



UK OPEN
GOVERNMENT
CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK

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The Rt Hon Ben Gummer MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General
70 Whitehall
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Dear Rt Hon Ben Gummer MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office

The future of open government

Thank you for your letter of 5th October, and particularly your commitment to continuing regular constructive discussions with the Open Government Network (OGN).

We want to take this opportunity ahead of the Paris OGP Summit and following the fifth anniversary of the initiative to outline some thoughts on what we consider to be the next phase for open government in the UK and internationally.

Important progress has been made over the past five years. At home, the OGP has provided the framework for a constructive ongoing dialogue between government and civil society, and helped secure significant commitments on issues such as company transparency, open contracting and the opening of government data. Internationally, the OGP has helped secure high-level political commitment to the principles of open government, rapidly built its reach from eight to seventy members, and supported an array of reforms with the potential for far-reaching impact.¹

The UK's leadership role - leading by example on co-creating the 2013-15 and 2016-18 action plans; championing international initiatives on, among other things, beneficial ownership, natural resource transparency, the Open Data Charter, and open contracting; and supporting the OGP membership of other countries - has been central to these achievements.

The next five years will require even greater leadership for open government and the OGP to deliver on its promise. With such leadership, open government reforms can help to tackle the pressing challenges that face society today, including reconnecting

¹ See 'Star Reforms in the Open Government Partnership':
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Star%20Commitments_0.pdf

institutions with the citizens whose lives they affect; achieving better health, education and other societal outcomes with less resources; and challenging the unaccountable power of global elites.

We call on you to use the OGP Summit to establish the UK's continued international leadership on open government, and work with us over the six months to identify and secure reforms that deliver positive change for citizens. As set out in commitment 13 and the joint statement on government and civil society collaboration, these would be introduced at the one year anniversary of the 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan in May 2017.²

Open government reforms can and must improve the lives of all citizens, particularly those who have been left behind by economic and social change. We look forward to working with you on this shared agenda.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Andy Williamson, Democratise
Anthony Zacharzewski, The Democratic Society
Colm Burns, Northern Ireland Open Government Network
Lucy McTernan, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Rachel Davies Teka, Transparency International UK
Simon Burall, Involve
Tim Davies, Practical Participation
Tim Hughes, Open Government Network coordinator

² Commitment 13: Government and Civil Society Collaboration:
<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-kingdom-third-national-action-plan-commitment-13-government-and-civil-society-collaboration-subject-to-review&sa=D&ust=1480013973060000&usg=AFQjCNGQSUQF0LNY4NJ8MV0dv0tX31Ec2w>