

The Sixth National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP6) 2024-25: Analysis of outreach phase

Version 2

Executive Summary

The outreach phase for the development of the Sixth National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP6) was launched after the April 2023 Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF). The outreach phase includes gathering parallel inputs from government and civil society, respectively by the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO, part of the Cabinet Office) and the UK Open Government Network Steering Committee (UK OGN). This material has then been assessed by CDDO for potential to progress to the co-creation stage.

CDDO recommends that the following themes be taken forward as part of the first phase of the Action Plan Development for NAP6: Open Contracting (Anti-corruption and integrity) and Budget Transparency focused on Aid Transparency. The following themes are recommended for further discussion and consideration at the June 2023 UK Multi-Stakeholder Forum: 'General' anti-corruption and integrity, Beneficial Ownership (Anti-corruption and integrity), Digital Governance, Inclusion, Justice, and Right to Information. The following themes have not garnered either significant interest, relevant ideas or sufficient civil society-government support and should not be taken forward as part of NAP6: Political Integrity (Anti-corruption and integrity), Civic Space, Natural Resources, Open Parliament, and Public Service Delivery.

In addition, some of the key lessons learnt from the NAP6 outreach phase have been recorded to help inform planning for the Seventh National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP7), which will begin during 2024.

Introduction

The UK is a founding member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and remains committed to improving government transparency, accountability and public participation. The implementation of the Fifth National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP5) is progressing well, with particular success around open contracting, open justice, algorithmic transparency, anti-corruption and international illicit finance, and aid transparency.

Alongside NAP5, the UK government is pleased to launch the development of Sixth National Action Plan for Open Government 2024-25 (NAP6) that will co-create a two-year action plan and commitments across a broad range of issues. These will be the product of co-creation between government and civil society through six stages of co-creation: analysing inputs, defining the problem, identifying solutions, drafting commitments, reasoned response and finalisation.

Outreach for initial ideas, problems, and evidence was open to public and government stakeholders between 12th May to 11th June 2023. Short extensions were provided to facilitate some delayed submissions. Each of the 61 submissions has been considered carefully and assessed regarding potential to develop suitably ambitious commitments.

This document addresses the analysis of the outreach received in terms of potential for the NAP6 co-creation process, however a recommendation for a particular theme to be taken forward does not imply CDDO endorsement of any particular submissions or proposal. Assessment of this information will be undertaken during the co-creation analysis stage by the relevant government and civil society stakeholders.

Methodology

NAP6 outreach was coordinated jointly by CDDO and UK OGN partners. The gathering of ideas from the public was led by UK OGN through a Google Form and CDDO undertook internal government outreach.

Analysis of NAP6 Outreach has been undertaken by the CDDO and was informed by the Open Government Partnership (OGP) UK Co-creation Brief (2023), written updates on NAP5 progress, and expectations regarding significance, relevance and capability to develop potential commitments. As such, only those ideas that meet this set of criteria will be taken forward for consideration ahead of the next Multi-Stakeholder Forum:

- Promote **ambitious open government reforms** that stretch the government beyond its current state of practice, significantly improving the status quo by strengthening transparency, accountability, and/or public participation in government.
- Are **relevant** by advancing one or more open government principles (transparency, accountability, participation, technology and innovation);

- Have **capability** and **resources** to support them. Identification of these attributes ensures there is sufficient demand and support to drive an idea forward.

Key terms and assessment criteria

The following table includes definitions of key terms used as part of the analysis:

Key terms	Definition
Ambitious	Substantial and of considerable importance
Relevant	Closely connected and appropriate to what is being considered
Capability	Refers to the terms 'ability' handle the workload and 'capacity'; make a timely decision
Stakeholder group	Refers to a group with a focused interest in the decision-making and activities of a specific theme, project or cause.

Each assessment of 'red' 'amber' 'green' as used in the "Assessment Summary Table" and "Detailed Theme Assessment Tables" is described in the table below:

RAG assessment criteria		
Red	Amber	Green
No potential to proceed to co-creation	Some potential but also some risk in proceeding to co-creation	Has strong potential and should proceed to co-creation

The balance of time given to liaise with government departments unfamiliar with the UK NAP co-development versus analysis of NAP6 outreach was a challenge due to compressed timescales. Submission of ideas from the public was also limited to online engagement. A range of lessons learnt have been captured to inform positive changes for the development of the Seventh National Action Plan on Open Government (NAP7).

Results & Discussion

Each theme is based on [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\) policy areas](#):

- Anti Corruption and Integrity
- Civic Space
- Digital Governance
- Budget transparency
- Inclusion
- Justice
- Natural Resources
- Open Parliaments
- Public Service Delivery
- Right to Information

One theme - Anti-Corruption and Integrity - has been further classified by sub-themes:

- General cross-cutting issues not covered by other sub-themes
- Open Contracting
- Beneficial Ownership
- Political Integrity

Assessment Summary Table

Theme Name (as per UK OGN Public Outreach Form, based on OGP Policy Areas)	Ambitious?	Relevant?	Government Capability	Civil Society Capability	RAG assessment
Anti-Corruption & Integrity (1 of 4): General	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Amber
Anti-Corruption & Integrity (2 of 4): Open Contracting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Green
Anti-Corruption & Integrity (3 of 4): Beneficial Ownership	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Amber
Anti-Corruption & Integrity (4 of 4): Political Integrity	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Red
Civic space (incl. defending journalists, freedom of assembly, freedom of association)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Red
Digital governance (incl. AI, algorithmic transparency, disinformation)	Yes	Yes	No	Maybe	Amber
Budget transparency (incl. participation & oversight of budgets)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Green
Inclusion (incl. race, gender, disabilities, LGBTQIA+, youth)	Yes	Yes	No	Maybe	Amber
Justice (incl. court reporting)	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Amber
Natural Resources (incl. environment & climate, water & sanitation)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Red
Open Parliament (incl. open legislative processes)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Red
Public Service Delivery (incl. education & health)	Yes	Yes	No	Maybe	Red
Right to Information (incl. FOI)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Amber

Detailed Theme Assessment Tables

Assessed 'Green'			
Theme: Sub-theme	No of relevant submissions	Summary of submissions	CDDO Analysis
Anti Corruption and Integrity (2 of 4): Open Contracting	8	At least 5 topics: Transforming Public Procurement Programme; enhancing Contracts Finder tool; transparency concerns with regulatory compliance; challenges to interoperability; and full implementation.	There is strong potential for Open Contracting due to a diverse set of interlinked suggestions and a clear and coherent stakeholder group through the Open Contracting Advisory Group.
Budgetary transparency	3	2 topics: transparency of Official Development Assistance (ODA); and transparency of the cost of clinical trials in the UK	ODA transparency has strong potential due to evident government-civil society support and capability through the Bond Transparency Working Group. However, further NAP commitments on clinical trials have been ruled out due to focus on current strategies

Although not all topic areas that have been suggested will be taken forward, these themes all have a clear set of diverse but interlinked ideas and a strong pre-existing stakeholder group for government and civil society to work through.

Assessed 'Amber'			
Theme: Sub-theme	No of relevant submissions	Summary of submissions	CDDO Analysis
Anti Corruption and Integrity (1 of 4): General	3	3 topics: UK Anti-Corruption Strategy; Anti-corruption Champion; broad issues of compliance and transparency.	There is the potential for a commitment in this area around overarching strategy to anti-corruption, however the relevant lead government team has requested more time to consider their capability to participate. In addition, it is not clear the extent of civil society capability.
Anti Corruption and Integrity (3 of 4): Beneficial Ownership	2	1 topic: data standards.	There is potential for a commitment in this area dedicated to beneficial ownership, however the relevant lead government team has requested more time to consider their capability to participate. In addition, it is not clear the extent of civil society capability.
Digital governance	9	7 topics: Artificial Intelligence (AI); Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (ATRS); digital governance of UK regulatory landscape; citizens juries; data processing transparency; knowledge, information and records management; and the spread of disinformation.	A broad range of important topics were highlighted by civil society and government. Our analysis took into consideration work underway from the previous NAP, delivery of the "Transforming for a digital future: 2022 to 2025 roadmap for digital and data" and the readiness of new suggestions to form ambitious commitments in the timeframe. Our proposal is to monitor ongoing activities (as above) with a view to developing a clearer understanding of stakeholders around Digital Governance opportunities via the UK OGN and other groups in the run-up to NAP7.
Inclusion	4	4 topics: diversity of candidates standing	Whilst there are a broad range of ideas, there is a lack of a

		in elections; racial discrimination; digital youth participation platform; and improvements to access opportunities for ethnic minorities	clear stakeholder group to take this collection forward. The current NAP5 D&I commitment aims to provide guidance for NAP development, and doesn't include broader D&I focus.
Justice	3	3 topics: Transparency concerns related to Open Justice data; and reform of strategic litigation or impact litigation	Whilst there is significant potential, and a well-established set of stakeholders, the Open Justice team have a Call for Evidence (CfE) in progress which will not conclude in a timeframe that supports NAP6 co-creation publication by December 2023. Depending on the outcome of the CfE, a planned amendment to NAP6 by the end of 2024 is a possibility for this theme.
Right to Information	5	4 topics: Freedom of Information (FOI) compliance; barriers to transparency through FOI; improve transparency of commissioned research; and broadcasting all public meetings.	FOI has potential due to evident government-civil society support, and civil society capability, however the relevant lead government team has requested more time to consider their capability to participate. However, broadcasting public meetings is a broad topic without a suitably broad stakeholder group to pursue this with.

For some 'amber' themes the primary issue is whether the government has capability at this time to engage with NAP6 due to timing and/or other commitments, including two anti-corruption and integrity themes and right to information. The ideas in the justice theme will need to be reassessed once their Call for Evidence is complete, whilst 'general' anti-corruption and integrity, and beneficial ownership are under immediate further consideration. It is proposed that digital governance proceeds with stakeholder development efforts outside of NAP6 in preparation for NAP7 due to existing commitment to a roadmap. It is proposed that 'inclusion' as a theme be re-examined for NAP7, allowing the NAP5 working group to deliver its outcomes.

Assessed 'Red'			
Theme: Sub-theme	No of relevant submissions	Summary of submissions	CDDO Analysis
Anti Corruption and Integrity (4 of 4): Political Integrity	6	5 topics: standards in public life; transparency of lobbying; ministerial meetings; overseas donations to political parties; and regulatory framework.	Whilst this theme has received multiple submissions from civil society, due to ongoing work in this area this is not an area the government has the capability to engage on for NAP6 co-creation.
Civic Space	3	3 topics: knowledge and information management to support data publication; public service relations during protests; and open licences for using public facilities	This theme received a diverse set of ideas with no evidence of potential for a sufficiently capable stakeholder group
Natural resources	3	3 topics: extractive industries; open data on urban trees; and connecting renewable resources	This theme received a diverse set of ideas with no evidence of potential for a sufficiently capable stakeholder group
Open Parliaments	3	3 topics: electoral reform regarding oversight of MPs between elections; improving political participation; and voting rights	This theme received a diverse set of ideas with no evidence of potential for a sufficiently capable stakeholder group
Public Service Delivery	3	5 topics: frontline health provision reform; transparency and safeguarding concerns around drug promotion; open source analysis platform; transparency of medical devices; and health care decision-making	This theme received a diverse set of ideas with little evidence of potential for a sufficiently capable stakeholder group. Existing health commitments are already part of wider health strategies and will continue beyond NAP5.

The themes assessed as 'red' all had individual interesting and relevant suggestions, some of which had the potential to be ambitious, however they also shared a common set of challenges around a lack of clear government and civil society capability to pursue the ideas. Submissions tended to come from a small number of individuals and covered a diverse range of suggestions with a lack of a common thread between them.

Lessons learned

As part of our ongoing open evaluation and improvement of the process, we have some areas from the NAP6 outreach stage that will inform future planning for the Seventh National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP7).

- Fewer but ambitious commitments

In contrast to NAP5, the focus for NAP6 has been on developing fewer but more ambitious commitments through a well-structured and well-paced co-creation process. As a result, CDDO's recommendations suggest that fewer themes will be taken forward as part of NAP6 Action Plan Development with a total number of 3 coherent themes and 5 themes that may benefit from further consideration. Fewer potential commitments provide a welcome opportunity to develop and implement NAP6 in a full, ambitious and timely manner. The clear expectations communicated as part of government outreach combined with compressed timescales, help explain the fewer number of commitments compared to NAP5. However, the newly structured approach combined with a longer planned NAP7 development process should provide greater scope for future commitments.

- Employ several submission methods during outreach

Entries made by the submission of an online form are most effective when concise, focus on specific areas of interest, and consider the demand and support required to drive an idea from concept to potential commitment. By contrast, detailed submissions that demonstrate several topics of interest are much harder to filter according to assessment criteria. HMG's [Policy Lab](#) identifies a range of techniques and methods which can be used to widen entry methods for the future.

- Open government reform beyond National Action Plans

Each contribution will feed into plans for NAP7 and there is opportunity to think about developing effective stakeholder groups ready for that process in advance. Stimulating open government reform in this way helps ensure greater flexibility with UK government timelines that do not always align with the Open Government Partnership mechanisms.

Conclusions

CDDO makes the following recommendations: 2 themes should proceed due to obvious strengths, 6 themes are recommended for further consideration, and a further 5 themes are recommended not to be taken forward into co-creation.

Those themes recommended for co-creation have in common strong potential for ambitious and relevant commitments, and have a strong set of identified government and civil society stakeholders to enable the next phase of co-creation. CDDO recommends that government and civil society stakeholders work outside of the NAP process to develop effective open government interactions in preparation for NAP7 and in support of wider open government efforts.

Although there are fewer themes recommended for consideration in NAP6 compared to those published in NAP5, the themes have a high likelihood of generating ambitious commitments as a result of pursuing a more effective process. This will make best use of government and civil society time and energy, and takes into account the feedback received from the UK Open Government Network and Open Government Partnership regarding the approach to the development of NAP5. Equally, CDDO acknowledges the limitations of the process on this NAP development cycle owing to tight timescales and a limited range of outreach mechanisms, both of which will be addressed during NAP7.

Next steps

The development of the Sixth National Action Plan takes place over two phases. Phase one will be launched at the MSF on 22nd June and will conclude at the autumn MSF (provisionally 18th October). Over this period, individual Thematic Stakeholder Groups (TSG) develop draft commitments, overseen and coordinated by CDDO and UK OGN. Phase two takes place between the autumn MSF (provisionally 18th October) and mid-December, concluding in the finalisation and publication of the Sixth National Action Plan for Open Government, which covers 2024-2025.

The next MSF at 1100-1300 hrs on Thursday 22nd June will be in two parts. Part 1 will be a review of recent progress on NAP5 implementation provided by government leads and civil society counterparts. Part 2 will launch the NAP6 Action Plan Development. A briefing document containing the material from the outreach phase will be provided to each approved Thematic Stakeholder Group after the June MSF.