

UK Multi-Stakeholder Forum

Read-out for publication

Thursday 27th April 2023

Aim of the meeting

The aim of this Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) was to examine implementation of the Fifth National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP5), and discuss plans for the co-creation process of the Sixth National Action Plan on Open Government (NAP6). This included an update on the UK's status in the Open Government Partnership (OGP), feedback on how best to monitor NAP implementation, a discussion on diversity and inclusion, and key milestones in the NAP6 co-creation process.

A written [update on NAP5 progress](#) was circulated ahead of the MSF, in addition to a copy of the [UK Co-Creation Brief 2023](#) created by the Open Government Partnership's Independent Reporting Mechanism.

Attendees

There were a total of 32 attendees, of which 18 were government representatives and 14 from civil society. There were a further 3 apologies received, 2 from government officials and 1 from civil society.

Slide-deck

A comprehensive slide-deck was used to facilitate this meeting, which contains a substantial amount of information which will not be duplicated in the read-out. The slide-deck is available in PDF format.

Welcome

The meeting was co-chaired by Sue Bateman, Interim Chief Data Officer from CDDO, and Kevin Keith, Chair of the UK Open Government Network.

The agenda was as follows:

- Sue Bateman provided an update on the UK OGP status;
- Ben Gittins, Open Data and Transparency Advisor from CDDO provided a NAP5 report readout
- Kevin Keith provided an update on diversity and inclusion and facilitated discussion;
- Paul Braithwaite and Andreas Pavlou from the OGP Support Unit/ Independent Reporting Mechanism presented on the OGP Co-Creation Standards, UK Co-Creation Brief and Ireland case study;
- Kevin Keith presented on civil society participation in co-creation and facilitated discussion;

- OGP UK Devolved Administration Members of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland were invited to raise matters relating to their respective National Action Plan development and any other business.

Part One: Oversight and Progress on NAP5

UK OGP Status update

The presentation provided an update since OGP placed the UK under procedural review. This included steps taken to reaffirm OGP requirements and plans for the UK to meet its domestic OGP process moving forward. Regularising the MSF forum and widening engagement with the UK Open Government Network (UKOGN) was highlighted as examples where the UK has worked hard to respond to issues raised as part OGP resolution of the Criteria & Standards Sub-committee. As part of the process, the UK government will write to OGP's Steering Committee and Criteria & Standards Subcommittee to show NAP5 implementation is on track and concerns are being addressed by the end of June. This included setting out the next steps as part of the development of the Sixth National Action Plan (NAP6).

NAP5 Report readout

Additional background information on the NAP5 report update was presented, including descriptions of each milestone status (not started, blocked, at risk, on track, and complete) used by each department to assess implementation.

Discussion centred around feedback on the written presentation of NAP5 updates and scope for improvement. There was recognition that more clarity was needed from contributors to explain the use of 'n/a' when provided under 'actions for milestone completion'. Regarding style, the PDF format was raised as a concern and an additional plain text version was suggested for those with accessibility issues. Visualising commitment areas that are progressing well and highlighting under performing areas was also seen as a way to improve future updates, in addition to a single summary slide. Showcasing 'wins' was highlighted as a key way for getting more people involved in the next NAP. Regarding content, it was noted that there was a gap in the written updates provided under the commitment of Local Transparency and an open question as to whether this commitment is considered blocked.

The balance of time given to fully discuss the progress of NAP5 commitments versus the development of NAP6 was recognised as a challenge. The need to find time to discuss both issues was highlighted to ensure there is a continued focus on the progress of the current NAP.

Diversity and inclusion update

The importance of diversity and inclusion within Open Government was championed and a verbal update on the roll out of an expression of interest to extend membership of the D&I working group was provided. The scope of inclusivity sought from people with diverse backgrounds focused on a wide definition of diversity in addition to protected characteristics.

Discussion focused on raising awareness of diversity and inclusion, and the need to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds into the Open Government process was highlighted. This included wider representation from flexible workers, those affected by health considerations, socio-economic backgrounds and class.

Part Two: NAP6 Strategic Planning

Participation between government and civil society was highlighted as a unique characteristic of the OGP's Co-Creation process and there was an open question as to how the UK government could not only meet minimum requirements, set out by newly updated standards, but exceed them.

OGP Co-creation standards & Case Study

A summary of OGP co-creation was presented, including a review of [new participation and minimum requirements](#). A readout of the UK Co-Creation brief 2023 was also shared, along with a co-creation case study example.

UK NAP6 Co-creation 2023/24 timetable

The timetable for NAP6 development was shared alongside dates of key milestones including, the forthcoming multi-stakeholder forums, NAP5 progress updates, and wider OGP engagement.

Civil service participation in Co-creation: Key Milestones and Thematic working groups

A summary of NAP6 timeline was presented, including challenges and considerations of co-creation efforts on Open Government. Key dates for the coming year were also shared alongside commentary emphasising the need to review resources and capability.

Discussion centred around meeting the tight timescale and practicalities of the co-creation process. The 'network of network' approach to harness existing communities where government and civil society already interact, and linking these to the call for ideas during outreach, was welcomed. There was an open question as to how civil society could be best

supported to engage in this process, including using online surveys to encourage the call for ideas from the public.

The [UK's NAP 6 timetable](#) was praised and details were sought over how it would be resourced and whether an independent facilitator will be used. Making preparations now on funding was seen an important factor in helping to ensure the process of co-creation could best be supported. A comparison was made with the case of Scotland, where an independent facilitator was absent but the timescale for delivery was longer. There was recognition that government and civil society were required to give their support to themes and accept that if ideas are not developed into commitments it is a consequence of co-creation.

Devolved Administration Members: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

A brief update of Scotland's current 2021-2025 NAP was given, including the dates of their next steering group meeting and a series of [events](#) being run as part of [Open Government Week](#).

Next Steps and June MSF

The need for additional opportunities outside the MSF for civil society to discuss current NAP updates with government was highlighted, and keeping to an agenda would improve timekeeping.

Acknowledgements were made to Katherine Gunderson for her work over the years and who will be leaving the Campaign for Freedom of Information (CfFOI).

The next provisional date for an MSF is mid-June, subject to Ministerial availability.