of practical application  $E_1$  and is less inclusive in its approach by not involving wider publics as stakeholders  $E_3$ . The toolkit did not offer any specific training  $E_8$ .

Table V also highlights the lowest ranking toolkits [70], [97], and [125], none of which provided strong evidence of coverage across any of the criteria. For example, Covington is a global

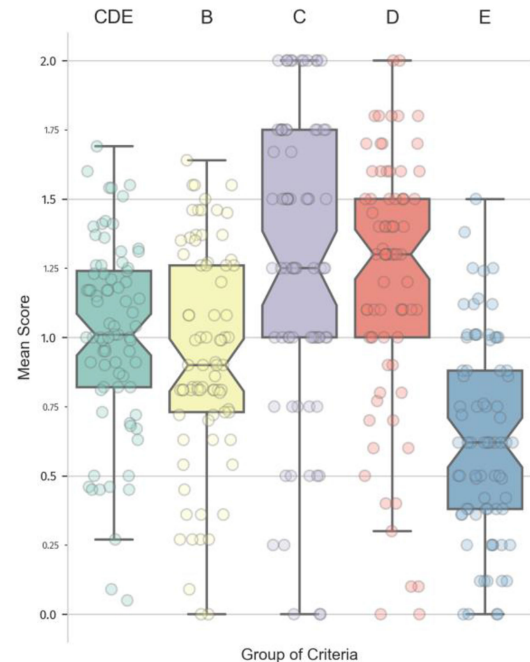


Fig. 1. Boxplot showing mean score distributions of independent expert ranked criteria over Likert scale  $[0, \dots, 2]$ .

law firm, based in USA. Its toolkit [125] claims to provide practical guidance for “the evolving regulatory landscape” with an emphasis on USA, U.K., and EU. The guidance is in the form of overviews, summaries of news articles, and a white paper with links to recent AI legislation articles and to the ICO/Alan Turing Explaining AI Decisions’ toolkit [83]. On the basis of our findings across the two SME engagement events, SMEs requested more training in order to understand the implications of legal frameworks and this toolkit would be difficult for them to practically apply as it is more a means of monitoring evolving regulation and legislation.

Fig. 1 shows the distribution of mean scores by groups of criteria. For example, one can see that criteria  $E$  (the practical application aspects for SMEs) has the lowest median and overall coverage by the toolkits (each, represented as a data point). Each plot represents one toolkit. This confirms the largely consensus view arising from our two events that in spite of the existence of toolkits to support responsible and ethical AI, most still lack adequate instructions and training to facilitate adoption. Many require significant time and specialist skills for implementation due to their length

Analysis has shown that no single toolkit covers all criteria, as indicated in Table V ( $p_0 > 0$  in all columns). Consequently, each set of criteria will now be analyzed independently to assess criterion coverage and highlight those toolkits with the highest ranked coverage. This will help SMEs to select toolkits that best align with their business culture and values, and the stage they are at in developing their own ethical policies and procedures.

1) *Common Ethical Principles (Group B)*: Fig. 2 shows the toolkit coverage of the ethical principles  $B_1, \dots, B_{11}$ . Clearly,  $B_2$  – AI must always be fair, unbiased, and transparent in the decision-making process receives the highest coverage across all toolkits. This is closely followed  $B_3$  – AI systems should always



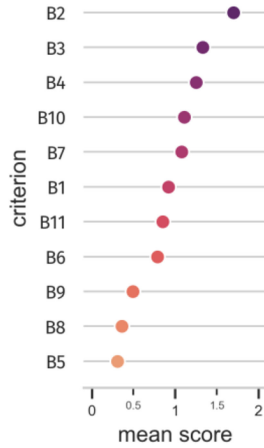


Fig. 2. Ranking of Group B criteria on mean score.

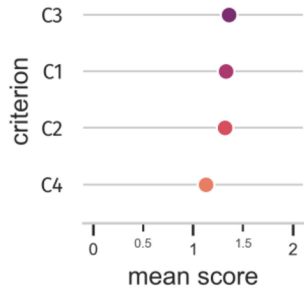


Fig. 3. Ranking of Group C criteria on mean score.

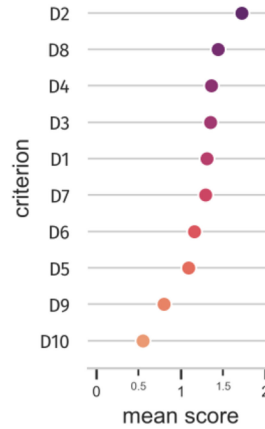


Fig. 4. Ranking of Group D criteria on mean score.

operate within the law and have human accountability and  $B_4$  – data governance and data privacy should be incorporated into the AI life cycle. These findings align with predominant global ethical principles [4]. Of least coverage was  $B_5$ , humans should always know when they have interactions with an AI system, which is only highlighted by toolkits [74], [116], [118], [120], and [126] and  $B_8$  – a human should always be in the loop for automated decision-making, covered by [101], [112], and [126]. Toolkit [126] (ranked 33 overall) stands out in this group. Titled “*Application Guide for the Ethical Assessment of AI for Actors within the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem*,” the toolkit is an open source guide published by the Inter-American Development Bank in May 2021. Its interdisciplinary approach to ethical self-assessment covers all stages on the AI life cycle, governance, and security with a focus on human involvement in AI systems. The guide has a three-stage assessment to determine the level of human involvement based on the impact that the system has on a human’s life. The toolkit helps organizations define associated key performance indicators, risk mitigation, and even develop emergency responses following analysis of all conceivable scenarios.

2) *Stages of AI Product Life Cycle (Group C)*: Fig. 3 shows the toolkit coverage for the four stages of the AI life cycle: 1) conceptualization  $C_1$ ; 2) data preparation  $C_2$ ; 3) exploration, model building, and evaluation  $C_3$ ; and 4) deployment and monitoring  $C_4$ . Analysis showed that toolkits were less likely

to cover the audit and compliance stage of the life cycle, compared to the other stages, presumably because few regulatory frameworks or standards are yet approved. For example, to date, out of the IEEE P7000 standards in development, only the IEEE 7010-2020 – IEEE Recommended Practice for Assessing the Impact of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems on Human Well-Being [14] is available on subscription only. Only toolkits [55], [56], [65], [70], [83], [85], [95], [101], [104], and [107] covered the whole life cycle, but to varying degrees. Toolkits [56] and [107] ranked, respectively, third and fifth overall against all criteria (see Table II). Agile ethics for AI (HAI) [56] is a Trello board which contains a series of boards covering scope, data audit, training, analysis, feedback, calibrate (optimal AI for increased uptake), augmentation (e.g., upskilling and training), and “people and the environment” which addresses accountability in AI deployment. Each board contains a series of “TO DOs” with specific resources, all available as open source. The World Economic Forum’s AI Procurement in a Box: Workbook [107] is a lengthy tool kit (54 pages) that features a series of questions and risk matrices and mapping tools covering the full AI life cycle. It is intended for businesses seeking to procure AI solutions. It also features a user manual with a strong emphasis on how to define the public benefit of AI while assessing risks in the early stages of conceptualization. The toolkit provides guidance on how to address both the technical and ethical limitations of data, clearly addressing the impact of bias.

3) *Responsible AI Themes (Group D)*: Fig. 4. shows the toolkit coverage for the responsible AI themes: Robustness  $D_1$ , fairness  $D_2$ , transparency  $D_3$ , accountability  $D_4$ , explainability  $D_5$ , privacy  $D_6$ , safety  $D_7$ , impact  $D_8$ , inclusivity of the toolkit (in general)  $D_9$ , and inclusivity w.r.t. general public inclusion as a stakeholder  $D_{10}$ . Examination of Group D criteria allows for more fine-grained analysis than within the more general ethical principles (see Fig. 2) and we expected to see the similarity with ethical principle  $B_2$  and fairness  $D_2$  with regard to coverage. Ninety-five percent of all toolkits moderately or strongly addressed the issue of fairness, with 88% also addressing the impact of AI technology on society  $D_8$ . Accountability  $D_4$ , both in terms of the processes of developing responsible technology

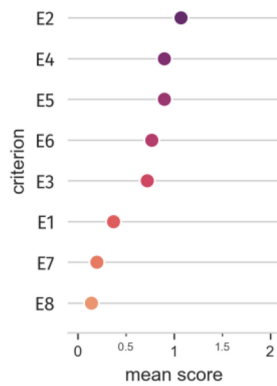


Fig. 5. Ranking of Group *E* criteria on mean score.

and the decision outcome, quality of the data and the model produced, also had moderate to strong coverage in 89% of toolkits. More than half (53%) of the toolkits failed to include the public voice, in any codesign or coproduction process to seek their opinions ( $D_{10}$ ) and only 62% of toolkits were moderately inclusive to the requirements and needs of a wide range of stakeholders (i.e., data scientists, software developers, managers, CEOs) ( $D_9$ ). The Action-Oriented AI Policy Toolkit for Technology Audits by Community Advocates and Activists [122], Agile Ethics for AI (HAI) [56], the JUST AI reflection prototype [82], Microsoft’s – Responsible Innovation: A Best Practices Toolkit [111], U.K. governments, Data Ethics Framework Guidance [114], and the Royal Society – Democratizing decisions about technology toolkit [120] were the only toolkits to have strong coverage of public inclusivity embedded within the toolkit objectives. As reported in Ouchchy *et al.* [129], public opinion is critical in the acceptance and adoption of new technology. Other work [130] has recommended that businesses including ethical value statements on trusted webpages; the inclusion of both ethicists and the public in new technology discussions could avert negative media responses and reputational damage to businesses. The importance of the role of the public stakeholder is also highlighted in policy road maps [32] and proposed regulation [36].

4) *Practical Application Aspects (Group E)*: Fig. 5 displays the ranked criteria in relation to different aspects regarding the practical application of the toolkits. Only 27% of the toolkits were coded as being equivalent to “quick start” guidance  $E_2$ . Sixty-nine percent of toolkits and their associated websites provided no exemplars or case studies of how to practically apply the toolkit; only 6% provided at least one example of adoption  $E_1$ . Coverage of stakeholders’ inclusivity  $E_4$  within the toolkit was scored as weak (27%), moderate (56%), and strong (17%). Analysis showed that toolkits were designed with specific audiences in mind, for example, the technical community (data scientists, programmers, and data analysts) where the focus was on criteria such as bias and fairness in both data quality and model generation. There were few toolkits that had end users and public inclusivity in mind, suggesting that the trajectory of practical application of toolkits is behind emerging legislation and wider discourse around building trust through

public involvement [120]. The feasibility of practical application of toolkits w.r.t. to SME resources (workload, personnel, and budgets)  $E_5$  was ranked similar to  $E_4$ . This indicated that SMEs would have to make a moderate to high investment to apply toolkits and embed ethical values and processes into business operations. Eighty-three percent of toolkits provided no training opportunities such as step-by-step instructions, user guides or checklist on how to practically use the toolkit. A strong emphasis on training  $E_7$  could only be found in IEEE Ethical Aligned Design [65] and The Royal Society – Democratizing decisions about technology toolkit [120]. The following toolkits covered some aspects of training: [56], [60], [70], [88], [99], [102], [104], [107], [108], [114], and [120]. An observation was that toolkits that were focused on the conceptualization stage of the AI life cycle and/or had more stakeholder inclusivity included some form of training.

Finally, evidence of adoption of a specific toolkit by SMEs’  $E_8$  was barely evident to nonexistent in 90% of toolkits. This suggests that either toolkits have not been designed with SMEs in mind, the barriers to practical application are too high, or toolkits are simply not being evaluated and publicized through practical use cases. Digital Catapult’s Machine Intelligence for Business [88] (ranked 24th in Table II) has published a short case study on Loomi – an AI assistant which builds trust through ethical transparent design [129]. Loomi, also the name of the SME featured in the case study, utilized Digital Catapult’s ethics framework to reposition “the product using ethics as a key differentiator.” IDEO’s toolkit (ranked 16th in Table II) highlights the benefits of human-centered design using its Design Kit [64] in a series of humanitarian case studies.

Across the criteria in this category  $E_1, \dots, E_8$ , DotEveryone’s Consequence Scanning toolkit [43], ranked 21st (Table II), exhibited moderate to strong coverage of all criteria. This open-source toolkit, developed in U.K., allows businesses and organizations (regardless of size) to examine, debate, risk assess, and mitigate the potential consequences of their product/service on society, communities, and the environment. A manual is provided (27 pages), with minimal resources required. The tool is employed at the conceptualization stage, with all stakeholders taking part, although public stakeholders are not specifically mentioned ( $D_{10}$ ). A strong facilitator is needed which may be a barrier for SMEs, but a session can last as little as 90 min. The tool has been reportedly adopted by SalesforceUX [130] as a way to bring design risks out into the open.

### C. Discussion

This article has evaluated and analyzed 77 toolkits that cover different aspects of the ML/AL life cycle and common ethical principles, responsible AI themes, such as bias and fairness, and degrees of practical application. Consequently, every organization should be able to find one or more toolkits that fit with their working practices, culture, and to complement their organizational values. Although Table II ranked Microsoft’s Responsible innovation: A Best Practices Toolkit [111] as the number one toolkit with regard to our criteria (*C*, *D*, and *E*), it still

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819 has limitations in its practical application by SMEs. Therefore,  
820 this research concludes that there is not a toolkit currently in  
821 existence that overcomes all the barriers and fully meets all the  
822 needs of SMEs identified in the analysis of the two SME en-  
823 gagement events. SMEs struggle with long, wordy, and technical  
824 documents. They require case studies, clear compelling stories  
825 of benefits, and step-by-step instruction manuals on how to use  
826 and embed toolkits into operations (and how much time/cash it  
827 will cost).

828 There was a good distribution across the toolkits of all the  
829 ethical principles (criteria *B*). Greatest coverage (mean of 1.64)  
830 was the Data Ethics Impact Assessment (ranked 17th in Table II)  
831 [91] which comprised a 16-page questionnaire designed for  
832 organizations to integrate the assessment of data ethics and the  
833 impacts of their AI on humans and society within their develop-  
834 ment and operational processes. The 56 questions cover aspects  
835 of transparency, equality, data governance, sustainability, ac-  
836 countability, and human-centered design and centered, drawing  
837 on DataEthics.eu’s principles of data ethics. In contrast, NESTA’s  
838 Civic AI Toolkit [121], which focused on using AI and data to ad-  
839 dress climate crisis and the Online Ethics Canvas [127], had little  
840 to no coverage. Results concluded that few toolkits addressed all  
841 11 principles, and none were considered to fully address all 11  
842 by any expert coder. Therefore, organizations will probably need  
843 to use more than one toolkit to get comprehensive coverage.

844 Detailed analysis in Section IV revealed that toolkits [55],  
845 [56], [65], [70], [83], [85], [95], [101], [104], and [107] covered  
846 the whole AI life cycle, but to varying degrees. Experts agreed  
847 that 24% of toolkits did not cover audit and compliance and  
848 this may be due to the current lack of AI legislation, regulation,  
849 and ethics standards. However, the proposed EU Regulation on  
850 AI [132] is likely to have a significant impact on future toolkit  
851 development, as it is being described by the Global Centre for  
852 Data Innovation as the “*most restrictive regulation of AI*” in the  
853 world. The expert coders agreed that 80% of toolkits analyzed in  
854 this study placed emphasis on getting things right the first time,  
855 i.e., at the point of AI product or service conceptualization, and  
856 can be seen as proactive in determining the consequences and  
857 harms a potential product could have on humans and society.

858 Analysis across the responsible AI themes (criteria *D*) in-  
859 dicates that the vast majority of toolkits covered aspects of  
860 fairness and the impact of AI. While these are core values  
861 in developing ethical and responsible AI, SMEs do need to  
862 ensure that they address all themes across the AI life cycle  
863 through culture change, rather than becoming fixated on bias  
864 and fairness to the detriment of other themes. It is unsurprising  
865 that so few toolkits strongly emphasize the importance of citizen  
866 representation in their toolkit application. Only 8% of all tool-  
867 kits strongly advocated the participation of citizens, with 53%  
868 relying only on internal stakeholders to take part. An absence  
869 of public involvement, especially in the new AI product/service  
870 conceptualization phase, leads to flaws in design thinking due  
871 to a lack of diversity and inclusivity, which leads to narrower  
872 perspectives. Consequently, a great business idea, with no public  
873 license to operate, can ultimately lead to reputational damage  
874 and loss of revenue. For example, Deloitte reported that a lack  
875 of inclusivity in the conceptualization stage of a smart city design  
876 resulted in a negative impact as people in wheelchairs were

877 unable to access eye-level retina scanners that require the person  
878 to be standing [133]. Section IV highlighted only six toolkits  
879 featuring citizen inclusivity. SMEs urgently need to find ways to  
880 engage and involve more diverse teams including people outside  
881 of their organizations, such as the general public. Our SME  
882 engagement events found that this activity is typically beyond  
883 their resources and skillset; they also raised concerns about  
884 intellectual property rights and trade secrets being disclosed.  
885 Put simply, SMEs need support and advice on how to engage  
886 effectively. The Community Jury proposed within Microsoft’s  
887 Responsible innovation: A best practices toolkit [111] is a good  
888 example of citizen engagement in the AI life cycle. The caveat  
889 is that it was designed by and for a large corporate and not  
890 an SME. Setting up such a jury may be daunting and resource  
891 intensive for an SME; we propose setting up city or regional  
892 juries, focused on ethical AI tech, as part of collective approach,  
893 where SMEs could present novel ideas and seek public opinion  
894 on design solutions. Ultimately, SMEs should seek to cocreate  
895 and codesign with citizens to build trust and obtain the public  
896 license to operate, but this is a significant step change to current  
897 operations.

898 Our analysis also highlighted the lack of exemplars or case  
899 studies by those organizations who have developed the toolkits.  
900 There was little evidence of adoption and virtually none involv-  
901 ing SMEs. This is not to say they haven’t been involved, but  
902 stories, outcomes, analyses, benefits, and outcomes are not in  
903 the public domain. This is a key knowledge gap that should  
904 be addressed to close the gap between ethical principles and  
905 practice. Toolkit developers could produce publicly accessible  
906 case studies to thoroughly document the journey and the impacts  
907 of adopting ethical practices. This is crucial to lower resistance,  
908 leverage investment, and gain the trust and attention of SMEs  
909 to invest their limited resources in upskilling and training their  
910 employees on AI ethics.

911 Guidance on how to train people to use the toolkits is another  
912 significant challenge. Our analysis indicated that 83% of toolkits  
913 did not provide any training material on how to practically  
914 implement the tool within the organization. While the overall  
915 majority of toolkits are open source and in the public domain,  
916 some organizations did offer consultation opportunities for a fee  
917 [113], [124], [125]. However, this is not enough, particularly for  
918 SMEs, if they do not come with comprehensive training and  
919 support materials.

920 It is important to note that many of these toolkits have been  
921 designed for specific and narrow purposes, with no intention to  
922 support all possible dimensions of ethical AI, not least because  
923 many were produced while ethical frameworks were still under  
924 development. For example, IBM’s 360 Fairness tool [78] was  
925 conceived to focus on evaluating bias and the fairness of algo-  
926 rithms, with no explicit regard for any assessment of eventual  
927 outcomes from decisions supported by said algorithms. At the  
928 other end of the spectrum, AINow’s Algorithmic Impact Assess-  
929 ment toolkit [53] is “designed to support affected communities  
930 and stakeholders as they seek to assess the claims made about  
931 these systems, and to determine where – or if – their use is  
932 acceptable.” It is therefore good to bear in mind that SMEs  
933 may need to deploy two or more toolkits to fully capture all  
934 dimensions of ethical operations.

## V. CONCLUSION

## APPENDIX

990

936 This research aimed to address two research questions as  
937 follows:

- 938 1) first, to understand the AI ethics landscape from the SME  
939 perspective (and uncover any existing barriers to adop-  
940 tion);
- 941 2) second, to evaluate and identify existing toolkits that are  
942 suitable for practical application by SMEs.

943 Two SME engagement events were conducted that identified  
944 a number of *common barriers to ethical AI* adoption by SMEs  
945 on the themes of: 1) resources (people and time); 2) practical  
946 business-focused training and upskilling on ethical and respon-  
947 sible AI; 3) data and AI governance infrastructures; 4) citizen  
948 engagement; 5) applicability of legal frameworks (data and AI)  
949 and how to apply them; and 6) audit, compliance, and liability.  
950 Next, a comprehensive review provided a picture of the current  
951 state of the market in availability of toolkits for embedding AI  
952 ethical frameworks and governance into an SME culture. Our  
953 key findings are summarized as recommendations to both the  
954 SME and academic communities.

955 There is no one-size-fits-all toolkit that provides guidance  
956 sufficient to cover all ethical principles and themes around  
957 responsible and ethical AI. Toolkits vary in their feasibility to  
958 implement. It is recommended that SMEs select toolkits based  
959 on their current capacity, resources, and ethical awareness levels  
960 – focusing initially at the conceptualization stage of the AI life  
961 cycle and then extending throughout.

962 Academics engaged in knowledge transfer projects with busi-  
963 nesses should also share good ethical practices, policies, pro-  
964 cedures and approval templates from their universities. While  
965 established processes governing research ethics are different,  
966 for example, in terms of the data processed and controlled,  
967 and differences in legal basis according to GDPR, they can  
968 help inform the private sector and provide cross pollination of  
969 good ethical practices. In this article, ethical AI toolkits have  
970 been analyzed from an SME perspective; however, evaluation of  
971 criteria *B*, *C*, and *D* provides a useful reference to the academic  
972 community, who may wish to embed the use of toolkits into their  
973 ethics approvals and evaluations of research projects. Finally,  
974 this analysis contributes a useful teaching resource for courses  
975 that include AI ethics and/or data and AI governance, to enable  
976 future data scientists and analysts to operationalize practical data  
977 and AI ethics within their future employment settings.

978 Our next step is to produce an easy online tool to help SMEs  
979 select the best toolkits to implement/inform practice based on  
980 coverage, ease of implementation, and stage in their ethical AI  
981 evolution as a company. Our proposed online selection tool  
982 will be a curated database that will allow SMEs to provide  
983 their own rating across different categories following a similar  
984 methodology to ours in this article. They will also be able to  
985 propose and categorize new toolkits to add to the database as  
986 and when they become available, given the high level of activity  
987 in this domain. The tool will be cocreated with SMEs and citizen  
988 stakeholders and be flexible to incorporate legislation changes  
989 and provide a go-to resource kit.

TABLE V

TOOLKIT COVERAGE OF CRITERIA *C*, *D*, AND *E*

ID	Ref	m	p <sub>c</sub>	p <sub>d</sub>	p <sub>e</sub>	mean	rank
72	[111]	22	13	5	82	1.69	1
75	[114]	22	13	14	73	1.6	2
6	[56]	22	9	27	64	1.55	3
78	[116]	22	14	18	68	1.54	4
68	[107]	22	5	36	59	1.54	4
24	[70]	22	4	41	55	1.51	6
73	[112]	22	13	32	55	1.42	7
70	[109]	22	18	23	59	1.41	8
18	[65]	22	18	23	59	1.41	8
13	[60]	22	5	50	45	1.4	10
58	[99]	22	4	55	41	1.37	11
74	[113]	22	14	36	50	1.36	12
61	[102]	22	18	32	50	1.32	13
64	[104]	22	14	41	45	1.31	14
60	[101]	22	14	41	45	1.31	14
17	[64]	22	9	55	36	1.27	16
49	[91]	22	19	36	45	1.26	17
41	[84]	22	19	36	45	1.26	17
80	[118]	20	15	45	40	1.25	19
40	[83]	22	31	14	55	1.24	20
9	[43]	22	18	41	41	1.23	21
7	[57]	22	27	23	50	1.23	21
82	[120]	19	37	5	58	1.21	23
45	[88]	21	9	62	29	1.2	24
38	[81]	22	23	36	41	1.18	25
28	[74]	22	19	45	36	1.17	26
30	[76]	22	19	45	36	1.17	26
81	[119]	22	19	45	36	1.17	26
55	[96]	22	19	45	36	1.17	26
23	[69]	22	19	45	36	1.17	26
36	[79]	21	28	29	43	1.15	31
26	[72]	22	27	32	41	1.14	32
88	[126]	22	32	23	45	1.13	33
47	[90]	22	23	41	36	1.13	34
8	[58]	22	32	27	41	1.09	35
69	[108]	22	27	41	32	1.05	36
14	[61]	22	32	32	36	1.04	37
27	[73]	22	23	50	27	1.04	37
15	[62]	22	22	55	23	1.01	39
33	[77]	22	22	55	23	1.01	39
43	[86]	22	18	64	18	1	41
5	[55]	21	43	14	43	1	41
52	[94]	22	32	36	32	1	41
22	[68]	22	18	64	18	1	41
57	[98]	22	32	36	32	1	41
50	[92]	22	28	45	27	0.99	46
25	[71]	22	28	45	27	0.99	46
53	[95]	22	36	32	32	0.96	48
85	[123]	20	25	55	20	0.95	49
67	[103]	22	32	41	27	0.95	49
79	[117]	20	20	65	15	0.95	51
65	[105]	22	50	9	41	0.91	52
66	[106]	22	41	27	32	0.91	52
34	[78]	21	38	33	29	0.91	54
86	[124]	22	37	36	27	0.9	55
2	[52]	22	36	41	23	0.87	56
46	[89]	21	33	48	19	0.86	57
84	[122]	22	41	36	23	0.82	58
19	[66]	22	41	36	23	0.82	58
10	[59]	22	41	36	23	0.82	58
71	[110]	22	37	45	18	0.81	61
77	[115]	22	41	45	14	0.73	62
51	[93]	22	46	36	18	0.72	63
44	[87]	22	45	41	14	0.69	64
16	[63]	22	50	32	18	0.68	65
37	[80]	21	33	67	0	0.67	66
12	[42]	22	55	27	18	0.63	67
42	[85]	22	68	14	18	0.5	68
62	[103]	22	68	14	18	0.5	68
59	[100]	22	68	18	14	0.46	70
3	[53]	22	59	36	5	0.46	71
29	[75]	22	64	27	9	0.45	72
39	[82]	22	64	27	9	0.45	72
83	[121]	22	64	27	9	0.45	72
76	[127]	22	73	27	0	0.27	75
56	[97]	22	91	9	0	0.09	76
87	[125]	22	95	5	0	0.05	77

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