

Multi-Stakeholder Forum Readout

Tuesday 17th February 2026

Aim of the meeting

The aim of this UK Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Open Government (MSF) was to:

- Review implementation of the [sixth UK National Action Plan for Open Government \(NAP6\)](#)
- Hear about updates to the Open Government Partnership's (OGP) Action Framework
- Discuss proposals for how to run the seventh UK National Action Plan for Open Government (NAP7)
- Share updates from around the UK, including engagement on the UK's co-chairship of OGP and plans for the Illicit Finance Summit.

Attendees

The forum operates under the Chatham House Rule. There were a total of 34 attendees: 17 were government representatives and 17 from civil society. There were a further 12 apologies received: 8 from the government and 4 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. Links to documents that were published shortly after the meeting have been included in the readout.

Welcome

The meeting was co-chaired by Matthew Clarke, Director, Civil Service Strategy Unit (CSSU) within Cabinet Office and Kevin Keith, Chair of the UK Open Government Civil Society Network (UK OGN).

Part 1: Review implementation of NAP6 to inform a government self assessment

Introduction and scene setting

Kevin Keith outlined the context surrounding NAP6 implementation since implementation began in January 2024 and its completion at the end of 2025. The breakout session was the final step to inform a government self assessment to improve implementation of the next NAP future.

Policy maturity and engagement

NAP6 thematic success stories included procurement reform, anti-corruption and aid transparency. Civil society and government agreed these areas demonstrated high maturity and examples of strong working level relationships throughout were commended. Other policy areas, notably those identified as part of 'building capacity' ambitions, were underdeveloped and progress was seen as slow or absent. There were different views on the progress of implementation including the valuable role of civil society as a well-informed 'critical friend', various levels of ownership, and those who felt disconnected from the process altogether. The absence of meetings of the UK MSF was cited as a major factor in this disconnection.

Drivers and constraints

Action plan progress was sustained by robust working relationships within each commitment, and supported by the strategic involvement of senior officials. However, several factors hindered momentum, including turnover of staff within government and the pause of the MSF between July 2024 and December 2025. These challenges sparked a discussion on the plan's inherent value: while some credited it with introducing vital external scrutiny and higher standards, others queried the extent to which the plan documented action as opposed to driving action. A clearer articulation of benefits of the UK Action Plan would be useful.

Resource and capacity asymmetries

Government and civil society highlighted an imbalance in the time, money, and staffing available to implement the commitments. Civil society representatives often make their contributions on a voluntary basis alongside their regular jobs - an effort that government officials acknowledged and praised. There was also recognition that competing priorities across government limited the ability to secure additional resources for NAP commitments. Open Contracting's learning and development programme was a notable example of how investment in training, guidance and resources created reciprocal benefits to the stakeholders involved. There was a clear desire for simple frequent progress updates that are openly available, combined with less frequent more detailed reports.

Coordination

Early NAP6 coordination was seen as a significant improvement on previous action plans ensuring meaningful co-creation of strong commitments, although the extent of the plan was limited to 4 commitments. Subsequent coordination was disrupted following a machinery of government change after the 2024 General Election. These challenges prompted discussion on implementation: whilst some understood the action plan to be running alongside reforms rather than driving them, others reflected on strong civil society engagement and the wide spectrum of interests and knowledge across government engaged in commitment delivery. Another major point of discussion was UK-wide coordination of open government and action plan delivery. This included the development of action plans in different governments across

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the UK which several people felt were in isolation from each other. Participants supported better UK-wide realisation of synergies and integration as well as better links between the UK National Action Plan and other UK government initiatives such as the Civil Society Covenant.

Part 2. Updates from across all levels of government and civil society

Members from civil society and government provided open government updates.

UK Open Government Civil Society Network

Kevin Keith noted that the [UK OGN](#) has appointed a network coordinator and will soon be appointing new network members as part of a drive to increase representation. It has commissioned an open government ecosystem mapping exercise to identify existing partners, and where gaps exist, widen participation from underrepresented groups. The network aims to build coalitions in thematic areas to strengthen UK OGN as a network of networks.

Cabinet Office, Civil Service Strategy Unit

Matt Donnelly noted the approval of changes to the Open Government Partnership's [Action Framework](#) which define the rules for national action plans. He also noted the delayed publication of government [NAP5 implementation](#) and [NAP6 co-creation](#) self-assessments, that [NAP6 implementation final status reports](#) are due to be published imminently, and that OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) is due to start work compiling the NAP6 Results Report.

Cabinet Office, Participatory Methods Forum

Camilla Pallesen highlighted the Participatory Methods Forum as a cross government forum promoting innovative, participatory projects and capacity building for civil servants. Camilla explained the forum was considering its programme of work and opportunities to participate in the UK NAP to improve participatory policymaking, and what it could do to support the UK's Co-chairship of OGP.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Stefan Kossoff from FCDO noted the USA and Israel's departure from the Open Government Partnership and welcomed [Thailand](#) as the newest member. FCDO reiterated its support to bringing as many countries as possible into the global democratic fold whilst maintaining standards and ensuring commitment to principles and value of open government. It's also important for OGP to step up efforts to strengthen visibility of partnership and re-engage members as part of forthcoming OGP15 campaign, which will correspond with our co-chair year.

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Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Department of Finance could not make the meeting. Representation from Northern Ireland Open Government Network noted that interaction with the Northern Ireland Executive remains limited despite requests from civil society, and the future of Northern Ireland's OGP local membership remains unresolved. They reiterated their support for genuine collaboration.

Scotland

The 2026-2030 Scottish Action Plan is being co-created and will run throughout the next parliament. Co-creation workshops will occur in March. Four majority themes have been identified: trust and transparency, anti-corruption, ethical use of data and digital technology, and participation. Scotland continues to work with the Nordic+ group of OGP countries – one of the pieces of work from that group has been to consider proactive publication standards which will be taken forward as a specific workstream. The next Nordic + group meeting is in May and we hope to present research on trust in Government.

Representation from the Scotland Open Government Network noted that work is underway to ensure civil society representation across the theme areas identified in the action plan and to improve how civil society works with government colleagues. Learning from previous experiences underscores the importance of iteration, genuine collaboration and empathy.

Wales

The Welsh Government focus is on delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act which includes setting up the [Innovating Democracy Advisory Group](#) to explore new ways to strengthen democracy in Wales.

Representation from Wales Open Government Network was unable to attend and sent their apologies.

Glasgow City Council

Civil society and government officials were unable to attend and sent their apologies.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

The first [GMCA Action Plan 2025-2028](#) was published in October 2025 and initial phases of implementation are underway. It was noted that work with its independent monitoring body was a focus alongside onboarding members of the combined authority on its open government priorities set out in the plan.

Representation from civil society in Manchester was unable to attend and sent their apologies.

Part 3. Update on UK OGP Co-Chair planning

FCDO noted that co-chair planning engagement has started, with consultation exercises already underway with key stakeholder groups. The next phase will involve OGP leadership troika retreat in Brazil to discuss and agree shared priorities and concrete deliverables going forward. We will look to share an update at the next MSF meeting, including plans for our co-chair year. This will commence with a high-level OGP@15 event at the UN General Assembly in September.

Illicit Finance Summit

Joanna Perrens from FCDO introduced the Illicit Finance Summit 2026 which supports the [UK anti-corruption strategy 2025](#), and explained why tackling Illicit finance is a Government priority. A range of actors from national across governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector are due to be invited to the event hosted by the Foreign Secretary in June. Three outcomes of the summit were outlined: expose the scale of illicit finance, promote national-level action-oriented commitments, and build new international partnerships. The policy focus of the Summit will be on tackling criminal and corrupt wealth, with a spotlight on three ways that wealth is moved around the world: illicit gold, property and crypto assets. In addition, spotlight areas of focus range from illicit gold to crypto assets were identified.

Part 4. Planning the next National Action Plan

Review of Open Government Partnership Action Framework

Matt Donnelly provided an overview of the review of the OGP Action Framework for national members, which has been co-led by the UK Government. The review was driven by the need to address rigid timelines and create greater flexibility in the National Action Plan process.

The scope of the review focused on national members, whilst acknowledging the potential benefits of national-local collaboration. The proposals, developed through a joint government civil society task force, were approved by the OGP Steering Committee in February. Key changes and updates resulting from OGP rule change were outlined, with details due to follow to the wider OGP community.

Concept for UK National Action Plan for Open Government

The key criteria for the next UK NAP were outlined: promote ambitious open government reforms, focus on open government principles (transparency, accountability, participation), and ensure capability and resources for government and civil society to work together. Matt explained the new approach will allow commitments to proceed at their own pace using a common coordinated approach, moving through four stages: build capability, co-create, implement, and plan for the future.

Matthew Clarke reiterated that the UK approach will need to consider the potential of the changes outlined and that the breakout session served as a next step in domestic

engagement. The session generated a wide range of views, ideas and aspirations to inform NAP7.

Agility vs. procedural rigor

Participants weighed the benefits of the new more flexible against the risk of losing the focus provided by fixed deadlines:

- While the flexibility of an iterative process is welcome, participants noted that the hard deadlines for co-creating NAP6, though stressful, were useful for sharpening government focus and ensuring timely completion.
- The ability to iterate and add to commitments during implementation was seen as a major opportunity to keep the plan relevant to emerging policy debates (e.g., AI and infrastructure).
- There is a concern that without specific milestones, good work might slide by or get stuck in the "building capability" phase without ever reaching tangible delivery.

Strategic value of the future action plan

There was a general sense of needing to use the new flexibilities available for the upcoming action plan to better align with the UK's electoral and administrative cycles:

- There was a shared view that open government principles should be integral to major policy delivery rather than an optional extra.
- Aligning the NAP with the parliamentary cycle was seen as a way to better integrate the NAP. However, there was concern about how this flexibility would work toward the end of a parliamentary term, where ambition might decrease.
- The example of Scotland's 4-year action highlighted the benefits of longer implementation periods for commitments, when an iterative approach is taken. Notably, the Scottish Government has a fixed 5-year electoral cycle, whereas the UK Government does not have a fixed parliamentary term.
- The new flexibilities available to the UK Government for its next action plan could be used to work more closely with the Devolved Governments and local government.

Opportunity to strengthen civil society-government collaboration

The new flexibilities available to the UK for the next action plan offer the opportunity for government to work more flexibly with civil society:

- The NAP and MSF could move towards having a more consistent "heartbeat" of engagement, including a more agile approach to developing commitments and monitoring implementation.
- This includes a strong link between the MSF and individual thematic advisory groups (like the Open Contracting Advisory Group) to ensure they continue to evolve as mutually beneficial centres of gravity. Existing successes could be used as a blueprint for success in other areas.

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- A successful relationship requires the ability to have candid conversations and honest reflections on what can be achieved, ensuring dialogue continues to be constructive.

Trust, integrity, and public resonance

The relevance of open government and the NAP to wider issues that matter directly to the public was noted. Civil society highlighted that:

- Trust in government was a core consideration, including matters such as integrity of public office holders, anti-corruption, and the protection of civic space.
- The technical implementation of commitments needs to be more clearly linked with their practical benefits in a way that resonates with the public, e.g. the real-world impact of improved public procurement and the importance of ethical AI.
- The scope and scale of progress on open government facilitated by successive NAPs was perceived as under-communicated. Improved external communication is needed to build public confidence and attract a broader range of civil society actors.

Thank you and next steps

Kevin Keith and Matthew Clarke thanked everyone for their positive and enthusiastic contributions, including those reporting back from breakout rooms, and noted the level of engagement by civil society.