



Julia Lopez MP
Parliamentary Secretary
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
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UK Open Government Civil Society Network

By email

5 March 2021

Dear UK Open Government Civil Society Network members,

Thank you for your letter of March 2nd, calling on the United Kingdom to reclaim its place as a global leader in openness and democracy. I am responding to your letter in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet Office, responsible for the Government Digital Service.

I understand your concerns following the UK's second review following the development and publication of the fourth National Action Plan (NAP4). Allow me to reassure you that as a founding member of the Open Government Partnership, the UK remains deeply committed to upholding the core values of transparency, accountability, and public participation.

We recognise that there were challenges in the development and release of NAP4, and will integrate lessons learnt into the NAP5 process. However, positive work has continued, and policies reflecting the concerns of Civil Society have been developed, as evidenced in the recent 'Transforming Public Procurement' Green Paper.

We have learned the lessons from previous NAP cycles, and are committed to the following measures to ensure that we meet and exceed expectations of transparency and inclusivity in the development of our next generation of commitments:

1. A broader, more open public consultation during the Multistakeholder Forum (MSF) stage of the process. My officials facilitated a strategic discussion and planning meeting in December 2020, co-chaired by the Director-General of the Government Digital Service and the chair of the UK Open Government Civil Society Network. The meeting produced several thematic areas for development into working groups, which will be populated by both government stakeholders and civil society partners in the coming weeks for further discussion.
2. An action read out from the strategic discussion is publically available on the UK's Open Government Network website and will be available on the Government's website (GOV.UK) in due course. Additional documentation produced during the working groups will also be made available for public oversight.

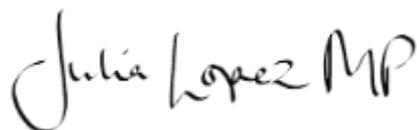
3. Officials have attended multiple Civil Society events, such as Open Government Network meetings to talk directly with external stakeholders, and to update the cross-government audience on the NAP5 process and highlight opportunities for further involvement.
4. My officials are exploring further options to work in conjunction with teams focused on open policy making and innovative participation methods, to support the working groups and deliver concrete commitments in time for the delivery of the NAP5 package within the agreed timescales.

I wish to reassure you that we regularly report against progress, and I am pleased to say the UK has delivered five of the eight commitments made in the fourth NAP to date, and we are confident that we will deliver all eight by the end of 2021. The UK has waived the option to extend the NAP delivery deadlines afforded due to the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the pace of delivery against its objectives.

I am happy to note that the strategic meeting of the MSF took place in December and that work is progressing on the development of the NAP5. In addition to these measures, I will be offering the Open Government Network an invite to a Multistakeholder event to discuss concerns, offer my assurances that work is continuing across government in service of this policy area, and officially begin the NAP5 planning process.

I look forward to working closely with the OGP and Civil Society over the coming months to deliver an ambitious package of commitments, and to overcome the challenges described in the recent report within the current Open Government Action Plan cycle.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Lopez MP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Lopez MP