Open Government

3rd UK National Action Plan

Northern Ireland Self-Assessment Report

December 2018

Introduction and Background

1. The Northern Ireland Open Government Network (NIOGN) was launched on the 5th November 2014 to encourage a more collaborative and transparent Northern Ireland Executive and with a commitment to work with the NIOGN to progress the NI Open Government agenda.

2. In December 2016, a total of four commitments were put forward to the 3rd UK National Action Plan (NAP3). These commitments were designed around the four core values of transparency, accountability, public participation and technology and innovation for openness and accountability.

National Action Plan Process

3. The Department of Finance (DoF) was responsible for progressing NI's input to NAP3.

4. DoF officials undertook a programme of consultation to seek input on the development of potential NI commitments for possible inclusion in the National Action Plan. This work involved a series of meetings and workshops with representatives from the NIOGN and a number of key internal stakeholders including representatives from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the Digital Transformation Service (DoF), the Department for the Economy's (DFE) Innovation Unit and The Executive Office (TEO)

5. Through a process of collaboration and discussion with the NIOGN and these cross departmental stakeholders, a set of four commitments were developed, supported by a number of actions. These were subsequently agreed for inclusion in NAP3.

6. Throughout the implementation period, DoF sought regular updates from the relevant departments on implementation of their commitments. Updates were also provided to the NIOGN. All parties have been involved in the process to develop and agree the content of this end of term report.

7. In addition, DoF officials have kept in regular contact with representatives from the Cabinet Office in London and the Scottish and Welsh Governments, to keep abreast of their progress and challenges and to inform the approach to reporting on the Plan's implementation.

Implementation of National Action Plan Commitments

8. Over the past eighteen months good progress has been made in relation to implementation and delivery of the NI commitments, with most actions having been substantially completed within the NAP timeframe. We consider this to be a good first step in the Nation Action Plan process. Whilst these first milestones have been substantially completed, we would view most of the commitments to be ongoing, as we are on a journey and would intend to build on these going forward into NAP4.

Commitment Completion Template
Commitment 1: Develop & trial effective open policy-making and public engagement methods
December 2016 – 31 August 2018

Lead implementing agency	Department of Finance
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The NICS faces a challenging agenda over the next few years. The delivery of priorities more than ever depends on the development and implementation of sound, effective and innovative policies. Key to our future in the public service is improving how we

	engage with the public.
	Despite the growing awareness of the benefits of effective engagement, there appears to be room for improvement, particularly in engaging stakeholders more openly in the very early scoping and initiation stages of policy development.
	Consequently, it is important for government to continue to explore and develop innovative approaches for engaging the public in formulation of policies that affect their lives.
What is the commitment?	To explore, develop and trial creative and effective open policy-making and public engagement methods and share the learning across government.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	To embed a culture of proactive and meaningful engagement with the public across government departments to ensure that the publics' input in a meaningful way to policy formulation and improving public services.
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	Public participation is a critical element of open government. This is in recognition of the important role the public should have in shaping the policies that affect their lives.
Additional information	

Completion Level	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
		X		

Description of the results	NI Innovation Lab utilises a range of innovative tools and methodologies to enable public engagement in support of open policy making such as: • **i-dec methodology** – Innovation through Design, Experimentation and Creativity • **Service Design** – Putting service users and stakeholders at the heart of policy and service design and using the 'Double Diamond' approach of Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver to progress projects. • **Behavioural Insights** - A mix of psychology and economics to understand how people behave and make decisions in everyday life • **Systems dynamics modelling** - System dynamics modelling looks at patterns of behaviour over time and seeks to understand the underlying structure of relationships producing the observed patterns. • **Strategic Insight Labs** - Tailored workshops facilitated by Lab staff where a complex or 'wicked' challenge is progressed through an innovative process and

	discussed by all the main stakeholders.
	The Innovation Lab has taken forward a number of projects and initiatives, trialling innovative approaches to tackle difficult policy issues and problems, share their learning, including:
	Pain Hackathon - The Innovation Lab organised a hackathon (#hackthepain) in July 17 and pain management event in July 2018, bringing together technical people and chronic pain sufferers. This was the foundations for an innovative, engaging and authoritative pain management information website, resulting in a campaign now hosted on **Myni** for over 400,000 people in Northern Ireland estimated to suffer from persistent pain. Other solutions included a Virtual Reality mindfulness app and a pain tracking app.
	Medicines Optimisation - Together with the Department of Health, the Innovation Lab delivered an innovation Lab with patients to reduce wastage of medicines, ensuring medicines are taken correctly and to help patients improve their outcomes. Six ideas were prototyped and presented to a team of stakeholders.
	Adult Social Care -System Dynamics modelling project, involving extensive engagement with all sectors of the public, CVS, ALBs and the private sector to inform policy options for the Reform of Adult Social Care in Northern Ireland.
	Lunch and Learn seminars - The Innovation Lab has run Lunch and Learn seminars inviting key personnel from across Departments to share knowledge.
	Belfast Design Week - As part of Belfast Design Week Nov 17, the Innovation Lab held a design thinking workshop 'Design Futures' for students at Belfast Met.
	Citizen Space is the NI Direct consultation portal. Uptake of the Citizen Space portal has been positive with 476 active internal users from across the NICS and its ALBs and NDPBs, and over 59,000 survey and consultation responses have been received through the platform. The Citizen Space platform subscription has been extended to February 2019.
Next Steps	There is evidence of further pockets of "good practice" occurring in many of the Departments/Business Areas across the NICS and wider public sector, which will be carried forward into NAP4 and built upon. The cross-departmental Open Government Implementation Group members have been tasked with identifying these and will consider how best to showcase/share them initially across the NICS and wider

Milestone status	Start Date:	End Date:	Completion level
as the opportunities arise.			
1. Government and civil society to co-design a pilot project to test open policy making methodology locally, ensuring that the lessons learned from the pilot are documented and shared across government.	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing
2. Support research and experimentation to create new tools or utilise existing tools and platforms that empower users to be fully active in the government policy making process.	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing
3. Complete the on boarding process to encourage greater levels of uptake from all Executive departments and NDPBs to the NI Direct consultation portal.	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing
4. Showcase best practice and innovative examples of public engagement in policy development across Executive departments.	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing

Contact information		
Lead implementing agency	Department of Finance	
Persons responsible from implementing agency	Malcolm Beattie	
Title, Department	Innovation Labs	
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Other Actors Involved	Government Ministries, Department/Agency	Representatives from the NICS Departments

CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Queens University Belfast Institute of Computer Sciences Members of the Public Anna Whicher AHRC research fellow from Cardiff Met
Additional Information	

Commitment Completion Template	
Commitment 2: Promote greater levels of public sector innovation	
December 2016 – 31 August 2018	
Lead implementing agency	Department for the Economy
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The local public sector faces significant challenges, which will require much greater degrees of innovation than it has traditionally deployed.
What is the commitment?	Develop a more innovative and entrepreneurial culture in the local public sector to address major societal and environmental challenges
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	Increasing the culture of innovation in the public sector will mean it will be more open, more agile and see a much greater degree of public participation. Through developing a more innovative public sector, Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Creating safer communities and Increasing corporate accountability
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	Regions which display a strong innovation culture demonstrate openness and participation across all of the aspects of society, - public sector, private sector, academia and wider society.
Additional information	

Completion Level	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
			X	

Description of the results	There has been good progress against most of this commitment, however the current political situation has stalled the establishment of an Executive Innovation Fund. This cannot be progressed until a NI Executive has been formed. An initial £1.1m Northern Ireland SBRI Challenge Fund was secured in 2016/17 resulting in five new SBRI competitions being launched. A further £1m was secured for projects in 2017/18 allowing two new SBRIs to be launched. A third call under the NI SBRI Challenge Fund was run early in 2018 and 5 projects have been selected for funding. The call for expressions of interest for SBRI projects in 2018/19 specifically highlighted opportunities in data analytics. IN addition the NI Innovation Lab has secured €166k funding over three years from the EU Atlantic Interreg programme. This is to fund a collaborative project ('User Factor') that seeks to develop and introduce service design within 25 SME organisations in Northern Ireland. The User Factor project is currently being progressed within the Innovation Lab. GovCamp Connect was held on 2nd September 2017 at Narrowwater Castle, Co. Down. A number of NICS staff attended and have shared details of the event with officials from the Irish Government.
Next Steps	The establishment of an Innovation Advisory Group, comprising senior representatives from all NICS Departments, will help promote and mainstream Innovation throughout NICS. Further opportunities for funding are being sought. Bid to Space for Smarter Government Programme has been submitted and the department is currently awaiting confirmation of the result. This will enable the programme to continue into NAP4 period. Work is underway to establish the data analytics and research exploitation centre and resources are being identified.

Milestone status	Start Date:	End Date:	Completion level
In line with the Executive's Innovation Strategy introduce a SBRI Challenge Fund to support public sector innovations	December 2016	June 2018	Completed
Seek to establish a New Executive Innovation Fund to support public sector innovation including SBRI and Challenge Prizes	December 2016	June 2018	Behind schedule
Explore funding opportunities for Public sector innovation beyond the region	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing
Explore opportunities for exemplar projects using data analytics to address voluntary, community, social enterprise, public and private sector needs	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing
Explore opportunities for the Executive for projects under the Space for Smarter Government Programme	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing
Develop a proposal for data analytics and research exploitation centre	December 2016	June 2018	Ongoing

Contact information		
Lead implementing agency	Department for the Economy	
Persons responsible from implementing agency	Eoin McFadden	
Title, Department		
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Other Actors Involved	Government Ministries, Department/Agency	Department of Finance – Innovation Lab

	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	EU Atlantic Interreg Programme Irish Government
	Additional Information	

Commitment Completion Template
Commitment 3: To investigate implementation of the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) in Central Procurement operations.
December 2016 – 31 August 2018

Lead implementing agency	Department of Finance
Commitment Description	

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	An international standard - Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) has been introduced around contract data and this has not been implemented locally.
What is the commitment?	To investigate implementation of the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) in Central Procurement operations.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	The ambition is to establish whether it is practical for DoF Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to implement the Open Contracting Data Standard moving forward.
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	This commitment will further advance the OGP values of access to information and public accountability and Increasing corporate accountability.
Additional information	

Completion Level	Not	Limited	Substantial	Completed

	Started			
			X	
Description of the results	Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) within the Department of Finance, has carried out an exercise to explore how the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) could be embraced in CPD operations. Analysis of the OCDS framework showed that CPD met the requirements for the Basic Disclosure Level (one-star). Extensive tender and contract award information was available to the public online, in PDF or Excel format. Further exploration then established some actions to take forward to reach the Intermediate DisclosureLevel (two-star). This included (i) publishing data on contracts awarded by CPD in CSV format on the OpenDataNI portal, and (ii) exploring additional reports that could be downloaded from the eTendersNI portal (the public procurement portal for the NI public sector) and published to the OpenDataNI portal. Contracts awarded data for recent financial years has now been published on the OpenDataNI portal in CSV format. The data includes contract titles, name of contracting authority, estimated value of contract, date awarded, contract end date, name and addresses of contractors. Another positive step forward, was the introduction a new process to record poor contractor performance from July 2017 onwards - where a contract management problem has been escalated from the client to CPD and the contractor has been issued with a formal warning or the contract has been terminated, this information and the name of the supplier will be published online in the 'Register of Poor Contractor Performance' on the Department of Finance website. CPD has spent time exploring whether additional reports could be made available from eTendersNI for publication on the OpenDataNI portal. Two strands which were explored

	included information on collaborative contracts managed by CPD, and summary data on tendering activity. Unfortunately it has not been possible to obtain meaningful datasets for publication. CPD has worked in partnership with the OpenDataNI portal team to ensure that the datasets published are compatible with the visualisation tool provided within the portal. This enables members of the public to view a location map showing the distribution of contractors.
Next Steps	The openness and transparency around government contracting is being developed further within a successor commitment within NAP 4.

Milestone status	Start Date:	End Date:	Completion level
1. DoF CPD to explore a pilot project implementing the Open Contracting Data Standard	December 2017	June 2018	Completed
2. Develop visualisation tool with contracts data from CPD as part of the Open Data Strategy	December 2017	June 2018	Completed

Contact information		
Lead implementing agency		Department of Finance – Central Procurement Directorate
Persons responsible from implementing agency		Christine Marshall
Title, Department		
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Other Actors	Government Ministries, Department/Agency	OpenDataNI portal team

Commitment 4: Open-up government for greater accountability, improve public services and building a more prosperous and equal society

December 2016 – 31 August 2018

Lead implementing agency	Department of Finance

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	To embed a culture of open by default and increase awareness and demand for open data.
What is the commitment?	To establish that all public sector data is Open by default (excepting personal, IPR, commercially or environmentally sensitive data).
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	To increase the number of public sector organisations aware of open data and to encourage publishing of their data on OpenDataNI. Also to encourage the use of open data as a driver to economic growth, innovation and research, and increased Public Sector efficiency.
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	Publication of Public Sector Open Data enables gain in value in a number of aspects, such as: • Improving public services – Enabling the Public Sector to enhance their services and create new services for the public; • Increasing public integrity – Engaging in better information management practices such as metadata creation, as well as helping to identify where data quality can be improved thereby leading to better informed decision-making;

	• More effectively managing public resources – Increasing efficiency in driving down administrative costs in relation to answering FOI requests and also due to savings which may be realised by access to data across the public sector negating the need for agencies to collect the same types of data separately each for their own uses; • Creating safer communities – Enabling the public to use data in order to help with day-to-day decision-making and planning; and • Increasing corporate accountability – Increasing transparency, in turn promoting increased trust and participation from the public.
Additional information	

Completion Level	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
		X		

Description of the results	The number of showcases published on the OpenDataNI showcase page has now increased from 12 to 22. The ODNI team has promoted the showcase page at a number of recent events to encourage users to demonstrate their use of open data. The results of the second Open Data Challenge (OpenDataNI Make-it challenge) were announced at the BelTech Edu conference in the Belfast Waterfront on 4th May 2018. The five winning team's projects were on display at the conference to an audience of their secondary school peers and the IT industry. Plans for a 3rd competition are dependent on greater engagement from the NI public sector on ideas/themes to base a competition plan on. Engagement continues via attendance and delivering presentations at a number of industry events to promote open data. The ODNI team are now involved with the organising team of GovCampConnect to promote open data with the attendees of this group. In December 2016 a total of 37 public sector agencies had publications on the OpenDataNI portal. As of October 2018, the number of organisations now

	registered as publishers on the portal has increased to 68.
	Analysis of the attendees to date at the 1st Fifteen Open Data Publisher Awareness sessions was presented at the last Open Data Implementation Board, showing a breakdown by Department and both specialist and substantive grade types amongst the 160 public sector staff who have attended the sessions.
	The OpenDataNI team continue to engage with all government departments seeking greater levels of proactive publication. The recently completed Information Asset Registers compiled in preparation for GDPR should give organisations a greater understanding of their data holdings and what can be published as open data. Should current rates of publication not increase then more formal commitments to publish a percentage of departmental data may need to be agreed at senior levels to encourage higher levels of proactive publication.
	A company (Xpand Ltd) based in Ulster Banks entrepreneur accelerator programme is utilising NI open data for the FinTech industry, to offer expertise on the NI economy and provide analytics on NI economic indicators for industrial activity to drive inward investment. ODNI has facilitated a number of meetings with colleagues across the NICS to support Xpand.
Next Steps	The OpenDataNI team will continue to engage with both the internal and external user community, to seek greater levels of pro-active publication going forward into NAP 4. Further engagement events between the public sector and the developer community will be held as part of the review of the existing open data strategy for Northern Ireland, planned to be carried out this business year The OpenDataNI team in Digital Shared Services are working in partnership with NISRA on a pilot Linked Data platform to test the process of publishing data as 4-star / 5-star linked Open Data and its end use by the data user community. This work will commence in July 2018.

Milestone status	Start Date:	End Date:	Completion level
1. Increase the number of Showcases on OpenDataNI	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing

2. Support an annual competition to derive and promote innovative services and products	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing
3. Support and host engagement events between the public sector and the developer community to focus on issues and problems locally and use technology, innovation and open data to find solutions	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing
4. Increase engagement with a number of partners such as ODI Belfast, NI Digital Catapult, universities, business and developer groups	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing
5. Increase proportion of public sector agencies to have published open data	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing
6. Increase the number of public sector staff trained in producing and publishing open data	December 2016	30 June 2018	ongoing
7. Increase proactive publication of data from government departments	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing
8. Publish 2 datasets as 4-star or 5 star linked Open Data as defined by W3C	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing
9. Work with ODI Belfast and partners to encourage innovative uses of open data for new products and services	December 2016	30 June 2018	Ongoing

Contact information	
Lead implementing agency	Department of Finance
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Other Actors Involved	Government Ministries, Department/Agency	Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	ODI Belfast, NI Digital Catapult, and Future Cities
Additional Information		

Conclusions and Next Steps

9. While this was the 3rd National Action Plan for the UK, NI was participating for the first time. This initial participation represents a first step for NI and this end of term assessment has provided the opportunity to consider progress made and identify lessons learned for the future.

10. Implementation of NI's four commitments has been reported positively. However, whilst it is accepted that some of the milestones/activities contained within the commitments have been substantially completed, the commitments as a whole remain ongoing.

    Examples of benefits achieved include:
    - A number of new tools have been created and best practice has been showcased in relation to public engagement.
    - An Innovation Advisory Group has been established to promote and mainstream innovation throughout the NICS.
    - A pilot project has been completed to explore implementation of Open Contracting Data standards.
    - The Open Data agenda has been furthered through a series of engagements with users, advocacy groups and government departments.

11. NI engaged well with the Cabinet Office's online survey to assess the level of engagement between government and civil society in the development, implementation and monitoring of NAP3 commitments and how well the partnership approach had worked. Of the 23 responses received, eight were from NI; five from government and three from civil society. Overall, the results from NI were largely positive although there are opportunities to increase the extent of the partnership and ongoing collaboration between government officials and civil society on the development and implementation of individual commitments.

12. Looking forward, there is a need for wider involvement in the Open Government agenda across NI departments, where Open Government itself is seen as a tool for reform. This could see an evolution of NI's commitments with a move towards larger and more significant initiatives to address specific and identified issues.