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Commitment Drafting: Open data

Lead steward(s) for this theme: Ellen Broad & Emeafa Doe



About

This document has been created for collaborative drafting of proposed commitments for the third UK Open Government Partnership National Action plan. A lead group should use this document to:

1. Review existing commitment ideas proposed through the Open Government Manifesto and identify key elements of these to draw upon;
2. Draft between one and three commitments that should be put forward by civil society for inclusion in the next UK OGP National Action Plan;

These proposals will be discussed by the UK Open Government Civil Society Network, and then discussed with government through an open process.

Contributions to this document are welcome. You can:

-  Add comments
-  Use suggestion mode to propose text changes

Remember to include your name along with your comments / suggestions if it is not automatically displayed.

Jump to:

[Drafting space](#) | Commitment templates ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) | [Manifesto Ideas](#)

Remember to also check existing commitments [from the 2013-2015 National Action Plan](#) that may relate to this theme, and build on these where relevant.



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Drafting space

Use this space for draft notes about potential commitments. You might also use this space to make a log of how you have drawn upon manifesto ideas in creating your proposed commitments.

Commitment 1 - As part of building a data infrastructure for the UK implement the UK's National Information Infrastructure: publish a plan and mechanism to compel the publication or creation, of core data assets that make up the UK's NII

Draft manifesto contributors: [kinzilla](#)

In its last action plan, the UK government committed to identifying and defining a UK National Information Infrastructure. Opening up core data sets with wide economic, social and environmental potential was at the centre of the NII planning. Now is the time to put this into action. The UK government needs to take concrete action to create a strong data infrastructure for people inside and outside government to build on.

As part of the National Information Infrastructure, the government should invest in the release - or, if not currently collected by government, the creation and maintenance of core data assets, along with organisations to operate and oversee those assets to ensure that data use and value is maximised. Land valuations, geospatial data and address data are just some data assets that have the capacity for immense economic and social impact.

Milestones

- Work with data users to define the kinds of data inside and outside government that are to be considered core data assets for the purpose of the National Information Infrastructure.
- Re-open dialogue on what information qualifies as socially, economically and environmentally valuable.
- Invest in making core data assets available as open data, including:
 - a national address database
 - a registry of land valuations of property information
 - geospatial data
- Identify/establish mechanisms for formal feedback/engagement with open data users as part of refining the NII and delivering future open data policies



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- Implement a framework for management of the NII that ensures data is maintained as much as possible using open standards, non-proprietary identifiers and open mechanisms for feedback and amendments.
- Identify the datasets that government departments are obligated by statute to release an outline a strategy as to how and when these will be released.
- Ensure that each core dataset released within the NII framework contains a clear course for community engagement including data users, service users, data subjects and data owners.

Commitment 2 - establish a formal mechanism for open data users to communicate with Government and help to deliver the UK's open data NAP commitments

Draft manifesto contributors: [Jim Killock](#)

The Open Data User Group (ODUG)'s mandate ended in May 2015. It's unclear whether there are any plans for a structured method of contributing user perspectives to government data policy making. The lack of representation for data users will limit the government's understanding of user needs for open data.

The UK government needs to commit to the creation of a formal mechanism to ensure user perspectives are a part of government open data policy making. The open data community can work with government to deliver its NAP open data commitments. The establishment of a representative group of open data users to replace ODUG will allow for better understanding of the interests and issues for open data users.

Milestones

- Establish a representative group to contribute to government open data policy making.
- Define a clear objective for this group and delineate appropriate powers to allow them to achieve their objectives. As part of their remit, provide them with the power to review data request and release processes and deliver actionable recommendations.
- Use this group to coordinate with open data users and highlight additional areas of government policy that can be made more transparent, and/or drive efficiencies, using open data

Commitment 3 - Require the use of open data by government in its decision making processes

Draft manifesto contributors: [Jim Killock](#), [Ellen Broad](#)

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At the moment, many departments release certain data assets as open data but don't use open data themselves to improve their decision making processes nor always encourage civil society and citizens to use the data to participate and hold the government accountable. For example, impact assessments accompanying policy decisions rarely ever include publication of the data and models underpinning the assessment. Nor is open data concerning government processes widely used to understand how these could be more efficient or transparent - i.e. data about FOI requests (how many, average response time, nature of request, data requested) for each department should be a fundamental part of reviewing the efficacy of FOI processes. In many cases, citizens and beneficiaries of government spending find it difficult to use and access data without the right training and user friendly tools.

Open data is an invaluable mechanism to enable greater transparency of government - how it works, how much things cost and where processes could be more efficient. However, it needs to be used so it can realise its accountability potential and drive change in government's performance and responsiveness.

Milestones

- Require that departments and agencies publish certain kinds of data as open data, including:
 - information about how certain personal data - like medical records and student records - are being accessed and shared, and by whom
 - Information about development spending - all departments, including non- DFID departments responsible for development activities (ODA and climate funding)) should aim for full publication of their total aid spending to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) by 2017.
 - information about fracking and planned policy reforms
 - Implement plans to improve the use of open data within government - for example, by requiring that impact assessments use open data sources, and make available the data and models underpinning them as open data
- Require that government improve publication processes by restricting the use of proprietary identifiers when publishing open data.
- Require that departments and agencies have a plan on how they will promote use of data internally and by its stakeholders:
 - For example, DFID should develop a two-year implementation plan for promoting aid data usage, including mapping its users of aid data, supporting capacity building and participation, by June 2016 and report on its implementation.
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Commitment Templates

A good commitment should be concise and clear. Aim for a maximum of 2 pages overall with all sections filled in.

Commitment 1: [title]

Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed

Main Objective

Brief Description of Commitment (140 character limit)

Relevance

Briefly describe the way in which this commitment is relevant to further advancing OGP values of access to information, public accountability, civic participation, and technology and innovation for openness and accountability.

Ambition

Briefly describe the intended results of the commitment and how it will either make government more open or improve government through more openness.



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Milestones

Please outline the verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfill the commitment.

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1	
2	



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Commitment 2: [title]

Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed

Main Objective

Brief Description of Commitment (140 character limit)

Relevance

Briefly describe the way in which this commitment is relevant to further advancing OGP values of access to information, public accountability, civic participation, and technology and innovation for openness and accountability.

Ambition

Briefly describe the intended results of the commitment and how it will either make government more open or improve government through more openness.



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Milestones

Please outline the verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfill the commitment.

#	
1	
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Most thematic areas will only need to have one or two commitments. But if you feel three distinct commitments are needed, you can propose a third here.



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Commitment 3: [title]

Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed

Main Objective

Brief Description of Commitment (140 character limit)

Relevance

Briefly describe the way in which this commitment is relevant to further advancing OGP values of access to information, public accountability, civic participation, and technology and innovation for openness and accountability.

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Milestones

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Open Government Manifesto Ideas

The following ideas were submitted through face-to-face events and online engagement for the [Open Government Manifesto](#) project.

Not all manifesto submissions will be able to feature within the commitments: but many will include important ideas that could feature within milestones, pre-amble or other places.

Where possible, include a note in your 'Drafting space' on the Manifesto ideas you have drawn upon.

Manifesto idea #28 - Civil society dialogue to decide what Open Data and open modelling is needed

Submitted by: JimKillock -

<http://www.opengovmanifesto.org.uk/ideas/civil-society-dialogue-to-decide-what-open-data-and-open-modelling-is-needed>

Each department should engage in an dialogue with civil society to understand what data is needed for their work to be properly understood.

The main reasons that data has been opened have included economic benefits and the ease of publishing. However this does not mean that the data that civil society needs to understand policy effects is prioritised for release as such. In some cases, the necessary data may not exist, or be of insufficient quality for release.

A dialogue with civil society would help departments prioritise data that is needed for accountability and transparency. It would mean that more useful data could be created or cleaned up, and help people in and outside of government agree on what data is needed or important for policy making.



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Manifesto idea #35 - Open access to UK land ownership & sales data / bigdata to help increase community, commons, food security, transparency and citizen participation

Submitted by: kinzilla -

<http://www.opengovmanifesto.org.uk/ideas/open-access-to-uk-land-ownership-sales-data-bigdata-to-help-increase-community-commons-food-security-transparency-and-citizen-participation>

Through the use of open data & by using price signals to help with land allocation decisions, open access to UK land ownership & sales data

To help increase & nurture community, commons, foodsecurity, transparency, resource management and essential citizen participation

Manifesto idea #40 - Embedding UK progress on open data

Submitted by: ellenbroad -

<http://www.opengovmanifesto.org.uk/ideas/embedding-uk-progress-on-open-data>

The Open Data Institute launched its open data roadmap for the UK in December 2014. It sets out steps the next UK government should take to continue to make progress on open data. For more information about the roadmap, see: <http://theodi.org/roadmap-uk-2015>

The steps are:

Continue to build a coherent open data strategy

Clearly embed open data within a wider data strategy

Appoint a Chief Data Officer for government to oversee this data strategy

Build data publication into all the Government Digital Service does

Open up more socially and economically beneficial data

Support UK trading funds to release more closed datasets as open data



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Use the National Information Infrastructure to plan for future releases

Include the release of open data in government procurement contracts

Support even more reuse of open data

Commit £10m to data training for government, business and citizens

Incentivise government to consume open data, not just publish it

Connect research and development frameworks to open data

The ODI's Open Data Roadmap builds on progress the UK has made to date opening up and encouraging the use of government data. Now, the focus must be on creating impact. The roadmap commitments offer a possible framework for commitments in an open government manifesto relating to open data.

Manifesto idea #43 - Open Data modelling for strategic policy areas

Submitted by: JimKillock -

<http://www.opengovmanifesto.org.uk/ideas/open-data-modelling-for-strategic-policy-areas>

Create fully open and reusable data models to replace closed data modelling where the modelling is considered a strategic element in policy making.

Data modelling is an important policy tool in many areas of government. Sometimes, these models are fully open and academics and civil society can look at them to understand assumptions and weaknesses. Where they are open, models can be improved through these processes

However this is inconsistent. Government should apply the idea consistently, on the basis that decision making should be open and transparent. Where models are critical to policy making, they should be fully open and not reliant on proprietary tools.

Closed models and algorithms however make the assumptions of policy makers



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obscure.

Additionally, the relevance of modelling may be less than is supposed: policy decisions may be more important the results of models when looking at the future. Government needs to be clear in stating what models can and cannot do, the tolerances they have and their limitations.

There is likely to be an issue with software and algorithms being proprietary in many cases. Policy makers will have to commit to moving away from such tools.

Manifesto idea #51 - Investing in data literacy in civil society

Submitted by: sj -

<http://www.opengovmanifesto.org.uk/ideas/investing-in-data-literacy-in-civil-society>

Data + people + action and feedback = open government. Open government is not just about releasing data into the wild and saying, 'here we go, we're open'. Truly sustainable, committed open government is about investing in their citizens to give them the skills to use the information that the UK government provides. In terms of open government data this means data literacy within civil society.

Providing skills training and building data capabilities at community level via intermediaries such as community groups or local journalists will allow more people to interact with the data and information that the UK government is providing.

More citizen interaction with the data means better and more localised use of the data to build knowledge, advocacy and action. More action means more feedback to the government on their decision-making, which helps to increase their accountability, which is after all the reason for being open in the first place.