



UK OPEN
GOVERNMENT
CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK

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Margot James MP
Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
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Dear Margot James MP

Delay to finalising the UK Open Government Action Plan

We write to you on the behalf of the UK Open Government Civil Society Network to express our disappointment and deep concern at the ongoing delay to the development and publication of the fourth UK Open Government Action Plan.

Since the foundation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011, the UK has been one of its leading participant countries. As first co-chair of the OGP, the UK secured its foundations and helped broaden the international initiative far beyond the original eight founding members to over 50 participating countries.

UK open government action plans have raised the bar and set the pace for open government reform globally. The UK's leadership on issues such as by introducing a public register of beneficial owners of companies, developing a cross-government anti-corruption strategy, and publishing UK aid funding and UK extractive companies' natural resource payments, has moved other countries and jurisdictions to introduce similar reforms.

These kinds of ambitious commitments are developed and implemented by reformers inside government, with close engagement by civil society and high-level political support. Unfortunately, the lack of high-level political support for this agenda currently has led to an ongoing delay to the development of the new UK action plan, to the extent that the UK Government has missed the deadline set by the OGP to submit its fourth action plan.

This risks undermining the UK's position as an international leader on open government, our role in setting the agenda on a global stage, and implementing domestic reform.

The current draft action plan is still awaiting final sign off from relevant ministers. While we appreciate the Government's dealing with Britain's Withdrawal Agreement with the European Union

is a national priority, ample time has passed for the fourth action plan to have been signed off and published within the OGP's 6-month submission window that ended on 31 December 2018.

We urge the UK Government to submit and publish the fourth UK Open Government Action Plan without further delay. We also ask for a meeting of the Open Government Multi-Stakeholder Forum as soon as possible to discuss these issues. Moving forward, we hope to see vocal Government support for the current action plan and the open government agenda.

Yours sincerely,

The Steering Committee of the Open Government Network