



Northern Ireland Audit Office

MEDIA RELEASE

NI Audit Office pleased to announce the launch of a £1.25 million project to develop data analytics

The Minister for Implementation in Cabinet Office, Oliver Dowden, will make an announcement at the TechUK conference in London today (6 September 2018) that the NI Audit Office has been successful as one of five schemes across the UK who had applied for funding from GovTech Catalyst. This is a £20million fund launched by the Cabinet Office in November 2017 to help the public sector identify and work with cutting edge technology firms to find innovative solutions to operational service and policy delivery challenges.

As a successful applicant we will be provided with up to £1.25 million of funding to challenge private sector firms to develop a data enabled public sector audit approach with the aim of making better use of data to improve the efficiency of audit. This would help identify errors and potential frauds in the data and allow us to place greater emphasis on adding value to the public sector. Private sector accountancy firms have already invested heavily in developing data analytics for their audit work with the long term goal to use machine learning and artificial intelligence to improve the accuracy, efficiency and coverage of audit work.

Pamela McCreedy, NIAO's Chief Operating Officer said, 'we are delighted to have been successful in our application to the GovTech scheme. Part of our Office's vision for the future is our commitment to innovative ways of working and reporting and the scheme provides us with a very exciting opportunity to test the market and explore the development of data analytics in a public sector audit context. There are no boundaries, we will work closely with bidders but they will have complete autonomy to create innovative solutions. In addition to the GovTech process I am pleased to report that we are also investing in the creation of two new posts within audit data analytics.'

It is expected that the procurement process, which will invite bids from private sector firms who believe they can address the challenge, will commence in mid-November.

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