Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): UK End-of-Term Report 2016-2018

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Overview: United Kingdom

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) End-of-Term Report 2016-2018

Commitments in the United Kingdom's (UK) third action plan have lowered ambition in relation to previous OGP cycles. The plan included commitments from all the nations of the UK, but institutional change and political context in the country have impacted its level of completion.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP-participating country. This report summarizes the results of the period October 2017 to May 2018 and includes some relevant developments up to October 2018.

The UK plan is made up of separate parts, reflecting the make-up of Britain and its devolved governments. The action plan includes UK-wide commitments, as well as separate commitments for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. For the UK-wide parts of the action plan, the UK Cabinet Office was responsible for coordinating OGP activities. The Office is well placed to coordinate the OGP agenda as it serves the Prime Minister and is the corporate lead for the UK government for important policy. The Scottish and Welsh Governments and Northern Irish Executive led on their respective commitments. The Brexit referendum on the UK leaving the EU, subsequent change of government and General Election all led to delays.

Table 1: At a Glance

	Mid-term	***End of term***
Number of Commitments	27	27
Level of Completion		
Completed	*2*	*12*
Substantial	*12*	*10*
Limited	*13*	*5*
Not Started	*0*	*0*
Number of Commitments with…		
Clear Relevance to OGP Values	*26*	*26*
Transformative Potential Impact	*3*	*3*
Substantial or Complete Implementation	*14*	*22*
All Three (✪)	*2*	*2*
Did It Open government?		
Major	***4***	
Outstanding	***0***	
Moving Forward		
Number of Commitments Carried Over to Next Action Plan	*N/A*	

CSOs took part in the planning and implementation process through a CSO steering group elected by the UK Open Government Network (OGN) with separate networks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The OGN consists of more than 2,000 members, including civil society, developers, academics, journalists and citizens. Civil society groups were involved in the action plan development as well as in the implementation period.

At the time of this report, final self-assessment reports from the UK governments were being drafted. In September 2018, the UK government had published a draft set of commitments for its 2018-2020 action plan but stated clearly that these were simply points for consultation and not a set series of commitments.

This report was prepared by Ben Worthy.

Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation

Countries participating in OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their action plan.

As with the second action plan, the UK government worked closely with a range of CSOs. The public participation CSO Involve coordinated the civil society network.[1] CSOs began consulting and developing ideas in advance of the formal development of the action plan through a series of quarterly meetings in London, though much work was done via listserves and open Google documents.

During the implementation itself, there were quarterly meetings between the CSO steering group and UK government leads, as well as engagement on an individual level.[2] There was also continued interaction between CSO and government leads for each commitment, though this decreased in some places. Meetings were open and regular and online consultations were publicised. In Wales and Northern Ireland, there were communication and meetings between civil society groups and governments there. Scotland also had regular interaction (though this was also related to the sub-national pioneer commitments) and hosted a meeting of UK-wide governments and CSOs in April 2018.

Table 2: Consultation during Implementation

Regular Multistakeholder Forum	Midterm	End of Term
1. Did a forum exist?	Yes	Yes
2. Did it meet regularly?	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Level of Public Influence during Implementation

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply to OGP.[3] This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for "collaborative."

Level of Public Influence during Implementation of Action Plan		Midterm	End of Term
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		
Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.	✔	✔
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.		
Consult	The public could give inputs.		
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.		
No Consultation	No consultation		

[1] Involve is a UK charity focused on involving the public in decision making, https://www.involve.org.uk/

[2] Opengovernment.org.uk, 'About', CSO network website 2017, http://www.opengovernment.org.uk/networks/uk/ The steering group are:

Andy Williamson, Democratise
Colm Burns, NI Open Government Network
Gavin Freeguard, Institute for Government
Jess Blair, ERS Wales & Welsh Open Government Network
Lucy McTernan, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) & Scotland Open Government Network
Martin Tisne, The Omidyar Network
Michelle Brook, The Democratic Society
Rachel Davies, Transparency International UK
Tim Davies, Practical Participation

[3] Spectrum of Participation, http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf

About the Assessment

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.[1] One measure, the "starred commitment" (✪), deserves further explanation due to its interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgment about its potential impact.
- The commitment's language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
- The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.[2]
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

Starred commitments can lose their starred status if their completion falls short of substantial or full completion at the end of the action plan implementation period.

In the midterm report, the United Kingdom action plan contained two starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, United Kingdom's action plan contained two starred commitments.

Finally, the tables in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its reporting process. For the full dataset for the United Kingdom, see the OGP Explorer at www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer.

About "Did It Open Government?"

To capture changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable "Did It Open Government?" in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment's implementation.

As written, some OGP commitments are vague and/or not clearly relevant to OGP values but achieve significant policy reforms. In other cases, commitments as written appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government as implemented. The "Did It Open Government" variable attempts to captures these subtleties.

The "Did It Open Government?" variable assesses changes in government practice using the following spectrum:

- Worsened: Government openness worsens as a result of the commitment.
- Did not change: No changes in government practice.
- Marginal: Some change, but minor in terms of its effect on level of openness.
- Major: A step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area but remains limited in scope or scale.
- Outstanding: A reform that has transformed "business as usual" in the relevant policy area by opening government.

To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes *as implemented* for changes in government openness.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed

in government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report.

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[1] IRM Procedures Manual, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm

[2] The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information, visit http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919.

Commitment Implementation

General Overview of Commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on the "Did It Open Government?" metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the 'Did It Open Government?' variable. For further details on these commitments, please see the United Kingdom's IRM progress report 2017.

The commitments included in the UK's third national action plan were structured around four priority areas:

- Fiscal transparency
- Tackling corruption
- Improving transparency around government and elections
- Investing in national information infrastructure.[1]

Table 4. Assessment of Progress by Commitment – United Kingdom

Commitment Overview:	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. Beneficial Ownership			✔		✔	✔					✔			✔				✔			
																✔					
2. Natural Resources			✔		✔						✔				✔				✔		
																✔					
3. Anti-Corruption Strategy			✔		✔	✔	✔			✔				✔					✔		
															✔						
4. Anti-Corruption Innovation Hub			✔		✔	✔		✔			✔			✔				✔			
														✔							
5. Open contracting				✔	✔			✔		✔						✔			✔		
																✔					
6. Grants data			✔		✔						✔			✔					✔		
															✔						
7. Elections Data				✔	✔	✔		✔			✔			✔				✔			
														✔							

Commitment Overview:	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
8. Enhanced transparency				✔	✔	✔				✔				✔					✔		
																✔					
9. Identify and publish data				✔	✔	✔		✔			✔			✔					✔		
															✔						
10. Involving data users			✔		✔	✔		✔		✔				✔					✔		
															✔						
11. Better use of data assets			✔		✔	✔		✔		✔					✔			✔			
																✔					
12. GOV.UK				✔	✔			✔		✔					✔				✔		
																✔					
13. Ongoing collaboration				✔	✔	✔				✔					✔				✔		
																✔					
Scotland																					
1. Effective open gov			✔		✔	✔				✔				✔					✔		
																✔					
Northern Ireland																					
1. Open policy making				✔	✔	✔		✔			✔			✔					✔		
														✔							
2. Public sector innov.		✔			✔					✔				✔				✔			
															✔						
3. Implement OCDS			✔		✔					✔					✔				✔		
																✔					
4. Open gov accountability				✔	✔	✔		✔		✔				✔					✔		
														✔							
Wales																					
1. Open data plan		✔			✔					✔					✔				✔		
															✔						
2. Open data service			✔		✔			✔		✔					✔				✔		
															✔						
3. StatWales				✔	✔			✔		✔					✔					✔	
															✔						
4. Admin Data Research Ctr			✔		✔			✔		✔					✔					✔	
															✔						
5. Gov Social Research	✔				✔					✔					✔			✔			
															✔						

Commitment Overview:	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6. Gov.Wales			✔		✔	✔				✔				✔					✔		
														✔							
7. Code of Practice				✔	Unclear							✔			✔				✔		
																✔					
8. Well-Being of Future Gen			✔		✔	✔						✔			✔					✔	
																✔					
✪9. Well-being duty			✔		✔	✔						✔				✔				✔	
																✔					

[1] UK Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18, p. 6-7, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-open-government-national-action-plan-2016-18/uk-open-government-national-action-plan-2016-18

1. Beneficial ownership

Commitment Text: *We will establish a public register of company beneficial ownership information for foreign companies who already own or buy property in the UK, or who bid on UK central government contracts.*

Objective: *The proposed beneficial ownership register will bring greater transparency to who bids on public contracts and owns or buys UK property.*

Status quo: *We currently do not collect or publish this information.*

Ambition: *From 6 April 2016, all UK companies are required to hold a register of People with Significant Control (PSC) and from 30 June 2016 UK companies will start providing PSC information to the Companies House public register. The UK is a founding country of the initiative for the automatic exchange of beneficial ownership information. This commitment will require foreign companies who own or buy property in the UK, or bid on central government public contracts, to identify and register their beneficial owners.*

Milestones:

1. *The intention is to consult by the end of the year.*
2. *Introduce primary legislation in the third Parliamentary session.*

Responsible Institution: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Supporting institution(s): Cabinet Office, mySociety, Natural Resource Governance Institute, ONE, Publish What You Pay UK, The Open Data Institute, Transparency International UK

Start date: May 2016

End date: March 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. Overall			✔		✔	✔					✔			✔	✔			✔			

Commitment Aim:

This commitment follows from the second national action plan's push towards beneficial ownership transparency.[1] The commitment involved publishing details of beneficial ownership of UK-registered business owners via the Person with Significant Control register. The new commitment aimed to extend the register to companies that bid on public

contracts and own or buy property in the UK. This stemmed from government and CSO concerns that London was being used to invest illicit money from overseas.

Status

Midterm: Limited

In March 2016, just before the beginning of the third action plan cycle, the government published a discussion paper looking for views on how to enhance the transparency of beneficial ownership.

The consultation was completed two months after the March 2017 deadline specified. In 2017, a new consultation paper asked for views on the register.[2] The paper was published on 5 April 2017. Those consulted were asked to respond by 15 May 2017 and the government published its response outside of the timeframe in March 2018.[3]

The changes in law require primary legislation to alter property registration. Although the deadline for the milestone was April 2018, the Queen's Speech announcing the legislative agenda did not mention it.[4]

End of term: Substantial

In January 2018, the UK government committed to a 12-month timetable for legislation. In 2018 the government announced that it[5] intends to legislate to establish a public register of beneficial owners of non-UK entities that own or buy UK property, or participate in UK Government procurement.[6] The word 'establish' could be taken to mean putting into operation or setting it up.

The new draft register bill was published on 23 July 2018, after the April 2018 deadline set forth in the action plan. It was left open for consultation until September 2018.[7] Though the commitment did not specify an end date for the operation of the new register, the government committed to having a register in place and operational by 2021. Some critics in the Labour Party felt the date was too far into the future and lobbied for a closer one.[8]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change
Civic Participation: Did Not Change

The policy aimed to open a new area of private sector activity and ownership to public scrutiny. Though estimates vary on the exact size, it is likely a new register would make transactions worth billions of pounds much more transparent, especially given the size and importance of the London property market.[9] However, at the time of writing this report, the primary legislation was not yet passed, and the establishment of the secondary register fell far outside the timeline of the two-year plan. Therefore, this commitment has not yet resulted in any changes.

Carried Forward?

Given the lengthy timetable for implementation, the commitment will continue. Commitment 6 of the UK government's draft ideas for its next action plan (2018-2020) seeks to 'improve compliance, coverage and quality of publication to Contracts Finder so that all above threshold public contracts can be tracked from planning to final spending'. This will involve using the register data itself, and connecting it to open contracting through, 'improving the use and validation of organisation identifiers will help to provide a view of government business with specific organisations and will help identify the geographic origin and beneficial ownership of those organisations.'[10]

[1] Worthy, Ben 'Offshore Tax Havens and Beneficial Ownership: A Quick Primer', https://opendatastudy.wordpress.com/2016/04/03/offshore-tax-havens-and-beneficial-ownership-a-quick-primer/

[2] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Overseas companies and other legal entities' beneficial ownership register: call for evidence, https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/property-ownership-and-public-contracting-by-overseas-companies-and-legal-entities-beneficial-ownership-register

[3] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Overseas companies and other legal entities' beneficial ownership register: call for evidence, https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/property-ownership-and-public-contracting-by-overseas-companies-and-legal-entities-beneficial-ownership-register; see also Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, The Government response to the call for evidence, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/681844/ROEBO_Gov_Response_to_Call_for_Evidence.pdf

[4] Cabinet Office (2017), The Queen's Speech 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620838/Queens_speech_2017_background_notes.pdf

[5] The Guardian (2018), May to set timetable to reveal foreign owners of UK property, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/17/theresa-may-set-timetable-reveal-foreign-owners-uk-property; also House of Lords (2018) Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill [HL] - Third Reading, https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2018-01-24a.1024.2#g1024.3; and UK Public Register of Overseas Entity Beneficial Ownership: Written statement - HCWS425, https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-01-24/HCWS425/

[6] UK government (2018), UK Public Register of Overseas Entity Beneficial Ownership: Written statement - HCWS425, 48th January 2018, https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-01-24/HCWS425/; and UK government (2018) 'Draft registration of overseas entities', https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-registration-of-overseas-entities-bill

[7] DBEIS (2018), Overview Document: Draft Registration of Overseas Entities, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727901/2._FINAL_Overview_document__1___1_.pdf

[8] The Guardian (2018), May to set timetable to reveal foreign owners of UK property, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/17/theresa-may-set-timetable-reveal-foreign-owners-uk-property

[9] Transparency International Faulty Towers: Understanding the impact of overseas corruption on the London property market, http://www.transparency.org.uk/publications/faulty-towers-understanding-the-impact-of-overseas-corruption-on-the-london-property-market

[10] UK Government (2018), Consultation draft of the National Action Plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XGUs6X8EHSOm00U-rX2_8cAoq7MnDsBjnetQeW0vnzA/edit#heading=h.y5i6179pcs8d

2. Natural Resource Transparency

Commitment Text: *We will work with others to enhance company disclosure regarding payments to government for the sale of oil, gas and minerals, complementing our commitment to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and implementation of EU Directives, and explore the scope for a common global reporting standard.*

Objective: *In addition to commitments on timely implementation of EITI and EU Directives, the UK will work with others to enhance company disclosure regarding payments to government for the sale of oil, gas and minerals. The UK will explore the scope for a common global reporting standard and work with others to build a common understanding and strengthen the evidence for transparency in this area.*

Status quo: *Over the last decade, the UK has led the way in encouraging the extractive sector to be more transparent, notably through a combination of voluntary reporting under the EITI and mandatory disclosure rules now present in the EU, Canada, the US and other countries. But despite this progress, a significant gap still exists. Payments from physical commodity trading companies to governments and state-owned enterprises for the sale of oil, gas and minerals –which account for the majority of total government revenues in countries such as Iraq, Libya, Angola and Nigeria – remain largely opaque. Whereas taxes, royalties and other payments are included within existing home disclosure rules, payments from oil traders to governments (often $US billions/year) are not.*

Ambition: *To enhance company disclosure regarding payments to government for the sale of oil, gas and minerals.*

Milestones:

1. *UK to publish second EITI report by 15 April 2017 and commence validation to become EITI compliant*
2. *UK listed extractive companies will be required to publish data under the EU transparency amending directive in an open and accessible format*
3. *Agree terms of reference for the dialogue on increased transparency around sales of oil, gas and minerals*

Responsible institution: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department of Energy and Climate Change, HM Treasury, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Department for International Development

Supporting institution(s): Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department of Energy and Climate Change, HM Treasury, Financial Conduct Authority and Department for International Development

Start date: May 2016

End date: March 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?

	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2. Overall			✔		✔						✔				✔	✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment continued the extractives transparency initiatives from the second action plan. Two parts of the commitment are a continuation of the reporting requirements of the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and an extension of openness to a set of companies not fully covered by earlier legislation.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The government reported in its July 2017 update the good progress on this commitment.[1] UK published the second EITI report in March 2017, and all relevant background data in line with its EITI requirements. Validation was still needed but as a result of EITI moving the deadline, not the UK government.[2] Companies covered by the EU Transparency Directive started to publish data in open and machine-readable formats.[3] As of December 2016, terms of reference on transparency of oil, gas and minerals physical commodity trading payments to governments had not yet been agreed.

However, the EITI process in the UK was thrown into doubt on 29 September 2017, when 20 members of civil society withdrew from the process over concerns about the possible disruption of the selection of civil society representatives by one group, Extractive Industries Civil Society (EICS). The withdrawing CSOs argued that their independence had been breached. Those withdrawing included major CSOs such as Global Witness, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Transparency International UK and Publish What You Pay UK.[4]

End of term: Complete

The UK published its third EITI report in April 2018 and commenced validation according to the current (revised) schedule on 1 July 2018. UK-listed extractive companies have begun to publish data under the EU Transparency Amending Directive in an open and machine-readable format and are required to continue doing so (this is an open process with no end date).[5]

The final UK government update of April 2018 outlined how the UK government had continued work to stimulate international dialogue, with a successful event hosted by OECD on commodity trading transparency in January 2018. The OECD reported that the event included 22 government delegations from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, as well as representatives from eight partner international organisations and institutions, and 48 major firms, industry associations, civil society organisations, academia, law firms and think tanks.[6] According to the OECD, the event allowed sharing of best practice examples and discussed ways and means of developing policy and sharing data.

The 10th EITI plenary, in June 2018, with 31 countries represented, discussed climate change, durable contracts and problems faced by tax base erosion.

The UK EITI Civil Society Network has not, to date, re-joined the UK initiative since withdrawing from it in September 2017, and is waiting for the government to identify a third-party independent body to handle the selection of civil society representatives for the Multi-Stakeholder Group.[7]

Did It Open Government?
Access to Information: Marginal

The policy aimed to further open up a new area of private sector activity of global importance. It is listed as a marginal change, as the first two parts of the commitment were a contribution to ongoing work from the third action plan, reinforcing and broadening work already done. In terms of access to information, this was a very small number of companies, estimated at 60-65, not fully covered before, compared with around 1,200 companies registered in the UK. While this closed a loophole, it had a small impact on provision overall. The third part of the commitment was building the ground work for important changes through international agreement, but the process was ongoing and not complete at the end of the implementation period.

Carried Forward?
The UK government's consultation on the next action plan for OGP suggested a possible continuation, though this is a suggestion and not government policy. The suggested commitment aims to enhance company disclosure regarding payments to governments for the sale of publicly owned oil, gas and minerals and help to establish/implement a common global reporting standard. The suggested commitment contained a four-point set of aims: to continue dialogue, assess how to 'further enhance' disclosure, work with stakeholders to enhance openness, and provide clearer guidance in making sure data is machine readable. If the commitment was carried forward, clarity on how this would be put into practice would be helpful.

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[1] Cabinet Office Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18,
July 2017 Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017) pre-publication passed to author.
[2] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Research and analysis, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative: payments report, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extractive-industries-transparency-initiative-payments-report-2015
[3] Interview with Miles Litvinoff, Publish What You Pay, 25 August 2017.
[4] Publish What You Pay UK 'News: Civil Society Organisations withdraw from UK EITI', http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/pwyp-news/civil-society-organisations-withdraw-from-uk-eiti/
[5] Email correspondence with Miles Litvinoff, PWYP, August 2018: UK government (2018) 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/
[6] OECD 9th meeting January 2018, and a 10th in June 2018, OECD (2018) Tenth Plenary Meeting of the PD-NR, 25-26 June 2018, http://www.oecd.org/dev/ninth-meeting-pd-nr-jan-2018.htm; summary report of the event, http://www.oecd.org/dev/Summary%20Report%20-%20Ninth%20Meeting%20of%20the%20Policy%20Dialogue%20on%20Natural%20Resources%20(FOR%20UPLOAD).pdf
[7] Email correspondence with Miles Litvinoff, PWYP, August 2018.

3. Anti-Corruption Strategy

Commitment Text: *To develop, in consultation with civil society, and publish a new Anti-Corruption Strategy ensuring accountability to Parliament on progress of implementation.*

Objective: *To continue to have a robust cross-government Anti-Corruption Strategy that builds on the existing plan and brings together the UK's current and up-to-date anti-corruption efforts in one place. The plan will be developed with civil society and delivered with strengthened accountability to Parliament.*

Status quo: *the first UK Anti-Corruption Plan, published in December 2014, features actions that have now been delivered. A new strategy will meet the government's commitment to create a living document that evolves alongside the nature of the threat from corruption and our response both here in the UK and abroad.*

Ambition: *this presents an opportunity for a new strategy to:*

- *Present a strong strategic narrative around our anti-corruption efforts*
- *To capture international activity from the Prime Minister's Anti-Corruption Summit*
- *To maintain our ambition to develop new commitments in areas of concern*

Enhanced engagement with civil society organisations and more accountability to Parliament will help demonstrate the government's openness to ensuring the principle of transparency is applied to all anti-corruption efforts.

Milestones:

1. *To consult with civil society on the content of and publish a UK Anti-Corruption Strategy*
2. *To publish progress against actions within the Strategy*
3. *To introduce a mechanism allowing greater Parliamentary scrutiny of anti-corruption work*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office and Home Office

Supporting institutions: All government departments, Bond Anti-Corruption Group (ARTICLE 19, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Corruption Watch, Global Witness, Integrity Action, ONE, Public Concern at Work, The Corner House, Transparency International UK), Campaign for Freedom of Information, International Budget Partnership, mySociety, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Publish What You Pay UK

Start date: May 2016

End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding

Commitment Aim:

The commitment stemmed from a series of anti-corruption initiatives in the second action plan and built on the UK's first Anti-Corruption Plan, published on 18 December 2014. The new strategy created a set of aims against which government action can be assessed or judged. The strategy potentially provided a long-term vision and set of priorities across government for the UK's anti-corruption activities.

Status

Midterm: Limited

At the end of the first year, the commitment's implementation was limited and behind schedule. Although consultation and work has taken place, the publication of the strategy was delayed 11 months beyond its November 2016 deadline.[1]

The government cited the change of government in July 2016, the General Election of June 2017 and the need for more time to consult with other governments as the key factors delaying the commitment's implementation.[2] CSOs confirmed these factors and felt that a delayed strategy was preferable to a rushed, poor strategy.[3] Nevertheless, they were disappointed in the delay, as they see this as an important area.[4]

End of term: Substantial

On 11 December 2017 the new 72-page strategy document was published, more than a year later than the government's initial commitment date of November 2016.[5] It was intended to pull together cross-government strategy and offer a six-point vision for the UK's anti-corruption activities:

1. Reduce the insider threat in high risk domestic sectors
2. Strengthen the integrity of the UK as an international financial centre
3. Promote integrity across the public and private sectors
4. Reduce corruption in public procurement and grants
5. Improve the business environment globally
6. Work with other countries to combat corruption[6]

Following the concerns of partner CSOs, John Penrose MP was appointed as the anti-corruption champion.[7]

According to the final government update of April 2018 the Joint Anti-Corruption Unit are now working with departments to implement the strategy and have developed a monitoring and evaluation framework, which was signed off at the cross-Whitehall Directors' meeting on Anti-Corruption.[8]

While the strategy itself has been published, the move to publish details of what progress is being made is reportedly 'ongoing' across government.[9] In terms of the reporting mechanism, it has been decided, according to the UK government, that the parliamentary accountability mechanism will be via an annual written update.[10]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change
Civic Participation: Marginal
Public Accountability: Did Not Change

The strategy represents an important step forward, but time will be needed to see how or whether the strategy works as a blueprint or guide for action and if it provides the 'vision' across government that many argued was needed.

The strategy was broadly, if cautiously, welcomed by civil society. The Bond anti-corruption group welcomed the breadth and remit across domestic and international politics, the appointment of a new champion, the maintenance of the Serious Fraud Office and requirement that the government report annually to Parliament. However, it qualified this by saying 'the Bond Group also feels that in several places the Strategy does not go far enough - for example, on transparency in the Overseas Territories, corruption in UK politics, golden visas and on a criminal corporate liability offence'.[11] Transparency International also called the strategy a 'welcome advance in the fight against corruption both at home and abroad' but made a similar point that 'the Strategy fails to address corruption in UK politics and avoids confrontation with Britain's infamous offshore financial centres'.[12]

So far, access to information and public accountability have not improved, especially as the parts of the commitment that track progress were incomplete. The strategy did not contain any new information or open up any new areas. There was a marginal improvement on participation, as members of the Bond group were involved in the consultation and met with government for face-to-face discussion in the summer of 2016. The government accepted that the strategy should cover domestic corruption, the UK's international influence, and the nexus between the two regarding, for example, illicit financial flows.[13] The measuring of progress and annual reporting to parliament will provide a means of understanding its effects into the future, though this may depend on what form it takes (e.g. if there are questions in parliament).

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward into a new action plan.

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[1] Interview with Alice Pilia and Jeremy Foster, Cabinet Office, 15 August 2017.
[2] Interview with Alice Pilia and Jeremy Foster, Cabinet Office, 15 August 2017.
[3] Interview with Rachel Davies Teka, Transparency International, 14 August 2017.
[4] Interview with Joseph Williams, 5 September 2017,
[5] DFID/Home Office (2017), UK anti-corruption strategy 2017 to 2022, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-anti-corruption-strategy-2017-to-2022
[6] Ibid.
[7] John Penrose (2017), John Named Anti-Corruption Champion, http://johnpenrose.org/wp/2017/12/11/john-named-anti-corruption-champion/
[8] UK government (2018), 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/
[9] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018: UK government (2018) 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/
[10] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.
[11] Bond Group (2017), UK makes welcome anti-corruption commitments, now action is needed, https://www.bond.org.uk/press-releases/2017/12/uk-makes-welcome-anti-corruption-commitments-now-action-is-needed
[12] Transparency International (2017), Transparency International gives qualified welcome to new UK Anti-Corruption Strategy, http://www.transparency.org.uk/press-releases/transparency-international-gives-qualified-welcome-to-new-uk-anti-corruption-strategy/#.WjfgN3nLjIW
[13] Correspondence with Rachel Davies Teka, Transparency International UK, February 2019

4. Anti-Corruption Innovation Hub

Commitment Text: *We will incubate an Anti-Corruption Innovation Hub to connect social innovators, technology experts and data scientists with law enforcement, business and civil society to collaborate on innovative approaches to anti-corruption.*

Objective: *To connect and catalyse innovative approaches to anti-corruption.*

Status quo: *Current efforts to innovate in tackling corruption are often scattered, piecemeal, and do not always utilise the benefits of scale. We need new coalitions to connect social innovators, technology experts, and businesses with law enforcement and civil society organisations to share experience and disseminate good practice that could be replicated and customised in different countries and contexts.*

Ambition: *Champion the use of innovative ways to report, detect and investigate corruption; collaborate on identifying and supporting, emerging anti-corruption innovations; share good practice and promote the use of anti-corruption innovations, and use established conferences and multilateral stakeholder groups to highlight innovative anti-corruption initiatives and opportunities for collaboration.*

Milestones:

1. *Establish Innovation Hub*
2. *Showcase examples of innovative approaches to tackling corruption at the 2016 OGP Summit in Paris in December 2016*
3. *Operationalise innovation hub*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office (Government Digital Service)

Supporting institution(s): Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Start date: May 2016

End date: May 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4. Overall			✔		✔	✔		✔			✔			✔				✔			

Commitment Aim:

This commitment emerged from the UK government's anti-corruption plan in the second action plan and, more specifically, the UK-led May 2016 International Anti-Corruption

Summit, when different groups were brought together to discuss anti-corruption activities.[1] There were no mechanisms or means of sharing ideas or learning, or for building links between, for example, open data innovators and governments. The hub is designed to spread knowledge, create collaborations and champion and spread innovative approaches to identifying corruption between selected countries and organisations.[2]

Status

Midterm: Limited

The commitment was behind schedule at the end of the first year. The government highlighted their showcasing of developments at the OGP summit in Paris in December 2016 as evidence of the commitment's progress.[3] However, as of November 2017, ministers were still working with officials on plans for the commitment's promised innovation hub, which was overdue and not yet operational.[4]

End of term: Limited

There has been some evidence of movement and continued work but only limited progress with no outputs so far. The UK Home Office (Ministry of the Interior) assumed responsibility for the commitment in late 2017. The Joint Anti-Corruption Unit had 'contracted a consultant to do scoping work in furtherance of this commitment', with a remit to look into possible ways forward for the policy. At the time of writing it was not clear what this would be. In the final update of April 2018, the UK government outlined how it was continuing to 'review options to develop and promote innovative approaches to combat corruption and consider how to support this going forward.'

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change
Civic Participation: Did Not Change

The original commitment was designed to fill a gap in global anti-corruption work, creating a hub where government, officials, CSOs and others could share knowledge and develop new ideas, of a kind that did not exist anywhere in the world. However, the hub was not put into place or made operational; it had no effect on opening government in either of the three areas. Some progress was made in meetings and discussing ideas. However, the commitment did not result in new information or data being made available, or enable the wider involvement of groups, stakeholders or the public. There was clearly an intent throughout to innovate with technology in some way, given the involvement of 'innovators, technology experts and data scientists', but this has not happened.

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward into a new action plan.

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[1] HM Government 'Anti-Corruption Plan', https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388894/UKantiCorruptionPlan.pdf; Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[2] Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[3] Cabinet Office 'Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-18: Mid-term Self Assessment Report' (UK government report September 2017) passed to author pre-publication.
[4] Cabinet Office (2017), Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: November 2017 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/og-nap-2016-18-november-2017-commitment-progress-updates/

5. Open contracting

Commitment Text: *To implement the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) in the Crown Commercial Service's (CCS) operations by October 2016; we will also begin applying this approach to major infrastructure projects, starting with High Speed Two (HS2), and rolling out OCDS across government thereafter.*

Objective: *To ensure citizens can see a clear public record of how government money is spent on public contracts and with what results.*

Status quo: *Civil Society tells us that we could open more relevant data, publish it more consistently and in formats that allow it to be more easily analysed. The challenges of working with current published data are a barrier to suppliers and businesses in deciding whether to bid for public sector business, and means third parties are less able to hold government to account for the way public money is spent.*

Ambition: *This policy will help to bring about a bold shift in the global default of public contracting and procurement from closed to open, supporting fair and effective contracting that will reduce fraud and corruption, save governments money and time, create more business opportunities for small and medium sized businesses, and empower civil society oversight and citizen engagement and innovation in service delivery. This represents a transformative commitment to transparency and we are the first G7 country to implement this.*

Milestone:

1. *Open Contracting Data Standard to be implemented on Crown Commercial Service procurement*

Responsible institution: Crown Commercial Service

Supporting institution(s): All government departments, ARTICLE 19, CAFOD, Campaign for Freedom of Information, NCVO, Open Contracting Partnership, The Open Data Institute

Start date: May 2016

End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5. Overall				✔	✔			✔		✔						✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment on Open Contracting links to earlier work in the UK's previous action plan towards opening up contracting in the UK, and a series of central and local government initiatives to make contracts more transparent over the past decade.

Status

Midterm: Complete

The commitment was complete at the end of the first year - albeit slightly delayed because of problems with some historical data on the site.[1] The updated Contracts Finder is now available in the OCDS format. Data from the Contracts Finder is also available on data.gov.uk and can be queried and explored by users.[2] The site is active and has been updated regularly.[3] In August 2017, 250 separate contracts relating to the high-speed rail development were available to the public via the Contracts Finder. According the November 2017 update, Contract Finder had '76,466 visitors in October 2017… and approximately 100,000 email alerts to subscribers per week'.[4]

The Crown Commercial Service established a small steering group, which included representatives of the Open Data Institute, service users, CSO groups and the Open Contracting Partnership. This group met 3-4 times a year and provided important help and feedback.[5]

Although the commitment was complete by the end of the first year, Crown Commercial continued to work on updating 'corporate identifiers' and to 'identify contractors to publish supply chain notices'. The final update reported a continued increase in use:

- 82,030 visitors in February 2018, up from 76,466 visitors in October 2017.
- 1,211,016 page views in February 2018 up from 784,7171 page views in October 2017.
- 38,344 individual users (up from 32,794 in October 2017) from 25,149 organisations, 16,075 (63%) of which are SMEs.[6]

In addition, a 'joint 'Contracting 5' working group' of Colombia, France, Mexico, the Ukraine and Argentina was created to 'share C5 experiences of implementing open contracting'.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

The developments in the commitment built on previous innovations in the UK's third action plan and further back. In terms of access to information, compared with the past, more data was made available to the public about various parts of contracting and on a timelier (in some cases daily) basis. Statistics on usage showed a continued increase in public interest and use of the data. There was also improved work on the format and completeness of data, as well as work merging it, which was evidence of continued use of technological innovation to enable public involvement.

The Open Contracting Partnership said, 'Crown Commercial Service has taken on an ambitious and important task' with 'major progress...achieved to publish daily open data based on the Open Contracting Data Standard'.[7] It continued 'while there is still work to be done to improve quality and completeness of information, the strong focus of the team on user needs, stakeholder engagement bodes well for 2017 and beyond'.[8] However, CSOs were disappointed at the commitment as a whole and felt it was obeying 'the letter' but not 'the spirit' of the reforms. CSOs hoped that the contracting data would link to the newly published Beneficial Ownership information on the Person with Significant Control register, although no specific milestone was given in the text and the government disagreed that this was an aim and did not feel that this had been expressed (see Commitment 1).[9] There was also a sense that there was a lack of Ministerial interest in the topic over the past year.

Carried Forward?

As Tim Davies pointed out, open contracting had been a theme of OGP's second and third action plans in the UK. Despite this continued push, the high-profile collapse of government contractor Carillion in spring 2018 showed the ongoing limitations and secrecy around procurement in the UK. Tim Davies recommended a more local focus for future open contracting work.[10]

The UK government's consultation on the national action plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020 suggested a similar approach, with a possible continuation of open contracting focused on the local level (though this is a suggestion and not government policy). This would be done by creating local level coalitions to push for change and by 'encouraging local authorities to publish all of the data they can... to make it easier for residents to see how organisations are performing.[11,12]

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[1] UK government 'OGP UK National Action Plan 2016/18 Commitment progress update, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/UK_6-month-progress-update_20161213.pdf; Cabinet Office Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: July 2017, Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017) pre-publication passed to author

[2] Gov.uk, 'Contracts Finder', https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search

[3] Gov.uk, 'Contracts Finder', https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/Summary

[4] Cabinet Office (2017), Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: November 2017 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/og-nap-2016-18-november-2017-commitment-progress-updates/

[5] Interview with Tim Davies, Open Contracting Partnership, 4 September 2017; Interview with Andrew Bowen, CCS, August 2017.

[6] UK government (2018), 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/

[7] Cabinet Office 'Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-18: Mid-term Self Assessment Report' (UK government report September 2017) passed to author pre-publication.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Interview with Tim Davies, Open Contracting Partnership, 4 September 2017; Companies House 'The New People with Significant Control Register', https://companieshouse.blog.gov.uk/2016/04/13/the-new-people-with-significant-control-register/

[10] Tim Davies blog post, 'Where next for Open Contracting in the UK?', 2 February 2018, http://www.timdavies.org.uk/2018/02/02/where-next-for-open-contracting-in-the-uk/

[11] UK Government (2018), Consultation draft of the National Action Plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XGUs6X8EHSOm00U-rX2_8cAoq7MnDsBjnetQeW0vnzA/edit#heading=h.y5i6179pcs8d

[12] Ibid.

6. Grants data

Commitment Text: *Government plans to collect more granular data on grant making. This will be in line with the 360 Giving Standard. In addition, the Grants Efficiency Programme in the Cabinet Office will publish more granular level data on Government Grants Expenditure at a scheme and award level. The quantity and type of data provided publicly will be determined following consultation and agreement with the data providers.*

Objective: *Increased release of information about government grant making as open, machine-readable data.*

Status quo: *The government's Grant Register was first published in January 2015 showing detail on government grants schemes for the 2013-14 financial year. The latest version of the register was published in February 2016 with information for the 2014-15 financial year. Collected by the Grants Efficiency Programme in Cabinet Office, the register includes the value of grant schemes and the type and number of recipients. While it is not fully comprehensive, and some of the information is estimated, the Grants Register provides a useful overview of the majority of government grants.*

The recently launched Government Grants Information System (GGIS) has been developed to enable recording of grant information across government in a simple, standardised and scalable way. It improves transparency and provides insight into grant spend enabling departments to manage grants efficiently and effectively, while actively reducing the risk of fraud.

Access to the GGIS is limited to grant giving departments, and associated arm's length bodies that give out grants on behalf of government. It is not open to the public.

Ambition: *At present, we are concentrating on collecting and sharing the scheme and award level data internally across government via the GGIS and working with departments to improve the quality and quantity of that data.*

Going forward, and in line with the transparency agenda, we plan to make that data available publicly via the Grants Register to improve availability of information. The quantity and the type of data provided will be dependent on agreements with the data owners, i.e. government departments.

Milestones

1. *Collate granular level data on grant schemes and grant awards on the GGIS (New May 2016- March 2017)*
2. *Publish more granular data sourced from the GGIS on grant schemes and grant awards (the quantity and the type of data provided will be dependent on agreements with the data owners, i.e. government departments) (May 2017 March 2018)*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office

Supporting institutions: All grant giving departments, 360Giving, NCVO, The Open Data Institute

Start date: May 2016

End date: March 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?

	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6. Overall			✔		✔						✔			✔	✔				✔		

Commitment Aim:

The UK government began to open up its data around grant payments when it first published its grants register in 2015, a list of schemes involving grants run by government.[1] The new commitment aims to publish data at a more granular level. It is based on the 360Giving Standard, which aims to offer an open, simple and comprehensive way of publishing grants data.[2] The commitment was wide ranging and there was some ambiguity in the language around exactly what would be published, and which departments would do it.

Status

Midterm: Limited

According to the government's July 2017 update, officials were working to "upload more granular level data to the GGIS, and to close any gaps which exist between scheme and award level data."[3] Officials have also held discussions and gathered data with stakeholders. CSOs praised the collaboration that took place and stressed the importance of individual relations between officials and civil society.[4] Departments were due to publish data in September 2017 and the government was on course to begin publishing data on the Government Grants Information System (GGIS). In October 2017, the Department of Transport and Department of Justice both published data under the 360Giving Standard.[5]

Some departments have struggled, but CSOs hoped that the 'big grant givers" release of data (the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Transport) could encourage others.[6]

End of Term: Substantial

This commitment was substantially completed with the release of data at scheme level by all departments, and complete publication under the 360 standards by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Transport in 2017 described above. The final government update reported that other departments were also pushing forward with an 'increase [in] their awards level data'. As of April 2018, they were 'planning to publish the grants data in the autumn. However, they will not know whether individual departments are in a position to approve the publication of their awards data until later this year.' It also spoke of a 'close, positive relationship between 360Giving and Government leads, which we should strive to replicate in other areas'.[7]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

As CSOs acknowledged, the commitment was wide ranging and would involve work, co-ordination and action across all government departments. It could, however, 'theoretically...revolutionise our understanding of how much the charity sector gets from government'.[8] In terms of access to information, the commitment has gone some way to

opening up a vital area of government spending. Before the commitment, data in this area was inconsistent and patchy. It has clearly 'increased' the amount of data available, at a new level (award level) and, because of the 360 standards, in a way that is consistent across the departments. The commitment will continue outside of the implementation cycle, with more data due to be published in late 2018.

Concerns remain about the quality and what the data tells us. One piece of analysis argued that it was not 'real transparency" and the data at present did not allow users to know what was happening with grant spending. Some entities have begun reporting in greater detail, but others have not. Compliance is inconsistent. In some ways, the data generated "additional confusion." The assessment argues that the commitment acted as a sort of 'half-way house...there is an agreed standard and format across government. If the 360Giving format is adopted properly it would make government grant-making truly transparent and easier to interrogate."[9]

Carried Forward?

The UK government's consultation on the national action plan for Open Government 2018-2020 proposed a further commitment around grants data to the transparency of government grant funding for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years. The plan is to have a continued process of release, as well as a co-ordination event to bring together important stakeholders to discuss new approaches.[10]

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[1] Gov.uk, 'Transparency data: Government grants register', https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-grants-register
[2] 360Giving, 'The 360Giving Standard', http://standard.threesixtygiving.org/en/latest/#
[3] Cabinet Office, Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18:July 2017 Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017) pre-publication passed to author.
[4] Interview with Rachel Rank, 360Giving, 13 August 2017.
[5] Cabinet Office (2017), 'Press release: Government releases £100bn of grant data in push for greater efficiency and transparency', https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-releases-100bn-of-grant-data-in-push-for-greater-efficiency-and-transparency
[6] Interview with Rachel Rank, 360Giving, August 2017.
[7] UK government (2018), 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/
[8] Kirsty Weakley (2018), 'How useful is the government's latest grants register', https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/voices/kirsty-weakley-how-useful-is-the-government-s-latest-grants-register.html#sthash.81XtXP6m.dpuf
[9] Ibid.
[10] UK Government (2018), Consultation draft of the national action plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XGUs6X8EHSOm00U-rX2_8cAoq7MnDsBjnetQeW0vnzA/edit#heading=h.y5i6179pcs8d

7. Elections data

Commitment Text: *Working with interested parties from government, Parliament and civil society, we will develop a common data standard for reporting election results in the UK faster and more efficiently and develop a plan to support electoral administrators to voluntarily adopt the standard.*

Objective: *To simplify and improve how the UK collects and publishes election data to enable greater use and reuse of structured information by government and civil society.*

Status quo: *Currently, there is no standard data structure for reporting election results. This means that to aggregate election results requires obtaining non-uniform, often unstructured data from each publishing authority - this is a highly resource intensive process. Local authority returning officers currently have a statutory duty to publish local and national elections on local authority websites. This activity currently takes place in a piecemeal way from one organisation to another with no official guidance or common practice to publish such data in any particular style, format or web location. The Electoral Commission guides that administrators must give public notice of the name of each candidate elected and of the total number of votes given for each candidate (whether elected or not), together with the number of rejected ballot papers as shown in the statement of rejected ballot papers.*

Whilst this approach allows scrutiny and review at the individual organisational level, much manual effort is required in finding the local published webpages and then to collate data from every publishing source to create a national overview. The current practice is difficult, labour intensive, time consuming and often error prone. Substantial savings, better data discovery and data reuse is possible if electoral administration departments can be encouraged to publish their data to a simple consistent form which can be read by humans and machines.

Ambition: *The vision is to work with all interested parties to agree a simple, minimum burden process and data standard to introduce consistency of data availability across the local government sector. Publishing election results in a consistent way will assist those who need to quickly understand the political landscape after an election and encourages other third parties to develop apps and other analysis services to help to inform the public faster about the overarching outcome from elections. It will also promote wider engagement and outreach with innovative application development and scrutiny by the electorate. It is our aim that by 2020, all election results will be reported digitally using a standard, machine readable and open standard.*

Milestones:

1. *Develop a draft schema and publishing process for consideration, refinement and agreement by interested parties - particularly data publishers, election management system (EMS) suppliers, data consumers*
2. *Use the draft data standard for real by gathering local elections results as they are announced*
3. *Develop guidance materials and a support programme to assist Election Services Departments to participate*
4. *Data consumer groups to trial early use of the standard - even to the extent of manually re-working published data into the standard themselves to demonstrate benefits*
5. *Adoption by the suppliers of EMS systems to provide auto-extraction of local election content into the standard format*
6. *Develop online data search, validation, harvesting and aggregation tools to assemble local data into combined regional and national elections results register*
7. *Encourage an initial pilot of local authorities to trial data output in the standard form - using May 2016 local election results. Aim for 20-30 participants*

8. *Encourage wider take up of the process in the 2017 local elections. Aim for 100-120 participants*

Responsible institution: Local Government Association (LGA)

Supporting institutions: Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Cabinet Office, Government Digital Service, Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators, House of Commons Information Services, Plymouth University Elections Centre, Democracy Club, Democratic Audit, Democratise, LGiU, mySociety, The Open Data Institute, suppliers of the key electoral management systems (EMS.

Start date: May 2016

End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
7. Overall				✔	✔	✔		✔			✔			✔				✔			

Commitment Aim:

Election data laws are outdated and there is no consistent or common approach to collecting election data, especially at the local level. Currently, laws governing elections in the UK ask only that notices of results be placed in a public place. This means that election results are placed online in various forms (as PDFs or scanned images) and there is no consistent means of publishing them.[1]

While national elections are relatively well analysed, results are inconsistent and slow for local elections (at the parish, district or county council, as well as for mayoral and police commissioner elections).[2] The publication of consistent data on local elections would mean local elections are reported in a simpler, more efficient and more open way.

Status

Midterm: Limited

The commitment was behind schedule at the end of the first year. Two rounds of consultations led to an agreed common standard for data collection.[3] The different bodies broadly agreed on a publishing approach that already exists. Guidance documents and e-education work has also been done.[4] The project team at the Local Government Association (LGA) also manually created and published several other sample datasets and made them available for early access and use. According to the government self-assessment, "the LGA is investigating [whether] sample data can be acquired from a few local authorities'.[5] In November 2017, the Cabinet Office approved the standard's entry into the H.M. Government catalogue of open data standards.

The constant change due to staggered elections in local government has caused some delay, as agreements and new relations needed to be built and re-built if/when new parties came into power. The General Election of June 2017 also slowed the process.[6] The commitment stalled in October 2016 due to needed updates to election systems. As of March 2018, EMS supplier Democracy Counts confirmed that they planned to implement the new standard into their system at their own cost. [7] Both the Cabinet Office and LGA were looking into funding.[8] CSOs expressed frustration that the commitment had halted for more than a year after such hard work and agreement.[9]

End of term: Limited

According to the final UK government update 'progress has continued steadily since the last report' and 'the LGA and Cabinet Office have been focussing on engaging with Election Management System suppliers to integrate the standard into their systems'.[10] Democracy Counts agreed to integrate the standard at their own cost/risk and a sample is currently being worked on.[11] The remaining suppliers have offered quotes for development costs but have indicated they have no capacity to make progress until 2019.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change
Civic Participation: Did Not Change

As the full adoption of the standard and publication of the data has not yet happened (and has a longer timeframe than the two-year cycle), it has not resulted in any changes for improving access to information or civic participation. No new information has been published as a result of the commitment so far and there has not been any greater public involvement.

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not being carried forward in future action plans, although the government has suggested other possible commitments around democratic innovation.[12] Given the longer timeframe, the project will continue past 2019 and into the future.

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[1] Interview with Tim Adams, Local Government Association, August 2017.
[2] In the UK, local government is divided into parish (village level), district (town or sub-regional), and county council (regional), with other elections for local elected mayors across 25 areas and 31 elected police commissioners – Gov.uk 'Understand how your council works', https://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works
[3] Tim Adams, 'Consultation No1: Summary of key contributions to the Elections Schema consultation', http://e-sd.org/fmcAY, and Tim Adams, Consultation No2; and Summary of key contributions to the Elections Schema consultation, http://e-sd.org/Rsr9V
[4] Local Government Association, 'Local transparency guidance – publishing election results data', http://e-sd.org/vgTJ3; and eLearning modules, Local Government Association 'Making publishing work for you', http://e-sd.org/zDImh
[5] Cabinet Office, 'Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-18:
Mid-term Self-Assessment Report' (UK government report September 2017) passed to author pre-publication.
[6] Interview with Ingrid Koehler, LGIU, 2 August 2017.
[7] Interview with Tim Adams, Local Government Association, 16 August 2017.
[8] Cabinet Office, 'Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-18:
Mid-term Self-Assessment Report' (UK government report September 2017) passed to author pre-publication.
[9] Interview with Tim Adams, Local Government Association, 16 August 2017; Interview with Ingrid Koehler, LGIU, 2 August 2017.
[10] UK government (2018), 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/
[11] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.
[12] UK Government (2018), Consultation draft of the national action plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XGUs6X8EHSOm00U-rX2_8cAoq7MnDsBjnetQeW0vnzA/edit#heading=h.y5i6179pcs8d

8. Enhanced transparency requirements and revised Freedom of Information Act Code of Practice

Commitment Text: *To increase transparency and improve the operation of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in the public interest.*

Objective: *To enhance proactive transparency by making more information available in a more consistent way across the public sector; and to promote the effective operation of the FOI Act in the public interest by updating and expanding the Code of Practice.*

Status quo: *Public authorities are already required to publish a wide range of information proactively. The Independent Commission on Freedom of Information (the Commission) recognised that advances have been made, with specific reference to senior pay and benefits.*

The Commission also commented on the publication of FOI performance statistics by a range of public authorities, including central government. However, the Commission highlighted a lack of consistency. It noted a lack of reliable FOI performance data across the public sector as a whole.

It also noted that while senior pay is published, details of expenses and benefits in kind are frequently not made available proactively. Further action is required to ensure enhanced and consistent standards of openness in these areas.

The Commission also highlighted the need to review and update the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the FOI Act. This allows the government to set out the practice that it considers desirable for public authorities to follow in meeting their FOI obligations. The Code of Practice was issued over a decade ago in November 2004, shortly before the FOI Act was introduced, and has not been updated since to reflect developments in best practice and case law.

The recent report by the Commission recommended that:

"The government reviews section 45 of the Act to ensure that the range of issues on which guidance can be offered to public authorities under the Code is adequate.

"The government should also review and update the Code to take account of the ten years of operation of the Act's information access scheme."

Ambition: *We are committed to making government more transparent, so taxpayers can hold it to account both on how money is being spent and how decisions are made. This commitment will implement proposals in the Commission's report. It will improve and increase the range of information available to the public without having to make requests for it and will improve the operation of the Act.*

Further steps will be taken to ensure transparency on issues such as FOI performance and senior pay and benefits across the whole public sector. The public should not have to resort to making FOI requests to obtain it. We intend to issue guidance to public authorities to set a higher standard for the publication of senior level pay and benefits by summer 2016. We will also issue guidance in the revised Section 45 Code of Practice to set a standard that, public authorities with 100 full time equivalent employees or more should publish statistics on their FOI performance, to better hold public authorities to account.

A revised Code of Practice will ensure the range of issues on which guidance can be offered to public authorities is sufficient and up to date. Public authorities should have sufficient guidance to properly manage information access requests in order to protect the right of access to information the FOI Act provides. We aim to consult on and issue a new Code of Practice by the end of 2016.

Milestones

1. *Enhanced transparency measures, including statistics on the operation of the FOI Act and data about senior pay and benefits (July 2016- December 2016)*
2. *Consult on and issue new FOI Code of Practice (July 2016- December 2016)*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office

Supporting institutions: 360Giving, ARTICLE 19, Campaign for Freedom of Information, mySociety, The Open Data Institute, Transparency International UK

Start date: July 2016

End date: December 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
8. Overall				✔	✔	✔				✔				✔		✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

The commitment concerned the updating of the UK's Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000, especially the section 45 code of practice that sets guidance on the law which has not been updated since the Act came into force in 2005.[1] The commitment was rooted in a Supreme Court judgement from March 2015 on the government's veto power, and a subsequent review of the FOI law by the independent Burn's Commission in 2015-2016.

The government also agreed to a series of other recommendations, including greater proactive publication of salaries; and publication of more statistics on FOI performance for bodies with more than 100 employees.[2]

The guidance would make for more consistent statistics on FOI across the UK (rather than the limited monitored bodies that publish statistics at present). It would also limit the time allowed for extensions of the 20-day FOI period and bring about more proactive publication of salary details for senior board level and equivalents - though what this means may vary. The S.14 explanation would make clear when the 'vexatious' requests section can and should be used, for requests that have the potential to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress. The government argues that this fits with a more proactive publication of data.[3]

Status

Midterm: Limited

The Code was published but was 16 months behind schedule. According to the government, although there were no particular obstacles, it took time to get the different parts of the code right, especially as the government wanted to create a comprehensive document.[4] CSOs felt that the delay on FOI showed the law was not a priority. Some of the recommendations were downgraded from what the inquiry called for, as some of the original ones required primary legislation (notably the amended section 77 that covers what happens if a public authority attempts to destroy documents). Other recommendations were not included, such as the online publication of details of past requests, answers by any

public body with more than 100 people or limiting the time available for internal reviews of requests to 20 days.[5]

End of term: Complete

The government issued the consultation and draft ideas for the paper by the end of the action plan cycle, albeit more than a year behind schedule. An updated and expanded Code was then issued slightly outside of the cycle in July 2018.[6] While not all departments had yet published the pay and benefits data outlined in the action plan, several government bodies were in the process of doing so and many intend to publish their data in the coming months.[7] The Campaign for Freedom of Information (CFOI) argued that the earlier draft code was "weaker in key respects than the 2004 version of the code it is intended to replace" and that "the new code should be substantially improved before it is introduced."[8] At least one of CFOI's concerns, about advice in vexatious and costly cases, appeared to have been improved. However, there were continued concerns from CFOI regarding how certain parts of the old code were missing, including sections of the code that had played an important part in more than 120 appeal rulings.[9]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Did not change

The commitment aimed to open government by publishing statistics about FOI itself and make the request process clearer, thus generating new information.

The new Code, as promised under the commitment, clarified and updated areas around access, cost limits and vexatious requests, as well as guidance on contractual data. Two important additions were included: One concerned publication of pay and hospitality data for senior management in public institutions (defined as 'staff at Director level and above'), and another mandated that all bodies with more than '100 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees...should, as a matter of best practice, publish details of their performance on handling requests for information under the Act'. This builds a far greater picture of FOI performance, given that at present only selected central government and monitored bodies collate data. The commitment had a marginal impact on access to information. As of the time of writing, only a few local authorities had published data on FOI requests, though experts believed that the timing of the publication of the code meant most bodies would begin to publish the data in April or May 2019.[10]

The government did not promote any greater public involvement during the implementation of this commitment.

Carried Forward?

This commitment will continue outside of the action plan into 2019 and beyond. The IRM's midterm report recommended that the Code be implemented as soon as possible, along with Lord Burn's original recommendations.

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[1] Department for Constitutional Affairs, Guidance: Code of practice on the discharge of public authorities functions under part 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-on-the-discharge-of-public-authorities-functions-under-part-1-of-the-freedom-of-information-act-2000

[2] Independent Commission on Freedom of Information Report, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/504139/Independent_Freedom_of_Information_Commission_Report.pdf, and Cabinet Office, 'Written statement to Parliament: Open and transparent government', https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/open-and-transparent-government

[3] Interview with Rachel Anderson, Head of FOI, Cabinet Office, 13 September 2017.

[4] Rachel Anderson, Head of FOI, Cabinet Office, 13 September 2017.

[5] Email exchange with Maurice Frankel, Director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information; Interview with Maurice Frankel, Director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information, 26 September 2017.
[6] Code issued in July 2018 (is this outside commitment?) Cabinet Office (2018), Freedom of Information Code of Practice, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-of-information-code-of-practice
[7] IRM researcher correspondence with FOI experts Paul Gibbons and Lynn Wyeth, February 2019.
[8] CFOI (2018), Revised Freedom of Information Code of Practice,
5 February 2018, https://www.cfoi.org.uk/latest-news/page/2/
[9] See comments by CFOI on the draft 4th action plan
[10] Correspondence with FOI experts Paul Gibbons and Lynn Wyeth, February 2019. One council, Leicester City Council, is already publishing it, http://data.leicester.gov.uk/explore/dataset/freedom-of-information-foi-code/table/?sort-period

9. Identifying and publishing core data assets

Commitment Text: *We will create a high-quality national information infrastructure, making government data more secure and easier to find, store and access.*

Objective: *To refine our national information infrastructure in order to support publishing and ensure data is good enough for people and organisations in all sectors of the economy and society to use and build on; this includes exploring options for the creation of an open address register.*

Status quo: *Our data.gov.uk portal has been instrumental in enabling the UK government to open up over 27,000 datasets since its launch in 2010. However, despite considerable recent progress, government data can still be difficult to find and use.*

Too much government data is still held in organisational silos, which are costly and inefficient to maintain. The data we currently make available openly does not always meet users' needs in terms of format, quality and timeliness. At the same time, data publishing processes across government do not fit a standard model. They are not always automated or embedded in 'business as usual', which can mean there is sometimes duplication and overlap in the data government holds.

We want to unlock the power of data to transform public services, drive greater transparency and innovation, and empower civil society. To do this we need to continue to develop our national information infrastructure so that it is as helpful as it can be for all data users.

Ambition: *To refine our national information infrastructure in order to support publishing and ensure data is good enough for people and organisations in all sectors of the economy and society to use and build on; this includes exploring options for the creation of an open address register.*

We need to continue to establish the infrastructure to make finding and accessing good quality data as frictionless as possible. To improve the quality of government data, we need to improve data collection. Within the public sector we need to make more data more easily queried through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) while still supporting bulk downloads. This will benefit digital services and improve operational and policy decision-making. Increasingly this will mean those holding data acting as custodians for that data. It will increasingly mean creating open registers, with custodians who understand the importance of their role and the rules under which they should operate.

We are committed to reviewing our existing open data infrastructure to ensure it is fit for the purpose of enabling citizens, businesses and the public sector to locate and access high-quality open data assets from across government. So we will engage with data users and refresh our existing open data architecture to ensure it meets user needs going forward.

We also need to ensure that core reference data is increasingly open and available without friction. This will include exploring options to create an open and freely available national address register, and ensuring the continued and improved availability of high-quality open data following any potential changes in the ownership of public data-holding bodies. An effective infrastructure requires metadata, standardised approaches for accessing data, appropriate institutional arrangements, skills, formalised obligations and effective co-ordination.

Milestones:

1. *Create a register of the fields used within canonical registers to ensure consistency of nomenclature*
2. *Create a linked ecosystem of trusted, resilient and accessible canonical data stores (known as registers), starting with data categories for which the user need is greatest (countries, local authorities, schools and companies) and implementing these during the period of this action plan*
3. *Through a technical working group, adopt existing and define and agree new common and, where possible, open data standards and approaches based on user needs*

4. *Explore options for the creation of an open address register underpinned by an open and authoritative identifier to enable anyone to cite or find a property or premises in the UK*
5. *Develop a better understanding of the data discovery needs of internal and external users of government data, to evolve data.gov.uk and inform the development of data discovery tools and services, with refreshed tools implemented during the period of this action plan*
6. *Report on the effects on the UK data infrastructure of any actions to change the ownership or contract out the operation of key public registers*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office (Government Digital Service)

Supporting institutions: All government departments, mySociety, The Open Data Institute

Start date: May 2016
End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
9. Overall				✔	✔	✔		✔			✔			✔	✔				✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment built on previous initiatives designed to improve the UK government's data infrastructure. It aimed to strengthen the usability and integrity of data and offer improved tools to search for it while publishing more data as registers. It also promised to create an open address register for UK addresses, which has been long sought after by campaigners and activists.[1]

Status

Midterm: Limited

During the first year of implementation, officials made substantial progress toward a timely completion of the commitment. According to the government, generally progress has been good, though the backroom nature of some of it made it hard for CSOs to judge. The government pointed out that some departments were open to the new ideas and others less so.[2] There was varied digital awareness and understanding of the importance of good data.

There has been less progress on the creation of an open address register, data that is seen as vital for a whole range of local services. The previous government made this commitment as part of a budget announcement in 2016. The issue of open address presents a series of complex legal and technical problems and the government was to explore options rather than make definitive commitment.[3] The emphasis shifted to geo-spatial data more generally

because the new May government committed, in its 2017 manifesto, to a new land data body, bringing together land data dispersed across several bodies in the UK.[4] Digital activists have long sought an open address register, and this change was likely to be a disappointment,[5] especially because some bodies have already experimented with a crowdsourced version.[6] Data.gov.uk was on track in terms of improving users' ability to search the government data portal. An experimental beta site named FIND was developed in August 2017, which was due to be made public soon after testing.[7]

End of Term: Substantial

By the end of the cycle, there was further progress in several areas. 42 registers were listed as being 'ready to use' i.e. live (up from 17 in the last update) with 36 more in progress (down from 45).[8]

The open address data aspect of the commitment changed substantially during the two years. In June 2018 (end of cycle) the Cabinet Office announced the release of OS MasterMap data in conjunction with Ordnance Survey, a set that includes important building blocks such as property boundaries. An accompanying government press claimed this would boost the economy by £130m a year and explained it would be carried out by the new Geospatial Commission.[9]

The Open Data Institute argued that 'this is significant, not only for us geospatial data fans but for the UK economy and its citizens'. It explained that Master Map data will be open for all to share and will contain key data such as 'property boundaries' as well as street-level data, 'Topographic Identifiers (TOIDs)', that can be linked to other datasets and used as building blocks for data on buildings, roads or other landmarks.[10]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Did not change

The one clear area of greater access to information and technology and innovation is registers. As Computerworld outlined in August 2018, registers represented one clear positive of the government's openness programme. It provides 'a reliable source of up-to-date government data that is quick and easy to source' across topics that 'range from allergens referenced in Food Standards Agency food safety alerts to lists of Jobcentre offices'. It has also been used to innovate: so far it has been the basis for a series of innovations, including being 'used to create the Cabinet Office's GOV.UK Pay system and the Parliamentary Digital Service's E-petitions service'.[11] It is too early to tell the effects of the other large-scale innovation on Master Map, such as on map data. However, so far, there is no evidence the commitment has encouraged greater participation.

Carried Forward?

This commitment will continue outside of the action plan into 2019 and beyond. The IRM midterm report recommended that the government continue to explore and innovate with access and obtain external scrutiny of their actions. This appears to be, at least in part, the role of the new Geospatial Commission.

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[1] Peter Wells, 'Open addresses: will the address wars ever end?', https://hackernoon.com/open-addresses-will-the-address-wars-ever-end-f1241bd24283
[2] Interview with Lawrence Hopper and Lois Taylor, Cabinet Office, 26 August 2017.
[3] Peter Wells, 'Open addresses: will the address wars ever end?', https://hackernoon.com/open-addresses-will-the-address-wars-ever-end-f1241bd24283
[4] UK Authority, 'Conservatives Plan for New Land Data Body, http://www.ukauthority.com/news/7177/conservatives-plan-for-new-land-data-body
[5] 2016 Government Digital Service, 'An Open Address Register' (23 March 2016), https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2016/03/23/an-open-address-register/, and ODI crowdsourced data list, Open Data

Institute, 'Free and Open Address List Launches Today', https://theodi.org/news/free-and-open-address-list-launches-today-open-addresses-uk-calls-for-individuals-and-organisations-to-get-involved; Interview with Lawrence Hopper and Lois Taylor, Cabinet Office, 26 August 2017.

[6] Peter Wells, 'Open addresses: will the address wars ever end?', https://hackernoon.com/open-addresses-will-the-address-wars-ever-end-f1241bd24283, and 'Budget 2016: The UK must take every opportunity to strengthen data infrastructure', https://theodi.org/news/budget-2016-the-uk-must-take-every-opportunity-to-strengthen-data-infrastructure

[7] Interview with Lawrence Hopper and Lois Taylor, Cabinet Office, 26 August 2017.

[8] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.

[9] UK Government (2018), https://www.gov.uk/government/news/unlocking-of-governments-mapping-and-location-data-to-boost-economy-by-130m-a-year; and Open Data Institute (2018) and on the New Geospatial commission itself, https://theodi.org/article/what-will-the-uks-geospatial-commission-look-like/

[10] Open Data Institute (2018), https://theodi.org/article/ordnance-survey-and-other-data-stewards-must-innovate-to-keep-up-with-the-private-sector/

[11] Computer World (2018), What is the UK government's open data strategy?, 7 September 2018, https://www.computerworlduk.com/data/how-uk-government-uses-open-data-3683332/

10. Involving data users in shaping the future of open data

Commitment text: *We will ensure government's work to modernise and improve the management, use and availability of data assets is informed by active and wide-ranging collaboration with current and potential data users.*

Objective: *To engage widely with current and potential data users in the development of the Government Data Programme and government's broader open data agenda, in order to ensure that our work meets users' needs and that limited resources are focused on areas of highest priority.*

Status quo: *Effective engagement with users of government data – whether in the public sector, private sector or civil society – is essential to shaping the future of open data. It is also key to the success of the Government Data Programme and our ability to drive innovation, public service, reform and transparency through the better use of data.*

Since our first OGP National Action Plan we have learned a huge amount through our engagement with data users. The feedback we have received has enabled government to prioritise its efforts to open up more data. We have built a clear understanding of the highest value datasets that are not yet freely and openly available, giving us a strong platform on which to continue to pursue greater open access where appropriate. And we have heard clearly from stakeholders that open data quality and reliability, not just quantity, is crucially important. This has helped us to develop a Government Data Programme to address the need for modernised data infrastructure and capability across government, driving better quality data for all users.

We have opened up a huge range of government datasets, while strengthening citizens' rights to request data in open and reusable format through amendments to the Freedom of Information Act and the introduction of the Re-use of Public Sector Information regulations. But we can be clearer and more proactive in raising awareness of the routes by which data access requests can be made available, and public bodies' duties in responding to them.

Ambition: *We need a wide range of engagement opportunities for users of government open data – and, crucially, those who currently do not use government data but stand to benefit from doing so. These will range from public events and speaking engagements, to online collaboration and subject-specific working groups. As government's use of data develops and expands, this engagement will need to be active and on going, and must involve the full spectrum of holders and users of government data. We must also be open and transparent about the discussions we have held and the outcomes of those discussions.*

Milestones:

1. *Develop a strong, ongoing and collaborative conversation with data users across sectors and specialisms, particularly through working groups and meet-ups on specific aspects of the government data agenda, to inform and challenge the Government Data Programme*
2. *Ensure government policy and the Government Data Programme is informed and challenged by leading external thinkers through an active Data Steering Group*
3. *Develop our partnership with the Open Data Institute to help government connect with data businesses, innovators and civil society*
4. *Build cross-government engagement and leadership on data management and open data, and publish plans for departmental engagement with data users and new open data commitments, through a cross- government Data Leaders Network*
5. *Maintain active and wide-ranging engagement with civil society groups to ensure the Government Data Programme supports better data access and use for smaller civil society organisations*
6. *Maintain regular updates on the government's open data policies online through blog posts and social media - allowing users to interact with these policies as they develop and post suggestions for improvements*

7. *Explore further channels with which to engage users on open data issues, such as the Open Government Forum, Google Communities or Slack – these would have the advantage of real time discussion and problem solving, as well as a more direct link between government and data users*

8. *Engage with citizens, civil society, private and public sectors to develop an ethical framework for the use of data science techniques in government, including through public engagement events and an interactive online engagement tool*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office (Government Digital Service)

Supporting institutions: all government departments, mySociety, The Open Data Institute

Start date: May 2016

End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
10. Overall			✔		✔	✔		✔		✔				✔	✔				✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed to improve and deepen engagement with civil society and expert networks in open data, given the sometimes-limited involvement by CSOs and limited means of doing so. Previous action plans had highlighted the need for wider involvement and suggested experimenting with new ideas. The commitment included using a series of pre-established bodies to monitor and review activity, as well as activities to extend and innovate on how government and civil society interact.

Status

Midterm: Limited

At the end of the first year of implementation, the government continuously engaged with data users in various ways.[1] These included attending events at the London Open Data Institute and interacting with user requests made via the data.gov.uk portal.[2] The UK government also co-sponsored the fourth Open Data Camp in Cardiff in February 2017.[3] There had also been continuous informal interaction through the Cabinet Office and through other departments.[4]

Parts of the commitment were incomplete or delayed. The Data Steering Group met every three months until September 2016.[5] The Data Leaders Network met monthly, though meetings were not listed.[6] The government has experimented with new channels and used 'Open Knowledge Forums during the exercise to create the Global Open Data Index'. It has

also experimented with a cross-government Slack channel and Google group, as well as continuing regular internal meet-ups of its data community.[7] Some CSOs felt the interaction was not as full as it could have been online.[8]

In June 2017, it was reported the UK government was clamping down on Slack use by officials over fear of FOIs opening them up or leaks, which may inhibit use.[9] In May 2016, the government launched the first version of its Data Science Ethical Framework "intended to give civil servants guidance on conducting data science projects [work with data using scientific approaches], and the confidence to innovate with data".[10] It called on civil society and experts to help develop it but there has been no sign of any further activity since.

End of Term: Substantial

There have been a number of moves forward in several areas that mean the commitment is now substantially implemented. Informal activities continued with a series of data user related activities, blogs and steering group meetings, including one joint meeting with data leaders and 'working with academics, civil society and the wider industry'.[11,12] Most importantly in the final phase, a new data ethics framework was published in June 2018. According to the Minister responsible, the new version focused on the need for co-operation across specialisms.[13]

The new framework is intended to 'help policy and practitioners better understand the core ethical expectations for public sector data science projects, and to tailor their offerings appropriately'. It is intended to set out 'ethical principles' while providing guidance and acting as 'a workbook'.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Marginal

The commitment has certainly succeeded in increasing CSO and expert engagement. In terms of access to information, the continued work improving the quality and consistency of statistics, as well as pushing organisational changes such as 'Reproducible Analytical Pipeline'(which allows for easy production and reproduction of statistics), made for more open and systematic data. The publicising of the government work with data and design of the two versions of the ethical framework may have encouraged innovation across government but the IRM found no evidence of its effect. Given some feeling among CSOs that there could have been more engagement, and some of the limitations, it is listed as marginal.

Carried Forward?

This commitment will continue outside of action plan into 2019 and beyond.

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[1] Cabinet Office, Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: July 2017 Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017) pre-publication passed to author.
[2] Open Data Institute 'Events', https://theodi.org/events.
[3] Data Blog, Gov.uk 'Looking Forward to Open Data Camp 2017, https://data.blog.gov.uk/2017/02/20/looking-forward-to-open-data-camp-2017/
[4] Interview with Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017; Cabinet Office 'Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-18: Mid-term Self Assessment Report' (UK government report September 2017) passed to author pre-publication.
[5] Gov.uk, 'Data Steering Group', https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/data-steering-group
[6] Interview with Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[7] Government Data Service Technology Blog, 'Technology at GDS: Join The Conversation', https://gdstechnology.blog.gov.uk/join-the-conversation/, and UK Government Digital 'Slack Channel', ukgovernmentdigital.slack.com; Interview with Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[8] Cabinet Office, Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: July 2017 Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017) pre-publication passed to author.

[9] Civil Service World, 'Not picking up the Slack: Whitehall instant messaging clampdown reveals lack of trust in civil servants', https://www.civilserviceworld.com/articles/opinion/not-picking-slack-whitehall-instant-messaging-clampdown-reveals-lack-trust-civil

[10] Cabinet Office, 'Guidance: Data Science Ethical Framework, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-science-ethical-framework, and Cabinet Office, 'Speech Data Science Ethical Framework launch: Matt Hancock speech', https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/data-science-ethical-framework-launch-matt-hancock-speech

[11] UK government (2018), 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan: April 2018 Commitment Progress Updates, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-open-government-action-plan-april-2018-commitment-progress-updates/; UK government (2017), Updating the data science ethics framework, https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2017/11/27/updating-the-data-science-ethical-framework/

[12] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.

[13] DCMS (2018), Guidance: Data Ethics Framework, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-ethics-framework/data-ethics-framework

11. Better use of data assets

Commitment Text: *We will encourage and support data-driven techniques in policy and service delivery across government departments and encourage the better use of open data in the economy and civil society.*

Objective: *Through our Government Data Programme, we plan to improve the availability, quality and use of government data and make it easier for that data to be used appropriately and effectively, both with and beyond government.*

Status quo: *Since our first OGP National Action Plan we have made considerable progress in opening up government data. Our data.gov.uk portal has enabled us to identify and open up over 27,000 publicly held data sets, fuelling the development of innovative apps, new insights for public service delivery and greater government transparency.*

Doing this has clearly shown the potential for value creation and enhanced public services, as more and more data is made available. The act of opening up data itself improves quality, as data users and publishers respond to incentives to improve it.

Having made this progress, there is now more we can do within government to make better use of the data assets we have, and to make more, better quality data openly and freely available, in order to drive service improvement, economic growth and transparency. To do that, we need to modernise our data infrastructure, and engage actively with data users to understand the demand for open data, as described in the parallel commitments. We also need to overcome legal and organisational barriers that prevent effective data use within the public sector for clearly defined purposes in the public interest, while being clear that identifiable data will never be made open and strict controls will govern the use of any such data. And we need to build the skills and capabilities to make best use of the data we hold.

Ambition: *Better use of data across government will drive up data quality, in turn improving the quality and reliability of the data we are able to make freely and openly available.*

As a result of this work, we expect to see:

- *Government increasingly re-using its own data to enable better operational, policy and economic decisions and drive up data quality*
- *Better cross-government platforms and improved services for citizens*
- *Better quality data available for innovation in the economy and wider society*
- *More accessible open data that is easy for citizens and civil society groups, as well as businesses and large organisations, to use*
- *Clear ethical and legal frameworks to build public support for the better use of data in government*

Milestones:

1. *Pursue legislative changes to enable better access to government data for defined purposes across organisational boundaries in public services and between different levels of government working with internal and external experts and consulting with the public at key stages*
2. *Publish departmental data plans for improving data quality, opening up more data and ensuring continuing engagement with external stakeholders*
3. *Monitor and publish progress against departmental data plans*
4. *Help non-data specialist policy and operational staff across government to understand analytical approaches and the transformational power of data*

5. *Equip government analysts with the latest data science tools and skills, through a programme of work led by the Office for National Statistics*
6. *Showcase best practice in data science through cross government projects, finding opportunities to bring in external expertise to inform the design and delivery of the projects*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office (Government Digital Service) and Office of National Statistics

Supporting institutions: All government departments, Democratise, mySociety, The Open Data institute.

Start date: May 2016

End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
11. Overall			✔		✔	✔		✔		✔					✔	✔		✔			

Commitment Aim:

The purpose of this commitment was for the government to make better use of its own data, improving access, skills and the quality of data within government, while building public support and engagement outside. The commitment consisted of overlapping goals and milestones including publishing data plans, training staff and raising awareness through showcases and examples.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

At the end of the first year of implementation, the promised legislation, named the Digital Economy Act 2017, had been passed.[1] In a speech in February 2017, the Chief Executive of the UK Civil Service, John Manzoni, explained that the new law 'provides a robust legal framework for sharing data between public authorities, where there is a clear public need and benefit'.[2] According to the government's July 2017 update, the work was under way to develop further four Codes of Practice and other regulations that would be approved by an affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament.[3] There was concern from CSOs over the provisions for data sharing and the extent to which such processes would be transparent and protect privacy across a range of areas, from details of debt to access to pornography.[4] The political events of 2016 and 2017, such as the Brexit referendum and the June 2017 General Election, delayed the plan for departmental data plans. It has been decided that individual department plans will now be merged into wider strategic plans.[5]

The government stated in July 2017 to be making good progress on outstanding milestones.[6] The cross-government Data Advisory Board is overseeing a programme of data-enabled transformation as part of its work on showcasing best practices in data science. In 2017, the programme included experiments with care home quality data and pensions.[7] For specialists within the government there has also been a continuous series of community building and showcasing events, as seen on the Government Digital service blogs.[8] Officials have also organised events to help non-specialists[9] with a cross-government training programme through the Government Digital Academy in four different locations.[10]

End of term: Complete

Though parts of the commitment were continuous and rolling, the central parts, such as the legislation, were complete and departmental plans have now been rolled into single plans.[11] Towards the end of the action plan cycle, the government made a strong push over data policy. It transferred responsibility to a new department (the Department of Culture, Media and Sport) which announced a new strategy led by a new centre for data ethics and excellence.[12] The Treasury also published a discussion paper on the economic value of data.[13] While designed to encourage debate, one point about open data caused some concern, as it appeared to move back on the government's commitment to open data, when it stated that 'this does not mean that open data is appropriate or beneficial for all forms of data... rather than rely on an open/closed distinction, data access should be seen as a spectrum, with different degrees of data openness'. This caused some concern to civil society, who saw it as a questioning of one of the central ideas of open data.[14]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change
Civic Participation: Did Not Change

The commitment was based mainly on legislation, alongside training and ongoing work inside of government, and so was focused on internal change. This focus meant no new information was released or new areas opened as a result of the commitment. Nor did any parts of the commitment lead to wider engagement or greater civic participation.

Carried Forward?

The UK government's consultation on the national action plan for Open Government 2018-2020 proposed a further commitment around 'public participation in digital and data policy development' that covers similar themes and aims (though this is a suggestion and not government policy). This includes committing to international discussions on open data, a new Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, and continued wide-ranging dialogue around the Government's National Data Strategy.[15]

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[1] Legislation.gov.uk, 'Digital Economy Act 2017', https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/30/contents
[2] Cabinet Office (John Manzoni), 'Speech: Big data in government: the challenges and opportunities', https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/big-data-in-government-the-challenges-and-opportunities
[3] UK government commitment update for July 2017.
[4] Panopticon, 'Digital Economy Bill made law', https://panopticonblog.com/2017/05/03/digital-economy-bill-made-law/
[5] Interview with Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[6] Cabinet Office, Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: July 2017 Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017) pre-publication passed to author.
[7] Government Digital Service, 'Guidance Data Science Accelerator Programme', https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-science-accelerator-programme, and Government Data Blog, 'The Data Science Accelerator: pensions, patient journeys and predicting public order', https://data.blog.gov.uk/2017/04/11/the-data-science-accelerator-pensions-patient-journeys-and-predicting-public-order/

[8] Government Digital Service, 'Building capability and community through the Government Data Science Partnership', https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/20/building-capability-and-community-through-the-government-data-science-partnership/
[9] Government Digital Service, 'Data literacy: helping non-data specialists make the most of data science', https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2016/04/27/data-literacy-helping-non-data-specialists-make-the-most-of-data-science/
[10] Government Digital Service, 'GDS Academy', https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/digital-academy
[11] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.
[12] Freeguard, G (2018), 'DCMS is the right place for data policy – but the next step is a government data strategy', 4 April 2018; Computerweekly (2018), DCMS sets out plans for National Data Strategy, 13 June 2018.
[13] Her Majesty's Treasury (2018), The Economic Value of Data, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731349/20180730_HMT_Discussion_Paper_-_The_Economic_Value_of_Data.pdf
[14] Computerworld, What is the UK government's open data strategy?, https://www.computerworlduk.com/data/how-uk-government-uses-open-data-3683332/.
[15] UK Government (2018), Consultation draft of the National Action Plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XGUs6X8EHSOm00U-rX2_8cAoq7MnDsBjnetQeW0vnzA/edit#heading=h.y5i6179pcs8d

12. GOV.UK

Commitment text: *Assess opportunities for digital consultation tools, rebuild navigation to bring guidance and policy together by topic, provide APIs for government content and provide a full version history of every published page.*

Objective: *Use GOV.UK to help all of government become more participative, open and accountable to its users.*

Status quo: *Centralising all government web publishing to GOV.UK has already radically improved access to information and public accountability. Information including departmental plans, transparency data and public consultations is now more consistently presented and easier to find in a single place.*

But there is enormous potential to do more. The vision for GOV.UK over the next two parliaments is to make government work for users - using the opportunity of a single shared platform to increase openness, accountability and civic participation right across government.

Ambition: *While GOV.UK has become the best place to find government services and information, it's not yet the best place it can be. GOV.UK has brought government web presences together and we now need to ensure that it really does work for all users and this means, among many other things, ensuring that government is participative, open and accountable.*

Milestones:

1. *Complete a discovery project to identify opportunities for improved digital consultation tools, identifying next steps (May 2016 September 2016)*
2. *Improve tagging, navigation, search and notification systems on GOV.UK, so publishers can begin to join together related content (including both guidance and policy) and transactions as coherent services (2017*
3. *Provide APIs for government content (April 2017 March 2018)*
4. *Provide a full version history of every published page (April 2017 March2018)*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office (Government Digital Service)

Supporting institutions: Democratic Society, Involve, Natural Resource Governance, Institute, The Open Data Institute

Start date: May 2016

End date: March 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm End of Term	Did It Open Government?

	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
12. Overall				✔	✔			✔		✔					✔	✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

Launched in 2012, GOV.UK is the platform for the websites of all government departments and many other agencies and public bodies.[1] The commitment aimed to improve the existing platform to make it more 'participative, open and accountable', by improving navigation, publishing full histories on sites and providing Application Programming Interfaces (API) for content (making it easier for developers to use the data to build applications).

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The implementation process has engaged users through set workshops, publicity via blogs, a short survey and informal encouragement that users get in touch.[2] According to the July 2017 update, milestones 1 and 2 were complete.[3]

The team has worked to make data both easier to publish internally and easier to find externally, through a series of workshops and continuous engagement with users.[4] This includes the development of a new design for the homepage making it easier to publish and label data and creating personalised reminders for those working on the site to take particular actions. The work on APIs is under way and the team has finished a 'discovery' into full history publication.[5] CSOs said that there had been less progress and, where progress was made, it was not well communicated. Some organisations expressed concern that certain milestones were pushed further into the future.[6]

End of term: Complete

In April 2018 GOV.UK launched its new public API, the final part of the commitment left incomplete from the midterm report. The API was designed in an open and public way (so anyone interested could see the entire process by which it was created) and drew on the needs of users that were gathered from the blog as it went along.[7] The team behind it explained that this was a public API meaning others could publish and republish data more easily.[8] As the work on discovery has been finished, the commitment is now complete.[9]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Marginal

Before the commitment some parts of the operation of GOV.UK (such as the API) were hard to access or not working as well as they could. Much of the work in the commitment was around infrastructure and was a continuation of the work from the previous plan. The commitment has improved access to information by making more information available and making it easier to find, use and re-use via the new API. The continual work by the GOV.UK

team in engaging with users, through a series of workshops, consultations and informal contacts, was evidence of a minor increase in civic participation.

Carried Forward?

The commitment was not carried forward, though the IRM researcher recommends that innovations with GOV.UK continue in some form.

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[1] Gov.uk, 'Welcome to GOV.UK', https://www.gov.uk/. The website won design of the year in 2013: The Guardian, "Direct and well-mannered' government website named design of the year', https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/apr/16/government-website-design-of-year

[2] Blog update, especially the section on the improvements to the 'common user journey', https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2017/10/16/what-we-delivered-in-the-first-3-months-of-our-new-roadmap/; and asking the public for ideas on the AP update, https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2017/09/11/a-public-api-for-gov-uk-content-inviting-expressions-of-interest/

[3] Cabinet Office, Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18: July 2017 Commitment Progress Updates (commitment update for July 2017), pre-publication passed to author.

[4] Blog update, especially this section on the improvements to the 'common user journey'. https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2017/10/16/what-we-delivered-in-the-first-3-months-of-our-new-roadmap/

[5] Data Blog, '8 things I learned about data discoveries', https://data.blog.gov.uk/2017/01/09/8-things-i-learned-about-data-discoveries/

[6] Interview with Michelle Brook, Democratic Society, 22 September 2017.

[7] Inside.Gov (2018), What we learnt from creating API documentation, https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2018/04/04/what-we-learnt-from-creating-api-documentation

[8] Inside GOV.UK (2018), 'What we learnt from creating API documentation', 4 April 2018, https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2018/04/04/what-we-learnt-from-creating-api-documentation/

[9] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.

13. Ongoing collaborative approach to open government reform

Commitment Text: *Identify, develop and implement robust and ambitious open government commitments on an ongoing basis through collaboration with partners in governments, parliaments and civil society across the UK.*

Objective: *Ensure the UK Open Government Partnership (OGP) remains a key platform for ongoing dialogue, collaboration and open government reform, with governments, parliaments and civil society across the UK.*

Status quo: *The development of this action plan has again demonstrated the benefits of an open and collaborative approach to policy making. Through working with partners from government, Parliament and civil society across the UK, the plan has benefited from a large range of ideas, challenge, expertise, creativity and energy.*

The result is a more ambitious and comprehensive set of commitments than would have been developed by government alone. The OGP has helped to inspire and focus government and civil society collaboration on open government reform in the UK. However, the two-year timescale of an action plan can mean that:

- *The political or policy window for potential commitments is missed*
- *Activity and collaboration happens in bursts rather than consistently*
- *The OGP process happens in parallel to other domestic or multilateral processes*

We want to address these weaknesses and build on the success of the OGP in the UK by embedding an ongoing collaborative approach to open government reform.

Ambition: *As well as being the beneficiaries of open government, citizens and civil society are key to bringing the transformation about.*

We want the OGP in the UK to be the platform for ongoing dialogue, collaboration and open government reform, and this partnership to include increasing numbers of citizens, civil society organisations and public institutions.

To support this we will:

- *Be approaching this action plan as a rolling plan, where new commitments are developed and added over its lifespan*
- *Continue to work collaboratively across governments, parliaments and the wider public sector in all nations of the UK*
- *Broaden engagement with civil society and citizens to ensure that we are focussing efforts on issues that matter most*
- *Engage with civil society and citizens on an ongoing basis, having honest conversations about progress across open government and collaboratively identifying, developing and implementing new reforms*

Milestones:

1. *Government and civil society will work together to develop and communicate an approach to implementation that supports transparency on progress of implementing commitments and provides forums for engagement at all levels to hold government to account*
2. *We will identify priority stakeholders and policy areas to inform an approach to broadening engagement and the priority focus for future commitments, including identifying platforms for communicating open government policy*

3. *The UK Open Government Civil Society Network will review its governance, terms of reference and working practices to ensure that it is able to continue to effectively build, involve and represent a broad membership*
4. *Commitments will be updated with new milestones as necessary to provide further clarity on agreed approaches to take work forward work*
5. *New commitments will be published at a minimum of two points in the two-year plan cycle. These will be developed through a co-creation process with civil society, meeting the OGP criteria for starred commitments*

Responsible institution: Cabinet Office and Involve

Supporting institutions: Involve UK government departments and UK Parliament. In consultation with colleagues in Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Government and Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. UK Open Government Network, National Council of Voluntary Organisation (NCVO)

Start date: May 2016

End date: June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
13. Overall				✔	✔	✔				✔					✔	✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment was designed to strengthen the joint government-civil society OGP process in the UK. As the commitment text points out, some commitments or proposals can be lost because of the two-year window for implementation. While many of those involved saw relations as collaborative, there is still room for improvement.[1]

The commitment was shared between the UK Cabinet Office, the coordinating CSO Involve and UK devolved bodies, and involves a series of changes including an agreement to close working between government and CSOs, extending the network and creating a 'rolling' programme of commitments and milestones to maintain momentum.[2] The key was to help identify priority stakeholders and bring them in.[3]

Status

Midterm: Substantial

Following a series of meetings, CSOs and government released a joint statement to:

- Collaborate in identifying, developing and implementing new reforms throughout the period of the action plan;

- Engage on an ongoing basis, having honest conversations about progress across open government; and
- Broaden the number of citizens and civil society organisations who actively engage in open government activities and who hold government to account. [4]

The milestone on identifying areas for new commitments with new stakeholders led to a discussion in November 2016, during which civil society representatives highlighted the importance of reflecting the priorities of citizens and the government.[5] The Cabinet Office published an open record of events and key publications, but it covers events only into 2017. The review of the UK Open Government Civil Society Network was completed and overseen by CSO Involve.[6]

In December 2016, the OGP process was rolled out to include a further four commitments for Northern Ireland, nine for Wales and one for Scotland, more than doubling the number of commitments and broadening involvement by civil society actors in the respective countries.[7] This was not what some of the CSOs imagined. Some organisations saw the commitment as a way of introducing new, perhaps symbolic, policies outside of the formal OGP-IRM process to maintain momentum.[8]

End of Term: Complete

Since the midterm review, officials have organised regular meetings of the multi-stakeholder group every four months, as well as an annual meeting with the minister responsible for OGP. Meetings were regularly attended by the CSO representatives. In addition, the UK government emphasised the importance of informal contacts with leads and individuals which, though hard to capture, had played an important part in the overall process. The UK government and civil society representatives were also part of a 10 April meeting in Scotland - see the update on Scotland for more details.[9]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Did Not Change

The commitment was designed to improve co-ordination between CSOs and government and maintain the momentum for change across the two-year period. Though the commitment did not directly open government, the inclusion of all four nations of the UK in the process and the subsequent effects, leading to stronger networks, more commitments and a cross-UK summit on open government led by Scotland, all had an impact indirectly on access to information by highlighting the policy and generating discussion and ideas. There was also openness on a more day-to-day basis with the publication of meetings, meeting notes and a timeline of government action in a more systematic way than had happened previously in other action plans.

Carried Forward?

The commitment was not carried forward. The UK government's consultation on the national action plan for Open Government 2018-2020 proposed a further commitment around 'public participation in digital and data policy development' that covers similar themes and aims (though this is a suggestion and not government policy) .[10]

[1] Cabinet Office, Self-assessment online survey - summary of results, online survey September 2017.
[2] Meeting between CSO and government, telephone conference call, July 2017.
[3] Interview with Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[4] Tim Hughes, 'Statement on ongoing government and civil society collaboration on open government', http://www.opengovernment.org.uk/2016/10/07/statement-on-ongoing-government-and-civil-society-collaboration-on-open-government/
[5] UK government, 'OGP UK National Action Plan 2016/18 Commitment progress update, December 2016.

[6] Tim Hughes, 'Terms of Reference of the UK Open Government Network', http://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/terms-of-reference-of-the-uk-open-government-network/
[7] Interview with Thom Townsend and William Gerry, Cabinet Office, 14 September 2017.
[8] Meeting between CSO and government, telephone conference call, July 2017.
[9] Interview with Katie Holder and Thom Townsend, DCMS, 8 August 2018.
[10] UK Government (2018), Consultation draft of the national action plan for Open Government 2018 – 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XGUs6X8EHSOm00U-rX2_8cAoq7MnDsBjnetQeW0vnzA/edit#heading=h.y5i6179pcs8d

Scotland

1. Effective Open Government for governments at all levels

Commitment Text: *Developing Effective Open Government for governments at all levels, through the outputs from one or more summit discussions.*

Main objective: *To share learning across the UK in order to establish the effective governance for Open Government commitments – through collaborative dialogue between governments, civil society and experts.*

Status quo: *in reviewing the first five years of Open Government Partnership a number of important themes emerged. Including the need to bring in new political leadership and open government innovations from all levels of government; to ensure that OGP commitments provide real improvement in people's lives. They also identified that only 2% of commitments worldwide are aimed at health or education or climate change.*

Scotland is one of 15 Pioneer governments at various levels worldwide who are developing action plans and working with OGP to consider these questions. Scotland will lead a collaborative discussion within the UK with governments, civil society and experts to identify how best to support the spread of Open Government.

The changing nature of democracy and varying levels of devolution in United Kingdom make it an

ideal testing ground for beginning to develop a robust framework, which enables OGP Action Plans to be developed at the level that is most effective for the people they serve. This will mean they are able to tackle some of the most significant societal issues in ways which will support the delivery of the sustainable development goals by 2030.

Ambition: *The result will be a draft framework to set out how OGP, governments and civil society can ensure that commitments are 'owned' at the level of government best able to deliver improvements while maintaining the core values and effective partnership with civil society.*

Milestone:

1. *One or more summit meetings between governments, civil society, OGP and experts to explore the issues collaboratively*

Responsible institution: Scottish Government

Supporting institutions: Governments of Wales, Northern Ireland and Cabinet Office for UK and Open Government Partnership OGP Civil Society Networks from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and UK

Start date: Spring 2017

End date: December 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding

Commitment Aim:

The commitment aimed to develop co-operation and share learning on open government reforms across the UK. Specifically, the commitment uses the OGP framework to create 'one or more summit meetings between governments, civil society, OGP and experts to explore the issues collaboratively' from across the four nations of the UK. Scotland has its own Freedom of Information (FOI) law that differs slightly from the UK-wide law.[1]

Overall, CSOs felt they were in a different place from a year previously when the pioneer status had been developed: for its promises of openness the Scottish government was 'pursuing a very traditional approach to policy in tight circles' and neglecting possibilities around the link between public service reform and openness that they had previously championed.[2]

Scotland is one of 15 participants of OGP's Subnational Government Pilot Program, created to recognise that 'open government innovations and reforms are happening at the local level where governments can engage more directly with citizens and many crucial public services are delivered with their own'.[3] As a consequence, Scotland has a separate action plan running on a different timeframe (see the Scottish action plan for more details).[4]

This commitment called for holding a summit (or summits) where equivalent Ministers from across UK governments (Britain, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland - as well as local government and elected mayors) can meet and discuss open government reforms with civil society. Ideally, the summit would encourage collaboration and, more specifically, develop ideas for the next action plan and future commitments.[5] However, the methodology to be used to address relevant issues was not specified.

Status

Midterm: Limited

The commitment initially had a deadline of December 2017, but discussions took longer. As of November 2017, the Scottish Government reported that it had not proven possible to find a suitable date within the calendar year. As of early 2018, a date had been set for April 2018, outside of the time period for this report, but within the time period of the action plan.[6]

End of Term: Complete

The first UK-wide summit took place on 10 April 2018. It included 45 'representatives of the UK, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland administrations, alongside local and regional governments and civil society representatives'.[7] There were speeches and presentations from village, city and national level government representatives, as well as OGP attendees.[8] As the post-summit analysis put it, the summit was intended as a space to discuss 'their ambitions and common challenges' from their different perspectives.[9] The attendees looked into collective work and how to maintain momentum and ambition, as well as how change works. Topics in particular focused on cross level attempts around 'openness, transparency and participation' and the need for 'collective action' around how to 'share learning and progress this agenda'. It was reported that there was an 'appetite in the room to reconvene in a year's time to continue the discussion, or potentially other meet ups within the nations to prepare'.[10]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic participation: Marginal

The meeting in April 2018 increased awareness of access to information approaches and experiments across the UK and was also important as a forum to share lessons, experiences and ideas between activists and officials at different levels of government, from the lowest to highest level. It also increased civic participation by bringing together, for the first time, UK-based civil society groups and politicians in a single place. Though listed as 'marginal', if repeated in the future such meetings could be more impactful.

Carried Forward?

The Scottish government was considering a follow-up commitment as part of the next action plan that would build on the meetings and networks made, based around 'learning/collaboration', drawn up between the various UK administrations.

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[1] The University of Edinburgh, 'Freedom of Information in Scotland and the rest of the UK', http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Law/Legislation.aspx. For more on Scotland's separate OGP commitments, Andy McDevitt (2017), Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Scotland Final Report 2017.
[2] Interview with Ruchir Shah, SCVO, September 2017.
[3] OGP, 'Subnational Government Pilot Program', https://www.opengovpartnership.org/subnational-government-pilot-program
[4] Scotland's action plan, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/scotland-united-kingdom-action-plan
[5] Interview with Doreen Grove and Emma Harvey, Scottish Government, 24 August 2017.
[6] Scottish Government (2017), Scotland Narrative for inclusion in UK Open Government, National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report (update sent to author October 2017).
[7] Niamh Webster (2018), Open Government Partnership Scotland hosts the first UK Open Government summit, 22 August 2018, https://blogs.gov.scot/open-government-partnership/2018/08/22/scotland-hosts-the-first-uk-open-government-summit/
[8] Interview with Doreen Grove and Emma Harvey, 22 May 2018.
[9] Niamh Webster (2018), Open Government Partnership Scotland hosts the first UK Open Government summit, 22 August 2018, https://blogs.gov.scot/open-government-partnership/2018/08/22/scotland-hosts-the-first-uk-open-government-summit/
[10] Ibid.

Northern Ireland

1. Develop & trial effective open policy-making and public engagement methods

Commitment Text: *to explore, develop and trial creative and effective open policy-making and public engagement methods and share the learning across government.*

Objective: *To embed a culture of proactive and meaningful engagement with the public across government departments to ensure that the public's' input contributes in a meaningful way to policy formulation.*

Status quo: *The Northern Ireland Civil Service (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*

Ambition: *To make public participation in government policy making more effective and meaningful.*

Milestones:

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.*
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.*
3. *Complete the on boarding process to encourage greater levels of uptake from all Executive departments and NDPBs to the NI Direct consultation portal*
4. *Showcase best practice and innovative examples of public engagement in policy development across Executive departments.*

Responsible institution: Department of Finance

Supporting institutions: Policy Champions Network, Open Government Network, Cabinet Office

Start date: December 2016

End date: May 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?

	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. Overall				✔	✔	✔		✔			✔			✔ ✔					✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed to create more open ways of policy making through trials and experiments based around either one case study or a series of pilots that will then be showcased across the government. Together, the milestones will promote alternative approaches to policy making that use different means (or 'methodologies') and, most importantly, involve the public in the process to a greater extent.

Status

Midterm: Limited

According to the government and CSOs, the government prioritised the first two milestones, notably the choice of the case study policy and other experiments with opening policy-making methodologies. After the first year of implementation, the commitment was behind schedule. Both government and CSOs felt that the final case study or pilot would fall outside of the third action plan's timeline.[1] Several ideas were developed for different policy laboratories and methodologies with a service designer in place and a behavioural insights unit. Some of these are outside of the OGP process but linked to the ongoing work.[2]

CSOs were concerned that not much movement had taken place and were awaiting the choice of the case study/example.[3] They too pointed out that delivery may not fall within the OGP timeframe.[4] CSOs thought that the experiments with policy could be conducted through a policy laboratory, perhaps similar to the UK government's policy lab where new ideas and approaches were tested and this is, indeed, what is now being done.[5] They felt there was a sense that parts of the executive were not wholly open to ideas of experimenting and testing.

End of Term: Limited

The final update was not available at the time of writing. The commitment remains limited due to the lack of a central case study where, according to the government, the work was ongoing to secure agreement.[6] According to the latest update of December 2017 'there has been some significant progress in most areas of the commitment' with the 'NI Innovation Lab leading the way in developing and utilising innovative approaches and methodologies to address difficult issues and problems across the public sector'. The Lab has continued to work on a 'number of difficult areas utilising a range of innovative tools and methodologies including service design and behavioural innovation'. It also published the results of studies and experiments on, for example, nutrition and promoting healthier eating in canteens.[7]

In addition, it launched an 'online consultation tool' that is 'now in use across the NICS Departments and beyond'.[8] The December 2017 update detailed how there had been 300 users and more than 25,000 responses through the platform. Eight of the nine departments are using it, as well as numerous agencies and Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs),

including the Boundary Commission, Northern Ireland Office (NIO), and the Health and Social Care Network (HSCN).[9] There have also been a series of showcases at public events in 2017 as well as informal seminars.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic participation: Marginal

This commitment created a marginal change in government practice. The series of experiments and results from the NI Lab opened some new information on a number of areas through reports on important issues, such as healthy eating. The consultation tool led to greater public participation in significant numbers who would (presumably) not have responded in the same way if done on paper. It also represented a new way of communicating and involving the public, with innovation further boosted by the showcase examples.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward. As the plan was not available at the time of writing, the midterm report recommended setting a date for the selection and completion of the case study choice and that there should be some way of keeping the policy within future action plans.

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[1] Nick Cochrane, Department of Finance and Dr Kelly Wilson, Head of Public Sector Reform Division, Dept. of Finance, 15 August 2017: Colm Burns and David McBurney, Northern Ireland Open Government Network, 11 August 2017.
[2] The UK Behavioural Insights Team, 'The Behavioural Insights Team', http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/; and Sunstein, Cass R., Nudging: A Very Short Guide 37 J. Consumer Policy 583 (2014), https://ssrn.com/abstract=2499658
[3] Colm Burns and David McBurney, Northern Ireland Open Government Network, 11 August 2017.
[4] Colm Burns and David McBurney, Northern Ireland Open Government Network, 11 August 2017.
[5] Gov.uk, 'Blog: Open Policy Blog', Policy Lab, https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/category/policy-lab/
[6] Northern Ireland (2017), Narrative for inclusion in UK Open Government, National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report. NI, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669433/Northern_Ireland_Input_to_3rd_UK_Open_Gov_National_Action_Plan_-_Self_As..._-_Copy__2_.pdf
[7] Ibid.;
Innovation Department of Finance (2018), 'Innovation' Lab', https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/public-sector-reform-division/innovation-lab; and Department of Finance (2018), 'Using behavioural Science to Encourage Healthier Eating', https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/using-behavioural-science-encourage-healthier-eating-health-and-social-care-canteens
[8] Northern Ireland (2017), Narrative for inclusion in UK Open Government, National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report. NI, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669433/Northern_Ireland_Input_to_3rd_UK_Open_Gov_National_Action_Plan_-_Self_As..._-_Copy__2_.pdf
The new 'citizen space' consultation tool, https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/ and https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfe/future-of-the-ni-ndrhi/
[9] Northern Ireland (2017), Narrative for inclusion in UK Open Government, National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report. NI, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669433/Northern_Ireland_Input_to_3rd_UK_Open_Gov_National_Action_Plan_-_Self_As..._-_Copy__2_.pdf

2. Promote greater levels of public sector innovation

Commitment Text: *Develop a more innovative and entrepreneurial culture in the local public sector to address major societal and environmental challenges*

Objective: *Developing a more innovative public sector*

Status quo: *The local public sector faces significant challenges, which will require much greater degrees of innovation than it has traditionally deployed*

Ambition: *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*

Milestones:

1. *In line with the Executive's Innovation Strategy introduce a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Challenge Fund to support public sector innovations (April 2016 March 2017)*
2. *Seek to establish a New Executive Innovation Fund to support public sector innovation including SBRI and Challenge Prizes (October 2016 March 2017)*
3. *Explore funding opportunities for Public sector innovation beyond the region (Ongoing)*
4. *Explore opportunities for exemplar projects using data analytics to address voluntary, community, social enterprise, public and private sector needs*
5. *Explore opportunities for the Executive for projects under the Space for Smarter Government Programme (April 2016 March 2018).*
6. *Develop a proposal for data analytics and research exploitation centre (April 2016 June 2017)*
7. *Explore opportunities, such as Govcamp, for promoting cross border knowledge sharing and collaboration on digital government ideas and issues. (December 2016 May 2018 (March 2018)*

Responsible institution: Department of Finance

Supporting institutions: Department for the Economy, in partnership with other Executive Departments and the wider public sector

Start date: 1 April 2016

End date: 31 March 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2. Overall		✔			✔					✔				✔				✔			

Commitment Aim:

The commitment sought to develop innovation within the Northern Ireland public sector to make it more open, agile and participative. Broken down, the commitment involves securing funding for projects, training staff and engaging with the wider community.

The commitment text contained different milestones of varying lengths with some areas unclear (for example, exactly what the funding would be for and how was unclear, and not all funding was from a specific area). CSOs felt the link to open government was unclear and pointed out that, of all the four Northern Ireland commitments, this was the one that was mostly created inside government.[1]

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the end of the first year, Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) and challenge funding had been secured and an innovation lab was being created via EU funding from a collaborative project.[2] Similarly, the funding for the second and third milestones was waiting for bid details or the application was being drawn up.[3] Officials were working to submit a project on SMART space and new resources were made available for data exploitation. Several government representatives attended the Open Gov Camp in September 2017 and the Open Data Camp in October 2017.[4]

End of Term: Substantial

Note: the final government update was not available at the time of writing this report.

The commitment appears to have progressed substantially, particularly in securing funding. According to the December 2017 update, more funding was secured, with a further £1m secured for projects in 2017/18 for SBRI. In the past, SBRI across the UK has helped develop innovations around drug prices, smart cities and analytics and search engine trials.[5] There was also a further £160k for NI Innovation in its work on behavioural change and 'nudging'. Other projects around the Space for Smarter Government continued, with the bodies involved developing exemplar projects and cases based on the themes of environment and local and regional development.[6]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

So far, the commitment has focused on obtaining funding for projects and so has not resulted in any changes to improving public access to information.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Colm Burns and David McBurney, Northern Ireland Open Government Network, 11 August 2017.
[2] Nick Cochrane, Department of Finance and Dr Kelly Wilson, Head of Public Sector Reform Division, 15 August 2017.
[3] Nick Cochrane, Department of Finance and Dr Kelly Wilson, Head of Public Sector Reform Division, 15 August 2017.
[4] 'OpendataNI, 'Open Data Camp Is Coming to Belfast', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/open-data-camp-is-coming-to-belfast
[5] UK Gov (2018), https://gov.uk/government/collections/sbri-the-small-business-research-initiative#success-stories
[6] Northern Ireland (2017), Narrative for inclusion in UK Open Government, National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report. NI, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669433/Northern_Ireland_Input_to_3rd_UK_Open_Gov_National_Action_Plan_-_Self_As..._-_Copy__2_.pdf

3. To investigate implementation of the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) in Central Procurement operations

Commitment Text: *To investigate implementation of the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) in Central Procurement operations.*

Objective: *To ensure data available on contracts awarded is available for use by stakeholders.*

Status quo: *An international standard - Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) has been introduced around contract data and this has not been implemented locally.*

Ambition: *The ambition is to establish whether it is practical for Department of Finance Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to implement the Open Contracting Data Standard moving forward.*

Milestones:

1. *DoF CPD to explore a pilot project implementing the Open Contracting Data Standard (January 2017 December 2017)*
2. *Develop visualisation tool with contracts data from CPD as part of the Open Data Strategy (January 2017 December 2017)*

Responsible institution: Department of Finance

Supporting institutions: N/A

Start date: January 2017

End date: December 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3. Overall			✔		✔					✔					✔	✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

The Open Contracting Data Standard is a global, non-proprietary data standard structured to reflect the complete contracting cycle that allows users and partners around the world to publish shareable, reusable, machine-readable data, to join that data with their own information, and to create tools to analyse or share that data.[1] It is rated according to a series of stars that set out the level of openness and interaction of the data (i.e. if it is linked). The Standard makes procurement and contracting more transparent and allows the public to examine, scrutinise and hold to account government contracts. The UK has championed this Standard across the world and has formed commitments in all three of its action plans.

If completed, the commitment would open up all contracts in Northern Ireland to this standard and would allow the public to visualise and scrutinise all of the Northern Irish government's contracting arrangements.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

At the end of the first year, the government highlighted good initial progress toward implementation of the Open Contracting Data Standard, with some exploratory work to see how government systems measure up.[2] Currently all contracts in Northern Ireland meet the requirements for 1-star data, meaning they are available on the internet under an open license. It was unlikely that the deadline to implement a new platform for viewing contract data would be met by December 2017, but work was being done to ensure data is compatible with current visualisation.[3]

End of Term: Complete

Note: the final government update was not available at the time of writing this report.

Given the commitment was exploratory, the December 2017 update indicates that the commitment is complete. It outlines that the 2016/17 contracts data had been published, with contract beginning and end dates, and names and addresses of contractors published on two portals, eTendersNI and OpenDataNI.[4] There was also work done to ensure 'members of the public' can now 'view a location map showing the distribution of contractors' as well as a new process for publishing poor performance. At the time this report was written, contracts had been updated on the portal through March 2018.[5]

The work initiated under this commitment will continue beyond the OGP cycle, as the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) intends "to explore ways to reach the OCDS Intermediate Disclosure Level (three-star)'. The CPD did not necessarily have influence over what happened with other bodies, though the update indicated this may change in the future.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

The commitment has increased access to information in this area. The government considerably increased the quantity, quality and variety of data available on the two contract awards portals. All contracts were also updated regularly. The new visualisation tool also helped users visualise the contracts data in new ways.

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward.

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[1] Open Contracting Partnership 'Open Contracting Data Standard: Documentation', http://standard.open-contracting.org/latest/en/

[2] Nick Cochrane, Department of Finance and Dr. Kelly Wilson, Head of Public Sector Reform Division, Dept. of Finance, 15 August 2017; Colm Burns and David McBurney, Northern Ireland Open Government Network, 11 August 2017.

[3] Public Sector Reform Division (2017), Northern Ireland (NI) Narrative for inclusion in UK Open Government, National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report, August 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669433/Northern_Ireland_Input_to_3rd_UK_Open_Gov_National_Action_Plan_-_Self_As..._-_Copy__2_.pdf

[4] Ibid.

[5] Open Data NI (2018), https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/dataset/contracts-awarded-by-central-procurement-directorate-in-the-2016-2017-year

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

Commitment Text: *To establish that all public sector data is Open by default (excepting personal, IPR, commercially or environmentally sensitive data).*

Objective: *To ensure that the Executive's Open Data Strategy is embraced and adopted by all public sector organisations.*

Status quo: *To embed a culture of open by default and increase awareness and demand for open data.*

Ambition: *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.*

Milestones:

1. *Increase the number of Showcases on OpenDataNI (November 2015 May 2018)*
2. *Support an annual competition to derive and promote innovative services and products (June 2016 May 2018)*
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 (June 2016 May 2018).*
4. *Increase engagement with a number of partners such as ODI Belfast, NI Digital Catapult, universities, business and developer groups (June 2016 May 2018)*
5. *Increase proportion of public sector agencies to have published open data (June 2016 May 2018)*
6. *Increase the number of public sector staff trained in producing and publishing open data (June 2016 May 2018)*
7. *Increase proactive publication of data from government departments (November 2015 May 2018)*
8. *Publish 2 datasets as 4-star or 5 star linked Open Data as defined by W3C (June 2016 May 2018)*
9. *Work with ODI Belfast and partners to encourage innovative uses of open data for new products and services (November 2015 May 2018)*

Responsible institution: Department of Finance

Supporting institutions: ODI Belfast, NI Digital Catapult, Future Cities

Start date: December 2016

End date: May 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?

	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4. Overall				✔	✔	✔		✔		✔				✔					✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment was part of an ongoing process in Northern Ireland based around its Open Data portal and its long-term Open Data strategy that runs from 2015 to 2018.[1] The strategy commited the Northern Ireland Executive to 'successfully implement and drive open data by default' meaning all data will be created and published automatically in an open format. The development of the portal and philosophy of openness was intended to both improve transparency and stimulate innovation; as the strategy puts it 'to embed a culture' of 'open by default' within the Northern Ireland public sector in order to drive public service efficiency, stimulate innovation and improve the economy in Northern Ireland'.[2]

Status

Midterm: Limited

The Open Data portal itself was already well established with a project board, team and plan already in place before the action plan. In May 2017, Northern Ireland scored eighth place in the Open Data Index, partly as a result of the portal.[3] It appeared that all of the milestones were under way, though all nine of them were not due to finish until May 2018 and some were more open-ended than others. The milestones on engagement (2, 4 and 9) were partly covered by the Open Data Camp coming to Belfast in October 2017, as well as a series of other initiatives and partnership work with, for example, education bodies and an event celebrating the portal in December 2016.[4] The training of staff in milestone 3 overlapped with Commitment 3 above, with more than 200 staff trained in data analytics.

According to the government, one area of difficulty appeared to be getting organisations to publish data proactively (milestones 5 and 6).[5] There was not always full appreciation of the value of open data and proactive openness was often blocked through a combination of lack of awareness and lack of resources.

End of Term: Limited

The commitment has continued, though the final update was not available at the time of writing. The provision of datasets has doubled by 2018 with 403 datasets, compared with 200 at the outset of the commitment. Innovation has also been encouraged. As of summer 2018 the website held 22 showcases of open data innovation in Northern Ireland. The Open Data challenge ran again in 2017, with a remit for young people to 'create a teaching resource for our schools'. There were four winning entries announced in May 2018 and past winners included a recycling visualisation tool, an interactive game based on the geography of Northern Ireland and an eco-learning game, all drawing on portal data.[6]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Marginal

The commitment aimed to increase the amount of data, as well as making openness a 'default' and increasing awareness. The changes are marginal, as all of the moves have been building on top of pre-existing activity. The commitment has increased access to information, through the provision of greater datasets on the portal, which have more than doubled from 200 to 403 in the two-year cycle, all in machine-readable form. There has also been a great deal of interaction and greater awareness around data in Northern Ireland. In parallel to this, prizes, events and other publicity helped encourage innovation and civic participation in the process, with a series of successful innovations in 2016 and 2017.

In terms of interaction and civic participation, the portal also holds a 'suggest data' contact form that is used by the public to suggest data to be released. This mechanism is regularly used and is clearly labelled when scheduled for release or when other bodies have been contacted to do so. In those cases where data has not been, or cannot be, released, the open data team have explained the reasons in the comments section under each request. Overall, open data has increased in quantity and visibility, though it is not possible to tell if it is now a 'default' for all government.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] OpenDatani.gov.uk, 'Open Data Northern Ireland', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/ ,and 'Open data strategy for Northern Ireland 2015 – 2018', https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/open-data-strategy-northern-ireland-2015-2018

[2] Department of Finance, 'Open Data Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015 – 2018', https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/open-data-strategy-northern-ireland-2015-2018

[3] Nick Cochrane, Department of Finance and Dr. Kelly Wilson, Head of Public Sector Reform Division, Dept. of Finance, 15 August 2017; Colm Burns and David McBurney, Northern Ireland Open Government Network, 11 August 2017; OpenDatani.gov.uk 'Northern Ireland makes a splash in the 2016 Global Open Data Index survey!', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/northern-ireland-makes-a-splash-in-the-global-open-data-index-survey-2016

[4] OpenDatani.gov.uk, 'Open Data Camp is coming to Belfast!', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/open-data-camp-is-coming-to-belfast, OpenDatani.gov.uk, 'OpenDataNI - stimulating innovation in the world of local education', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/opendatani-stimulating-innovation-in-the-world-of-local-education, and OpenDatani.gov.uk, 'OpenDataNI: The first year', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/opendatani-the-first-year

[5] Nick Cochrane, Department of Finance and Dr. Kelly Wilson, Head of Public Sector Reform Division, Dept. of Finance, 15 August 2017.

[6] Open Data NI (2018), 'Open Make It Challenge Winners: The Grand Unveiling', https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/opendatani-make-it-challenge-winners-the-grand-unveiling, https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/blog/open-data-make-it-challenge

Wales

1. Open data plan

Commitment text: *develop and implement an open data plan for Welsh Government and work towards achieving the commitments outlined within the plan.*

Objective: *to develop a plan that outlines Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to open data and increase awareness of open data across Welsh Government.*

Status quo: *Within Welsh Government we are already striving to increase the accessibility to our data through websites such as Lle and StatsWales. However there is more that can be done to increase the openness and transparency of our data.*

There also needs to be greater awareness of the potential opportunities and benefits that open data can provide to the people of Wales, businesses, the public service sector and Welsh Government. Implementation of our Open Data Plan and its commitments should help address these issues.

Ambition: *whilst work is already on going in the field of open data within Welsh Government we hope that implementation of this Open Data Plan will raise awareness, consolidate on going work and demonstrate Welsh Government's commitment to open data. The plan will hopefully also provide a practical opportunity to work with and encourage public service organisations to increase their publication and use of open data.*

Milestones:

1. *Implement commitments outlined within the Welsh Government Open Data Plan*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: March 2016

End date: March 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. Overall		✔			✔					✔					✔ / ✔				✔		

Commitment Aim:

Although having engaged in Open Data work for some time, the Welsh Government published its first Open Data Plan in March 2016.[1] The plan set a series of goals under the four broad headings of 'open by default', 'quantity and quality', 'make data usable by all' and 'releasing data for improved governance and innovation'. These goals covered improving

data quality, creating a Welsh Open Data service, encouraging innovation and publishing more data.

The commitment's ambition suggested that the implementation could offer more data of a higher quality with an overarching service behind it, while also developing a stronger network of users and engaged people. However, due to the vagueness of the commitment's text, particularly of the activities, it was not possible to determine if the Open Data Plan will produce more and higher quality data.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

By the end of the first year of implementation, the commitment was on track for its March 2018 deadline.[2] The datasets were publishing in open formats as per the plan. The Welsh government worked with the Open Data Institute Cardiff, the Welsh Audit Office and Cardiff Capital Region Open Data group to push the agenda forward.[3] There was less progress developing an Open Data catalogue due to a lack of resources.[4] In June 2017, the Welsh government announced it would work alongside CSOs to further engagement.[5]

The government increased its output of data and began the process of developing civil society networks. The Welsh government published data on its two main open data platforms, including a geo-Portal that was developed in partnership between the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. The portal now holds 200 datasets, while StatsWales portal houses 1,000 datasets.[6]

End of term: Substantial

The Welsh government's final update of October 2018 reported that the parts of the commitment were either complete or, in the case of the open-ended ones, ongoing.[7] Since the midterm assessment, the datasets on Lle had increased from 200 to 260, while Stats Wales was updated daily with new datasets. The infrastructure for the Lle was to be built upon.[8] However, work on the catalogue and certification had been delayed and 'slower than anticipated', though the final update noted that resources had been obtained to continue with this process.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

The commitment had a marginal effect on access to information. It led to new information being published across both Welsh websites, with both websites increasing their output and Lse increasing by 25 percent, as well as new systems and an overall strategy for greater openness and greater, more systematic management of data. The strategy also created new emphasis and drew attention to the importance of data in Wales, according to the Welsh government.[9]

Carried Forward?

The commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Welsh Government 'Open Data Plan', http://gov.wales/docs//decisions/General/160331OpenDataPlan.pdf
[2] Interview with Jetske Germing, Welsh Council of Voluntary Organizations, 8 September 2017.
[3] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.
[4] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.
[5] Digital Land Data Blog, 'Working Together To Be More Open', https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/2017/06/28/working-together-to-be-more-open/
[6] Lle, Welsh Government, 'Lle: A Geo-Portal for Wales', http://lle.gov.wales/home, and Statistics Wales 'Statistics Wales Portal', https://statswales.gov.wales/Help/Index. There are also 2,798 datasets on data.gov.uk covering the Welsh government and Welsh matters, https://data.gov.uk/publisher/welsh-government

[7] Welsh Government (2018), Third UK Open Government national action plan 2016-2018, Welsh Government End of Term Self-Assessment Report, October 2018, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Office-of-the-Chief-Digital-Officer-NAP-3-Open Government-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018-Final-Assessment.pdf
[8] Welsh Government (2017), National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report.
[9] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.

2. Open data service

Commitment Text: *develop an Open Data Service for Wales with a focus on helping improve public services.*

Objective: *to increase the openness and amount of data about Wales that is published by Welsh Government and other public sector bodies.*

Status quo: *only a subset of data about Wales held by Welsh Government and other public sector partners is currently published.*

Ambition: *developing an Open Data Service for Wales will increase the accessibility and the amount of data published by Welsh Government and other public sector bodies in Wales. Furthermore making more data openly available will hopefully help improve public services in Wales.*

Milestones:

1. *StatsWales data published in machine readable format*
2. *StatsWales training material on improvements prepared and delivered*
3. *Lle developed to allow users to build their own maps*
4. *Open data catalogue produced*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institutions: Welsh Government other government departments, StatsWales site team

Start date: March 2016

End date: March 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2. Overall			✔		✔			✔		✔					✔ / ✔				✔		

Commitment Aim:

As mentioned in Commitment 1, the Welsh government currently publishes some data via its two portals, Lle and StatsWales.[1] This commitment aimed to develop an Open Data Service for Wales to improve on the current amount and quality of data available.

As the commitment text points out, only a subset of data about Wales is currently published. The commitment will ensure not only that more data is published but also that the government's openness rating improves, training materials are made available and there is interactive content is published.[2]

The commitment would further increase the openness of the Welsh government, while also making data publication more systematic and interactive. If fully implemented, the commitment would improve the quality of existing data, but would address neither the issue of multiple data portals, nor the issue of determining which data subsets should be required for publication in order to bridge the current gap where only a few subsets are published.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

Three of the four milestones were in progress after the first year. An examination of the catalogue showed StatsWales data being published in machine-readable format across a wide range of areas. Statistics Wales also had a series of training materials on how to use and analyse the data on the site (both the data itself and the meta-data) with more planned.[3]

For milestone 3, on the geo-spatial Lle website, a new beta development now allows users of the data to build their own maps.[4] Only milestone 4 is behind schedule, as the open catalogue has been delayed over the development of a prototype from StatsWales, due to lack of resources.[5]

End of Term: Substantial

Most parts of the commitment were completed according to the December 2017 update. The commitment was, in some senses, a subset of the Open Data plan in commitment 1 and so shared a number of the outcomes. By the final update of 2018 the data was made machine readable, guidance material had been produced and a beta version of the map creator for the Lle site was up and running.[6] Another 60 datasets were added by the end of the commitment, making a total of 260 by 2018. Only the production of an open data catalogue was categorised as 'behind schedule' because of contractual delays. These problems were due to accreditation, but resources had been obtained by the final update.[7]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

The commitment aimed to increase both the amount and accessibility of information. The change so far has increased access to information in a minor way, with Lle increasing the number of datasets from around 200 in 2016 to 260 in 2018 and making all data machine readable. The data included regular release of social indicators, health and a range of socio-cultural data, all in machine-readable form. Innovations such as the map creator also made the data accessible in new ways.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Lle, Welsh Government, 'Lle: A Geo-Portal for Wales', http://lle.gov.wales/home, and Statistics Wales 'Statistics Wales Portal', https://statswales.gov.wales/Help/Index

[2] The starred openness rating system, 5stardata.info '5 Star Data', http://5stardata.info/en/

[3] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017. Stats Wales 'Help', https://statswales.gov.wales/Help/Index, and https://statswales.gov.wales/Help/Index

[4] Lle, 'Lidar Composite Dataset', http://lle.gov.wales/Catalogue/Item/LidarCompositeDataset/?lang=en

[5] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.

[6] Welsh Government (2018), Third UK Open Government, national action plan 2016-2018, Welsh Government End of Term Self-Assessment Report, October 2018, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Office-of-the-Chief-Digital-Officer-NAP-3-Open Government-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018-Final-Assessment.pdf; Map creator in beta, http://lle.gov.wales/map

[7] Welsh Government (2017), National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report.

3. StatsWales

Commitment text: *Develop StatsWales, the Welsh Government's online repository for detailed statistical data, to increase its openness rating to 4*.*

Objective: *To increase the openness and amount of structured data that is published by Welsh Government and other public sector bodies.*

Status quo: *Only a subset of data about Wales held by Welsh Government and other public sector partners is currently published. Whilst StatsWales publishes structured data openly there is a need to increase its openness rating.*

Ambition: *Through this commitment we will improve the openness of data published by Welsh Government, enabling our data to be freely shared and used by others.*

Milestones:

1. *StatsWales data published in machine readable format June 2016 (ongoing)*
2. *StatsWales guidance and training videos prepared and published Nov 2016 – Dec*
3. *Accreditation of StatsWales carried out successfully*
4. *StatsWales training material prepared and delivered*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: March 2016

End date: December 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3. Overall				✔	✔			✔		✔					✔ / ✔					✔	

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed to develop StatsWales, the main data portal in Wales, and increase the quality of its data to a 4-star data rating, which means data is linked (i.e. connected to other data) and served at URIs that work as locators for information on the web.[1] It also included the creation of training material and guidance. The milestones were highly specific as to what the outcomes will be - though they appeared to overlap with Commitment 2, while milestones 2 and 4 appear to overlap.

The commitment could lead to higher quality data, uniformly consistent and easier to find, possible to use and match with other data. However, the new functionalities would require

some level of expertise from users, which could undermine the usability of the data for the public.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

According to the Welsh government the commitment was on schedule to be completed. The IRM researcher found all the data on the site to be machine-readable (available as xl or comma separated value).[2] StatsWales also has a series of training materials on how to use and analyse the data on the site (both the data itself and the meta-data) with more planned.[3] The accreditation is also linked to Commitment 2 on an Open Data Catalogue, and so awaits resources and action from elsewhere.[4]

End of term: Substantial

By the final update of 2018, all data on Stats Wales had been made machine readable, and guidance material had been placed on the website, including a video to help users download data.[5] The only outstanding work was to examine whether there could be automatic accreditation for data published, which the government was continuing to look into and remained 'ongoing'.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Major

The commitment aimed at publishing more data while also ensuring that what was published was structured (and could be used for analysis). The government created a marginal improvement in access to information by publishing new data across 18 different areas, from tourism to tax and the Welsh Language. The data has also contributed to the new future generations' measurements (see commitments 8 and 9).[6] The updates to make all data machine readable ensured that all the data were structured, so users could innovate with it.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] 5stardata.info, '5 Star Data', http://5stardata.info/en/
[2] IRM search on Stats Wales, 27 September 2017.
[3] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017. Stats Wales 'Help', https://statswales.gov.wales/Help/Index
[4] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.
[5] Welsh Government (2018), Third UK Open Government, national action plan 2016-2018, Welsh Government End of Term Self-Assessment Report, October 2018, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Office-of-the-Chief-Digital-Officer-NAP-3-Open-Government-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018-Final-Assessment.pdf; map creator in beta, http://lle/gov/wales/map
[6] Welsh Government (2017), Well-being Report, https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/well-being-wales/?lang=en

4. Administrative Data Research Centre Wales

Commitment text: *In partnership with the Administrative Data Research Centre Wales, the Welsh Government will work to ensure that access to government datasets is available in a secure and safe manner for the purposes of academic and public sector research. Furthermore, such access is promoted to maximise the use of such data for research that is published and made available to support better decisions.*

Objective: *Secure and ethical access to data held by government to accredited academic and public sector researchers in approved safe environments with appropriate controls in place, leading to published research for the public good.*

Status quo: *To overcome barriers to access to data for academic or public sector research purposes.*

Ambition: *Through this commitment we will improve the public value of government data by ensuring it is available to use to produce high quality, published, research that will inform public policy and improve the lives of citizens.*

Milestones:

1. *Publish further research in partnership with the Administrative Data Research Centre-Wales by the end of the financial year*
2. *Increase the number of public sector datasets available for Welsh researchers through the ADRC-W by the end of the financial year*
3. *Pilot techniques for local authorities to supply data for research in the ADRC-W by the end of the financial year*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institutions: UK statistics authority, Administrative Data Research Centre – Wales (academic partnership); ESRC; Administrative Data Research Network Board

Start date: March 2015

End date: March 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4. Overall			✔		✔			✔		✔					✔ / ✔					✔	

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed to extend secure use of data by the public sector and academics, as part of a partnership between the Administrative Data Research Centre Wales, based at

Cardiff University, and the Welsh government. The Administrative Data Research Centre Wales is a centre for leading data scientists and a hub for networks across Wales that 'uses cutting-edge technology to efficiently link and analyses de-identified administrative data that has the ability to inform social, economic and health related research in the UK'.[1]

The milestones are mostly open ended and considered to be 'rolling', particularly milestones 1 and 2.[2] If fully completed, the commitment would be a positive step towards improved accessibility of data for research, for which there is a demand.[3] However, although the commitment's activities are verifiable, they do not explain what type of research will be published, the granularity of the datasets, and what the pilot techniques will entail.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

So far, milestones 1 and 2 are ongoing, as the Administrative Data Research Centre Wales has continued to make available more data for researchers (though the data is not publicly accessible because of the sensitivity). Both milestones will carry on until the deadline.[4]

For milestone 3, funding for the pilot is in place (which took longer than anticipated), and there is now a need to identify a pilot local authority to carry out the project.[5]

There are a range of innovative projects drawing on the new data. They will provide benefit both to data scientists and policymakers, and help 'overcome barriers' to access as the commitment intends. The Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) has begun a detailed project with the Welsh government to accurately map the number of Welsh speakers across Wales by linking survey and census data.[6] Other ongoing work includes an analysis of disability benefit recipients, social capital and the link between health and homelessness.[7]

End of term: Substantial

The Welsh government's final update of October 2018 mapped the continuing work and collaboration with academics.[8] Further collaborative work was published, with the second "Supporting People linking data" progress report on an innovative program that uses data to support a Welsh government housing programme in 2018.[9] Data on a series of different subjects, from home efficiency to children, were added, as were data deposits for the National Pupil Database and National Survey for Wales. Confirmation of funding for the pilot projects was delayed but various local government-level collaborative programmes began in June 2017. One local authority (Swansea) installed data linking technology and four others committed to doing so in the future.[10]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Major

The commitment aimed to open (in a secure way) datasets for research, building on ongoing work with academics and researchers. The new data, covering a range of government information, has fed into important research, from heating efficiency and studies of the Welsh language to health and homelessness. The programme is ongoing, and it appears there is more research and data in progress. The reports on data innovation, as a result, help stimulate new thinking about collaboration with the data, with new linked data techniques now being used in at least one local authority.

Carried Forward?

The commitment has not been carried forward, but work is ongoing.

[1] ADRC Wales 'ADRC Wales', https://adrn.ac.uk/about/network/wales/
[2] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.

[3] Welsh Government, http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2014/140331-recommendations-improving-research-access-potentially-disclosive-data-summary-en.pdf
[4] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.
[5] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.
[6] NETWORK, Research starts on Welsh language project, https://adrn.ac.uk/media/174234/network_4.pdf
[7] ADRC Wales, 'ADRC Wales projects', https://adrn.ac.uk/about/network/wales/
[8] Welsh Government (2018), Third UK Open Government, national action plan 2016-2018, Welsh Government End of Term Self-Assessment Report, October 2018, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Office-of-the-Chief-Digital-Officer-NAP-3-Open-Government-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018-Final-Assessment.pdf; map creator in beta, http://lle.gov.wales/map
[9] Supporting People Data Linking Project, Johnson, R. Lowe, S.
E. Jones I.(2018) Supporting People Data Linkage Study: Year Two Progress Report, Cardiff: Welsh Government,, https://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2018/180628-supporting-people-data-linkage-study-year-two-en.pdf
[10] Welsh Government (2017), National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report

5. Government Social Research Publication Protocol

Commitment text: *Welsh Government will continue to publish government research according to the Government Social Research Publication Protocol, with reports pre-announced and published on the 'Statistics & Research' pages of the Welsh Government website. Publication of social research reports, according to the GSR publication protocol, is a key part of the Welsh Government Principles for Research and Evaluation.*

Objective: *To publish research according to the Government Social Research publication protocol.*

Status quo: *The Government Social Research publication protocol has been adopted to increase the transparency of evidence used by the Welsh Government.*

Ambition: *Publication of research puts the evidence Government uses in its decisions in the public domain and also provides research findings useful for other public and third sector bodies to inform their own decision making.*

Milestones:

1. *Using the GSR publication protocol for all research publications*
2. *Ministerial commitment to use of Government Social Research publication protocol*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: N/A

End date: N/A

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Comple tion		Midterm End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5. Overall	✔				✔					✔					✔			✔			

Commitment Aim:

This commitment was based upon a Welsh government ministerial commitment and the following of the Government Social Research Publication Protocol. This would help end inconsistency in how research is published and build greater public trust in what government publishes. This is a set of protocols for government that 'sets out the five principles they should use in the publication and release of all government social research products, with

practical advice about how they should be applied'.[1] In summary, the five principles ask that research is published promptly in a way that promotes trust and is communicated clearly and with clear responsibility.[2]

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The commitment was mostly completed before the third action plan cycle. However, if it is intended to be rolling then the Welsh Government website does specifically outline that 'we will publish research according to the Government Social Research publication protocol' with an external link to the UK government's 2015 protocols' and milestone 1 is simply a continuous process.[3] According to the self-assessment, 'Ministerial commitment' was then 'reconfirmed following 2016 [Welsh] election'.[4]

End of Term: Substantial

As this was a continuous process and simply re-affirmed and used continuously, the IRM viewed it as complete. In the self-assessment of December 2017 and final update of October 2018 it was listed as complete but 'ongoing', with no breaches reported as occurring.[5]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

According to the website, all government publications have been published according to the protocol. It is not clear that the commitment implied any new action or work and appeared to be mainly the continuation of an ongoing policy. There is no evidence that it has led to any greater access to information. It is not clear if the protocol has influenced any use or uptake.

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward.

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[1] Civil Service and Government Social Research Profession, 'Guidance: Government Social Research: Publication protocol', https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-social-research-publication-protocols

[2] Government Economic & Social Research Team, 'Publishing research and analysis in government GSR Publication Protocol' (policy/protocol report 2015)

[3] Welsh Government, 'About Statistics & Research', http://gweddill.gov.wales/statistics-and-research/about/?lang=en

[4] Assessment made in Welsh Government (2017), UK Open Government, national action plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report (draft document accessed by author October 2017)

[5] Welsh Government (2018), Third UK Open Government, national action plan 2016 - 2018 Welsh Government End of Term Self-Assessment Report October 2018, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Office-of-the-Chief-Digital-Officer-NAP-3-Open-Government-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018-Final-Assessment.pdf: Welsh Government (2017), National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report.

6. Gov.Wales

Commitment text: *We will make our information and services easier to find and consume by consolidating our digital content on a new Welsh Government website that is focussed on meeting user needs. The site will include an improved consultation service.*

Objective: *Build a new GOV.WALES to improve access to Welsh Government information and services.*

Status quo: *The Welsh Government publishes information on more than 150 websites. Information is presented inconsistently and is sometimes duplicated. Users do not know whether they have found all Welsh Government information on a particular issue.*

Ambition: *GOV.WALES will accommodate practically all Welsh Government information and services, making it easier for users to understand what we do and how we are performing. It will provide a clearer picture of the public sector in Wales, increasing accountability by allowing the public to see and access those bodies that are working on their behalf. The new consultations service will provide a better way for the public to participate in our decision-making process.*

Milestones:

1. *Launch beta consultations service, including response forms that users can save*
2. *Launch beta campaigns platform*
3. *Launch beta public bodies platform*
4. *Publish first tranche of beta corporate content*
5. *Publish remaining corporate content*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: April 2015

End date: June 2019

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6. Overall			✔		✔	✔				✔				✔					✔		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed to create a single 'gov.wales' site for Welsh government services along the lines of the UK's GOV.UK.[1] To develop the new site, it would be run as a beta

version, which means it will run experimentally and its services will be continually tested and improved.[2]

Status

Midterm: Limited

According to the government, after the first year the commitment was on track to be completed.[3] The Welsh government had launched a series of seven consultations in Beta experimental form:[4] including the Welsh Government consultations, Superfast broadband campaign, Brexit: Securing Wales' Future and Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee.

According to the self-assessment published after the close of the evaluation period for this report, the corporate content was uploaded to the beta version.[5]

End of term: Limited

According to the self-assessment of December 2017 all parts of the commitment were completed except the final milestone, though this runs until 30 June 2019 (a year outside of the OGP cycle). For this cycle 'work is under way to move content to the new platform but is taking longer than expected'.[6][7]

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Marginal

Prior to this commitment, information on Welsh government services was spread across 'more than 150 websites' with information 'inconsistent' and 'sometimes duplicated'. So far, the commitment has had a marginal and indirect impact on open government by drawing together information on a single 'one stop' site, similar to the UK GOV.UK site. In terms of access to information, this makes it easier to find information and navigate to one single place rather than search the 150 or so estimated sites it was spread across before. It would also help make it more consistent and end duplication. The commitment has had a small effect in enhancing civic participation through online consultations, and the consultations, according to the Welsh government, have been 'well used in a beta version in 2017 in a number of areas and received positive feedback from government and external users'.[8]

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward.

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[1] Gov.uk, 'Welcome to GOV.UK', https://www.gov.uk/. The website won design of the year in 2013, The Guardian, "Direct and well-mannered' government website named design of the year', https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/apr/16/government-website-design-of-year

[2] Gov.uk, 'Beta on GOV.UK', https://www.gov.uk/help/beta

[3] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.

[4] Welsh Government, 'Consultations: Beta on GOV.WALES', https://consultations.gov.wales/help/beta-govwales?lang=en as verified by the IRM researcher.

[5] Welsh government (2017), Input to 3rd UK Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018: Mid-term (2017) assessment report, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668973/Welsh_Government_Input_to_3rd_UK_Open_Government_National_Action_Plan_2016-2018_-_Mid_Term__2017__Self_Assessment_Report.pdf

[6] The IRM was unable to ascertain externally how far the commitment had progressed, aside from the final report.

[7] Welsh Government (2017), National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report.

[8] Welsh Government (2018), Third UK Open Government, national action plan 2016-2018, Welsh Government End of Term Self-Assessment Report, October 2018, https://www.opengovernment.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Office-of-the-Chief-Digital-Officer-NAP-3-Open-Government-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018-Final-Assessment.pdf

7. Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in Supply Chains

Commitment text: *Welsh Government will develop a code for ethical supply chain behaviour, that will ensure awareness and understanding of actions to mitigate against ethical supply chain issues.*

Objective: *To achieve high levels of sign-up to 12 commitments aimed at promoting the legal and ethical treatment of workers.*

Status quo: *Unethical and illegal treatment of workers in public sector supply chains.*

Ambition: *One ambition of this piece of work is to raise awareness of the prevalence of modern slavery in our supply chains and take actions to address areas of high risk.*

Another ambition is to raise and level the playing field in Wales so that suppliers that wish to employ workers ethically are not disadvantaged in bidding for public contracts.

A third ambition is to encourage the more widespread adoption of the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage (based on the costs of living).

Milestones:

1. *First draft completed and introduced at Procurex*
2. *Task and Finish Group established and first meeting set-up*
3. *Engagement with business and third sector*
4. *Ethical supply chain code launch*
5. *Sign-up*

Responsible institution: Welsh government

Supporting institutions: Public sector organisations in Wales Businesses and third sector organisations in Wales

Start date: March 2016

End date: Early 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
7. Overall				✔	Unclear							✔			✔	✔			✔		

Commitment Aim:

The Welsh Government committed to a code for ethical supply chains based on 12 separate parts, including a Code of Practice, guidance to help staff spot potential abuse and questions to be asked in the tender process. The government would publish and champion the new code, with organisations in Wales being asked to sign up. In particular, 'all organisations that receive funding from Welsh Government, either directly or via grants or contracts'.[1]

The code will help prevent aspects of poor treatment relating to 'terms and conditions of employment, including zero hours contracts, Umbrella Schemes and False Self-Employment'.[2] While the commitment addresses an important issue, as written the activities lacked a public-facing element. Additionally, it was unclear if the commitment would release information on supply chains to the public or allow broader public scrutiny of the information or the processes.

If fully implemented with sufficient co-operation and sign-ups, the commitment could have a potentially transformative impact. It could create a set of stronger ethical guidelines for a range of businesses and organisations.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

Milestones 1 through 4 were all on track and completed within the timeframe of the action plan.[3] The code was launched at the Procurex event in October 2016.[4] It was then developed with the support of the Workforce Partnership Council and social partners including Unions and released on 29 March 2017 in line with the timetable.[5] So far, according to the Welsh Government's self-assessment, all universities and police forces have signed up and 'one local authority, two housing associations and over 25 businesses and third sector organisations'.[6]

End of term: Complete

The commitment is complete given the commitment aimed to have sign-ups from different sectors without a particular target. The self-assessment of December 2017 spoke of ongoing activity – to raise awareness of the Code and increase sign-up'.[7]

An FOI request to the Welsh government in April 2018 found progress from the midterm report.[8] The government reported that 83 organisations have signed up. This included nine local councils and a number of Welsh police forces (including Caerphilly, Cardiff, Ceredigion, Anglesey, Pembrokeshire, Rhonda Cwm Taff, Swansea, Powys and Wrexham). In total, 22 public bodies and 39 private sector organisations had signed up.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

The commitment was aimed at preventing unethical and illegal treatment in supply chains and employment. Although it did not fit any OGP values specifically, the work on this commitment created a marginal change in access to information by making public the commitment of a growing range of bodies (both government and private) to ethical supply chain. These commitments were not previously public information. It also affected behaviour and activism around issues of contracts and employment rights. As one example, a member of the Trade Union UNISON spoke of how the Code had been used in campaigns against zero-hours contracts.[9]

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not being carried forward.

[1] Welsh Government, 'Code of practice: Ethical employment in supply chains', http://gov.wales/topics/improvingservices/bettervfm/code-of-practice/?lang=en
[2] Welsh Government, 'Code of Practice for Ethical Employment launched', http://gov.wales/newsroom/finance1/2017/58948814/?lang=en
[3] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017.
[4] Public Spend Forum Europe, 'Ethical Employment In Supply Chains – Wales Takes The Lead', http://publicspendforumeurope.com/2016/10/24/ethical-employment-in-supply-chains-wales-takes-the-lead/
[5] Welsh Government, 'Code of Practice for Ethical Employment launched', http://gov.wales/newsroom/finance1/2017/58948814/?lang=en
[6] Welsh Government (2017), UK Open Government, National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report (draft document accessed by author November 2017)
[7] Welsh Government (2017), National Action Plan Welsh Government Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report
[8] Response to this FOI request asking for details of sign-ups, whatdotheyknow.com (2018), and 'Code of Practice for ethical supply chains', https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/code_of_practice_for_ethical_emp_3, and background data https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/477276/response/1155260/attach/html/4/ATISN%2012235%202018%2005%2009%20FOI%20Information%20Requested.pdf.html
[9] ITV News (2018), 'Reported cases of modern day slavery doubles in a year', 3 August 2018, http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2018-08-23/56-rise-in-reported-cases-of-modern-day-slavery/; BBC (2018), Zero-hours employers should not get Welsh Government aid, AMs say, 23 May 2018, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-44224124

✪8. Well-being of Future Generations Act – National Indicators for Wales

Commitment Text: *To measure progress towards the achievement of the seven well-being goals for Wales set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and report on them annually.*

Objective: *In order to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales the Welsh Government has developed a set of National Indicators to measure progress against the 7 well-being goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In doing so an open and transparent approach is being taken in the development and communication of the National Indicators and the data that underpins them.*

Status quo: *Measuring national progress against the seven well-being goals for Wales set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.*

Ambition: *If we are to collectively achieve the seven well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we need a way of measuring, at a national level, what progress is being made. The 46 National Indicators for Wales are intended to measure progress against the seven well-being goals and have been prepared following public consultation. They will be reported on annually through a 'Well-being Report for Wales'.*

Milestones:

1. *Lay the 'National Indicators for Wales' before the National Assembly for Wales*
2. *Produce the first Annual Well-being Report for Wales*

Responsible institution: Welsh government

Supporting institutions: Specified public bodies under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Auditor General for Wales

Start date: March 2016

End date: Early 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
✪8. Overall			✔		✔	✔						✔			✔	✔				✔	

Editorial note: *This commitment is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.*

Commitment Aim:

In 2015, the National Assembly of Wales passed the Well-being of Future Generations Act.[1] The Act 'aims to improve the social, economic and cultural well-being of Wales by placing a duty on public bodies to think in a more sustainable and long-term way through seven goals'.[2] The public bodies include the devolved and local government, the Welsh National Health Service and various other institutions, such as Sport Wales and the National Library of Wales.

In terms of transparency and openness, the Act 'puts in place seven well-being goals that public bodies must work to achieve and take into consideration across all their decision-making' based on 46 indicators.[3]

Status

Midterm: Substantial

At the end of the first year of implementation, the government had made substantial progress on the commitment. The indicators and goals were developed after an extensive national conversation with civil society and other bodies.[4] Before becoming law parts of the bill were criticised but it changed as it developed.[5] The Welsh Government published the well-being objectives in November 2016.[6] The Welsh Commissioner for Future Generations welcomed the publication as a significant step forward for transparency.[7]

The government's first Annual Well-Being report for Wales, which makes up milestone 2, was slightly behind schedule but was published in September 2017.[8]

End of Term: Complete

The commitment was completed when the first Annual Well-Being report was published.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Major
Civic Participation: Major

The commitment has increased access to information by making more data available in an easier to use and access way, on the actions of government (and other) bodies across a range of subjects, with data on health, language and employment all published, for the first time, in one place and presented in an easy to interpret format, with links to sources and further explanation. The Well Being data covers 46 different areas, from air pollution to lifestyle choices, and museums to language abilities. Some of the data was already available but some appears to have been collated and further developed by the plan itself. The Welsh government pointed out that the commitment has led to 'additional breakdowns by geographical area or population group where this has been possible'.[9] Wales' chief statistician Glyn Jones said the commitment was 'important' in 'bringing together a range of statistics on a wide range of topics' that could work as a benchmark'.[10] In May 2018 the Future Generations Commissioner, reflecting on the law and data, praised the release but spoke of the need to keep information simple and involve the public in creation of the reports.[11]

In terms of civic participation, the well-being plan is specifically designed to encourage integration, collaboration and involvement and 'place well-being at the heart of regeneration policy'. One recent academic study argued that the well-being Act had been part of a suite of changes in Wales that had helped' increase opportunities for local people to have a voice in the planning process', though they 'warned that there must be awareness of pressures on overburdened, under-resourced local authorities'.[12] The law has led to experiments with

online toolkits, 'Shape my town', built to assist local community groups, and this has helped local groups get involved in urban development and planning projects in various Welsh towns, as well as Welsh National Parks.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Welsh Government, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en, and National Assembly for Wales Research Service, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: What is it and what does it mean for Wales?, https://assemblyinbrief.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/the-well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-what-is-it-and-what-does-it-mean-for-wales/

[2] The seven goals are a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales.

[3] The goals are listed here and fit with five long-term needs: Long-term thinking, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, Involvement, National Assembly for Wales Research Service, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: What is it and what does it mean for Wales?, https://assemblyinbrief.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/the-well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-what-is-it-and-what-does-it-mean-for-wales/

[4] WCVA, 'The Future Generations Act-All You Need to Know', https://www.wcva.org.uk/what-we-do/the-future-generations-(wales)-act-all-you-need-to-know, and WCVA, 'Talking Future Generations: The Conversation So Far' Stakeholder Event Report', https://www.wcva.org.uk/media/4657899/stakeholder-event-report-english-281016-small-without-watermark.pdf

[5] BBC, Welsh government's well-being bill has 'no clear purpose', http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-31802841

[6] Welsh Government, 'Written Statement - Taking Wales Forward: The Welsh Government's well-being objectives', http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2016-new/wellbeingobjectives/?lang=en

[7] Future Generations, Commissioner for Wales 'Commissioner responds to Welsh Government well-being objectives', https://futuregenerations.wales/news/commissioner-responds-to-welsh-government-well-being-objectives/

[8] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017, and Welsh Government (2017), Well-Being of Wales 2016-2017, http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2017/170925-well-being-wales-2016-17-en.pdf

[9] Welsh Government (2017), Well Being Report, https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/well-being-wales/?lang=en

[10] BBC (2017), Well-being progress made but challenges remain, report says, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-41386999

[11] Future Generations Commissioner Wales (2018), Well-being in Wales: the journey so far Future Generations Commissioner for Wales May 2018, http://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FGCW-1-year-Report-_English.pdf

[12] Jones, M. and Spence, A. (2017) Empowering local people through the planning process: The emerging practice of Place Planning and its contribution to community well-being in Wales. In: Brotas, L., Roaf, S. and Nicol, F., eds. (2017) Design to Thrive. Edinburgh, UK: Network for Comfort and Energy Use in Buildings, pp. 4493-4500

✪9. Well-being duty on specified public bodies in Wales

Commitment Text: *All public bodies, listed in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, have a duty to set and publish well-being objectives that outline how they will contribute to achieving each of the well-being goals and take reasonable steps to meet those objectives.*

Objective: *Requiring public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle; to require public bodies to report on such action.*

Status quo: *A more consistent approach across the public sector to decision making affecting the well-being of Wales.*

Ambition: *It will place a legal duty on specified public bodies to take account of the importance of involving people that reflect the diversity of the population in their decision making.*

Milestones:

1. *Legal duty comes into force (April 2016)*
2. *Public Bodies publish their first well-being objectives (April 2016 – May 2017)*
3. *Assessment of local well-being (April 2016 – May 2017)*

Responsible institution: Welsh Government

Supporting institutions: The 43 specified public bodies under the Act and Public Service Boards, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Auditor General for Wales

Start date: April 2016

End date: On-going

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
✪9. Overall			✔		✔	✔						✔				✔				✔	

Editorial note: *This commitment is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.*

Commitment Aim:

In 2015, the National Assembly of Wales passed the Well-being of Future Generations Act.[1] The Act 'aims to improve the social, economic and cultural well-being of Wales by placing a duty on public bodies to think in a more sustainable and long-term way through seven goals',

based on 46 indicators.[2] Public bodies must publish their strategy for achieving these seven goals.[3] Commitment 9 builds directly off Commitment 8 and overlaps considerably with it.

The Act establishes a total of 19 Public Services Boards (PSBs), one for each local authority/local government area in Wales, covering the 43 public bodies in the Act. The Members of the Board must include the local authority, the Local Health Board, the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority and Natural Resources Wales, as well as the option of a number of other bodies, such as the police. It must include at least one voluntary organisation.[4]

The commitment also creates opportunities for the public to become involved in decision making and discloses information on those decisions. If fully implemented the commitment would help promote openness and public discussion regarding long-term well-being in Wales. Making the participatory decision-making process legally binding would be a transformative change to government practice.

Status

Midterm: Complete

All milestones were implemented by the end of the first year of implementation.[5] In July 2017, the Welsh Commissioner for Future Generations praised the PSBs as having met milestones 2 and 3 by publishing all their objectives but warned that 'the work also highlights the real challenges that are faced to be properly prepared to consider the needs of future generations and plan for well-being.'[6] In terms of openness, the Commissioner advised of a 'need to dig deeper into data… Assessments should not just be a collection of data, they should be an opportunity to make connections between key issues'. She also noted that skills needed to be developed within organisations for this purpose.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Major
Civic Participation: Marginal

The commitment has increased access to information in a major way. Each of the public boards across Wales have published a set of objectives and well-being assessments. In May 2018 the Future Generations Commissioner, reflecting on two years of the law's operation, said, 'Public bodies have devoted much time and energy...publishing these objectives, working on assessments of well-being for their local area and developing joint well-being plans. PSBs published assessments of well-being for their locality, drafted objectives to improve well-being and consulted on these plans with their communities'.

Progress remains to be made on tasks including 'dating documents, explaining the status of the publication and keeping the information simple'.[7] Some documents are hard to understand and not always easy to find online. Other evidence supports increased civic participation. The Well-being Act had also helped stimulate public engagement in areas such as planning, though the same study 'warned that there must be awareness of pressures on overburdened, under-resourced local authorities'. Another observer highlighted the commitment's role in involving community groups in consultations and meetings around urban community-driven redevelopment.[8]

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

[1] Welsh Government, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en, and National Assembly for Wales Research Service, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: What is it and what does it mean for Wales?, https://assemblyinbrief.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/the-well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-what-is-it-and-what-does-it-mean-for-wales/

[2] The seven goals are a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales.
[3] The goals are listed here and fit with five long-term needs: Long-term thinking, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration Involvement, National Assembly for Wales Research Service, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: What is it and what does it mean for Wales?, https://assemblyinbrief.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/the-well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-what-is-it-and-what-does-it-mean-for-wales/
[4] Welsh Government, 'Public Service Boards', http://gov.wales/topics/improvingservices/public-services-boards/?lang=en
[5] Interview with Rhiannon Caunt, Welsh Government, 6 September 2017: Interview with Jetske Germing, Welsh Council of Voluntary Organizations, 8 September 2017.
[6] Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 'Commissioner responds to Welsh Government well-being objectives', https://futuregenerations.wales/news/commissioner-responds-to-welsh-government-well-being-objectives/
[7] Future Generations Commissioner Wales (2018), Well-being in Wales: the journey so far Future Generations Commissioner for Wales May 2018, http://futuregenerations.wales/resources_posts/well-being-in-wales-the-journey-so-far/
[8] Jones, M. and Spence, A. (2017) Empowering local people through the planning process: The emerging practice of Place Planning and its contribution to community well-being in Wales. In: Brotas, L., Roaf, S. and Nicol, F., eds. (2017) Design to Thrive. Edinburgh, UK: Network for Comfort and Energy Use in Buildings, pp. 4493-4500: Littlewood, J., & Davies, G. (2017). The Sustainable regeneration of the Swansea High Street-a cohesive community. Sustainability in Energy and Buildings: Research Advances ISSN 2054-3743 Vol. 6. No. 1 : pp.35-43 : seb17s-010

Methodological Note

The end-of-term report is based on desk research and interviews with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's self-assessment report; other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations; and the previous IRM progress report.

This report was based on a combination of desk research, the government's own self-assessments for the UK and Wales and communications with both officials and stakeholders. Information was also gathered from social media, emails and list serves of the UK open government network, both UK wide and at the level of the four nations.

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The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, to empower citizens, to fight corruption, and to harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and to improve accountability.