ANNEX A

FOI DOF/2026-0118

Request

I am writing to request information on your department's current use of artificial intelligence systems and hope you can provide the following.

1. A list of all AI tools, systems or models currently in use within the department or its agencies.
2. A description of the purpose of each AI system, including the tasks it supports and the problem it is intended to address.
3. Details of any external providers or contractors involved in supplying, maintaining or operating these AI systems.
4. Any internal guidance, risk assessments or governance frameworks that relate to the deployment or oversight of AI within the department.
5. Information on any planned future use of AI, including systems under procurement, testing or evaluation.

If elements of this information are already published, please direct me to the relevant sources.

Response

I can confirm the Department of Finance (DoF) hold some of the information requested.

Some DoF business areas utilise Microsoft Copilot to assist in routine elements of tasks carried out to meet their business needs.

Staff are responsible to ensure that when utilising Copilot, they undertake due process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of any information used in their outputs.

Digital Security and Finance Shared Services (DSF) within DoF provide a technical and digital service for government departments.

1. The tools used within DSF (IT Assist) include -

   Co-pilot studio (developers)
   Azure AI Foundry (developers)
   Git-Hub Co-Pilot (developers)
   Co-Pilot Chat
   Copilot edge
   Teams premium
   Copilot 365

2. DoF has used Artificial Intelligence powered productivity tools to provide real time assistance for tasks such as drafting documents, summarising meetings, analysing data and streamlining communications. It is used to help Civil Servants with tasks like generating content, identifying action items, and automating repetitive processes whilst maintaining the security and privacy standards of the Department. The Department has also used Artificial Intelligence coding assistant to help developers become more efficient in writing code, quickly identifying and rectifying errors, increasing efficiency and productivity.

   The Department recognised the adoption and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers many opportunities to examine how processes and procedures could be improved to drive efficiencies and effectiveness across the Civil Service and the wider public sector. However, these opportunities must be considered in the light of the challenges such as the availability and suitability of data, data protection, data privacy and cyber security alongside the wider issues with AI such as usage monitoring, bias, incorrect information, data poisoning, incorrect predictions, and hallucinations.

3. None

4. NICS Use of Generative AI Policy – **Annex D** & The Use of Generative AI Guidance Paper – **Annex E.** For ease of reference these documents have been provided as separate PDF attachments.

Redaction of documents -

Please note that references for internal use only have been removed, this information is not relevant to the request.

Personal Information is withheld under exemption Section 40(2).

Applied Exemption - Section 40(2) – Personal Information
Information you have requested is being withheld because it is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles of the Data Protection Act.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – lawful, fairness and transparency test (see Annex B), the Department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of the remaining third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject.

5. No information held.

NICS Internal Audit Service within DoF

1. UK Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) Insight and Risk Engines are currently being piloted within NICS Internal Audit Services (NICS IAS). While recognised by the GIAA as AI powered tools they are relatively narrow, task specific tools and don’t operate autonomously.

2. To support IAS staff in the identification and articulation of risks and explore the potential for collating insights on key themes from audit reports.

3. UK Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) provides the Insight and Risk Engines.

4. Nil

5. UK Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) Risk Engine is currently under evaluation for potential future use.

Annex B

TEMPLATE FOR APPLYING FOI SECTION 40(2) OR EIR 12(3) 13(1)

DOF/2026-0118

The lawfulness, fairness and transparency test

Business areas are required to carry out a "lawfulness, fairness and transparency test" when considering the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of a FOI or EIR request. **In most cases**, neither of the lawful basis outlined below will apply, however the business area must complete the test as evidence as having considered.
The steps are as follows:-

1. **Consider the Personal Data falling within the scope of the request**
   What is the nature of the data, are there references to a name, location, physical, genetic, economic, cultural identifiers, include how the information held is linked to the data subject, e.g. is it used to inform decisions affecting them.
   Brief description: Staff name and contact information.

2. **Lawfulness**

   Do either of the two lawful bases below, which allow for the processing **(disclosure)** of personal data, apply? **No**

   ☐ **Consent:** This will apply when the data subject(s) clear consent exists that allows you to disclose the personal data falling within the scope of this request.

   ☐ **Legitimate interests:** the processing **(disclosure)** is necessary for the Department's legitimate interests or the legitimate interests of a third party that overrides the data subject(s) rights and freedoms, particularly their right to privacy.

   If yes, please indicate by ticking the relevant box and continue to **3** below.

   If no, an exemption/exception for 3rd party personal data will apply and the form is complete.

Annex C

Internal Reviews

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state**: That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.