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# **Open Government Partnership New Zealand**

## **National Action Plan 2016-18**

**October 2016**

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## Foreword from the State Services Commissioner

The State Services Commission has accountability for managing New Zealand's obligations under the Open Government Partnership (OGP). This is our second National Action Plan and, like others in the 70 countries that have signed up to OGP in its short history, we are learning more with each plan we deliver.

New Zealand is internationally recognised as having one of the most open and transparent governments in the world. We also have one of the most trusted and high-integrity governments in the world, sitting at the top of most international measures.

We cannot rest on our laurels though, and we are committed to continuing to improve in all aspects of what we do. This includes making government more open, more transparent and more focused on the needs of New Zealanders. Being a member of the OGP, and committing to the aims and principles of the Partnership, is one of the ways we are seeking to do this.

New Zealand is starting from a high base of transparency and openness as we develop our second National Action Plan. I believe the commitments we are making here will stretch us and will help make our government even more open.

A major plank of our action plan is a commitment to improve compliance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). The OIA is a critical part of how the New Zealand government is transparent and accountable. It is essential that the Act is working effectively and that government agencies are meeting their obligations under it.

In 2015 the then Chief Ombudsman, Dame Beverley Wakem, released a seminal report on the operation of the OIA and how well government agencies were meeting their obligations. Dame Beverley made a number of insightful recommendations for how government can improve its performance and improve public confidence in how we comply with the Act. This is a theme that came through strongly in the submissions made by civil society during the development of our action plan.

A central aim of the work programme under the National Action Plan is to improve the consistency and quality of the data on compliance with the OIA, and to make this publicly available, in line with Dame Beverley's recommendations. We will also be working to improve the information and guidance on the OIA for both citizens and government agencies and support agencies to proactively make more information available.

The State Services Commission is committed to leading the work programme to improve agency practice around the OIA. A cross-agency team is being established to take this work forward without delay, working in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman.

The New Zealand government is in the midst of delivering a broad work programme to reorient the public service to focus on priority needs of New Zealanders, and to work collectively to meet them. This is challenging work for everyone involved – from frontline public servants to chief executives to government Ministers and the public we serve – and is leading to real improvements in how government operates.

The Better Public Services initiatives, along with other change programmes like an all-of-government information and communications technology (ICT) strategy, touch nearly every agency within New Zealand's public services and are requiring, in some cases, significant shifts in emphasis and orientation for agencies.

This National Action Plan builds on our first plan and takes into account the feedback we received from civil society and the OGP independent review mechanism. It represents a real step forward for transparency and openness and challenges government to keep doing more. We will continue to learn and improve as we develop future action plans and will continue to improve our engagement with civil society.

I would like to thank those who worked on this plan with us:

- individuals and community groups who contributed to the plan's development
- engage2, which led the engagement with New Zealanders
- our Expert Advisory Panel and the Stakeholder Advisory Group that preceded it
- our Officials Group
- the Department of Internal Affairs for its support of our online engagement.

The commitment and engagement from these groups and individuals in the development of this National Action Plan has made our commitments stronger and more targeted. What these diverse groups have in common is a commitment to the ideals of public service and to delivering for New Zealanders, both today and into the future, and I thank them for their input.

Peter Hughes, CNZM  
State Services Commissioner

## Introduction

The Open Government Partnership has at its heart a theme of continuously improving how government and citizens relate. The OGP recognises that the quality and effectiveness of government is increased by open government and by public participation in government. It encourages government and citizens to work together on actions that will make a measurable difference in openness and transparency, encourage public participation and enable greater use of technology.

New Zealand starts from a strong position in open government. We rate amongst the top countries in international measures and comparisons – for example, we rank first amongst 100 countries in the international Open Budget Survey. Our governing system does not tolerate corruption. We are also amongst the top countries for integrity and the rule of law, underpinned by an independent judiciary and professional police force. We have a politically neutral public service that has a responsibility to provide free and frank advice in delivering on the directions and priorities of the Government of the day. The Official Information Act (OIA) provides the foundation for the opening up of government information in New Zealand so that citizens can participate in decision-making and hold decision-makers to account.

Government services are being reshaped across New Zealand to put people at their centre and better meet community needs. A key part of this is government agencies sharing their open data and making it available to everyone so that all the government-held evidence to guide the best solutions is available. And it means government agencies joining up their knowledge, people and resources to work together on the complex problems and significant opportunities that require a collective approach.

The OGP has challenged New Zealand to commit to actions that will maintain our strengths but build beyond them in areas where greater progress or new initiatives are needed. It sets out a process of public engagement and participation to develop a two-year National Action Plan and track progress on implementing it.

Since we submitted our first plan in 2014, we have learnt lessons about how we can better reflect the work we are already doing to deliver on open government principles and how we can make further progress.

The first plan contained commitments that reflected work that was primarily already under way. These were:

- Report on progress towards Better Public Services Results on an ongoing six-monthly basis through existing progress reporting
- Focus on Result 10 of the Better Public Services Results: New Zealanders can complete their transactions with government easily in a digital environment, through ongoing six-monthly basis reporting
- The Government ICT Action Plan to 2017 is to be refreshed by 2014
- Focus on Action 13 of the ICT Strategy to be Open by default by June 2016
- The National Integrity System assessment report is consulted on and reported to ministers in February 2015

- Progress on the Kia Tūtahi (Standing Together) Relationship Accord is reviewed in 2015.

## Learning how to shape a good plan

Our understanding of how to develop and deliver a successful National Action Plan continues to expand. We are taking an approach of continuous improvement to delivering on New Zealand's obligations under the OGP, which means that we intend to continue to evolve our practice and improve over successive plan periods.

New Zealand was due to submit its second action plan in July 2016 but sought additional time to improve its engagement. Although in the end the time period was constrained, we were able to hear from many groups and individuals about the ideas they had to improve transparency, accountability, access to information and public participation in government. Details about our engagement programme can be found in Appendix A.

The State Services Commission (SSC), which has accountability for delivering a National Action Plan for New Zealand, has learnt a great deal during the country's first term in the OGP. To support its work, SSC has sought external advice about developing and reporting on New Zealand's action plans. An initial Stakeholder Advisory Group was set up in 2015 and when its term expired in June 2016, a new Expert Advisory Panel was formed. It has worked to support SSC to deliver a plan that reflects achievable, practical commitments. We are further supported by a group of government officials providing advice on their respective areas of expertise, including justice, data, and technology.

These groups worked alongside representatives of civil society in a day-long workshop at the end of our engagement programme to turn ideas about draft commitments into actions that agencies could deliver.

In an effort to continue to improve our engagement practices, one commitment in this National Action Plan has been developed around improving how we engage with communities in developing and implementing our action plans and commitments.

## The New Zealand context for OGP

The New Zealand government is regularly rated amongst the world's best for its openness and transparency and amongst the lowest on international corruption indexes. Efforts to improve the way government interacts with New Zealanders, driven by an extensive programme to improve public services, has seen government agencies work together to improve service delivery and to understand the needs of their customers so that services can be oriented around those needs. Two key result areas are also devoted to making it easier for businesses and individuals to do business with government in a digital environment. Alongside this, the government is working with New Zealanders to enable greater access and use of government-held data to better inform decision-making.

New Zealand's changing demographics show us that we face an increasing challenge to engage our diverse communities in the activities of government and the importance of their participation in decision-making. Statistics New Zealand projects that by 2038 Māori, Asian and Pacific peoples will make up 51 percent of the population, up from 34 percent in the 2013 Census.

There is a range of work under way across government to further the principles of open government. The commitments in New Zealand's National Action Plan cannot fully capture the breadth of these. These initiatives cover access to information, open data and technology.

Currently, this includes:

- [Chief Ombudsman's report on government OIA practices](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/newsroom/item/chief-ombudsman-releases-report-into-government-oia-practices) (<http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/newsroom/item/chief-ombudsman-releases-report-into-government-oia-practices>)
- Better Public Services, particularly [Result Areas 9 and 10](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/bps-interaction-with-govt) (<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/bps-interaction-with-govt>)
- [Government ICT strategy](https://www.ict.govt.nz/strategy-and-action-plan/) (<https://www.ict.govt.nz/strategy-and-action-plan/>)
- [LINZ Open Government Information and Data Programme](http://www.linz.govt.nz/about-linz/what-were-doing/projects/open-government-information-and-data-programme) (<http://www.linz.govt.nz/about-linz/what-were-doing/projects/open-government-information-and-data-programme>)
- [New Zealand Data Futures Partnership](http://datafutures.co.nz/) (<http://datafutures.co.nz/>)
- work under way by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to expand New Zealand Treaties Online (<http://www.treaties.mfat.govt.nz/>) – a home for information on all of New Zealand's international treaties, including those in negotiation – to include New Zealand's non-legally binding international instruments.

We know that it takes attention and diligence to maintain and advance the principles of openness and transparency that are cornerstones of New Zealand's approach to government.

In global measures of transparency and accountability, New Zealand ranks:

- first in the International Budget Partnership's biennial Open Budget Survey (2015)
- second out of 189 economies on the World Bank's assessment of how governments regulate commerce (2016)
- fourth out of 168 countries in Transparency International's 2015 Corruptions Perceptions Index
- fifth out of 180 countries in the 2016 World Press Freedom Index (9th in 2014, 6th in 2015)
- sixth out of 92 countries in the 2015 Global Open Data Barometer
- sixth out of 102 countries in the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index
- in the top 10 countries in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index
- tenth out of 133 countries on the 2016 Social Progress Index
- eighth in the E-Government Development Index and sixth in the E-Participation Index in the 2016 United Nations E-Government Survey of 193 countries.

Participation in the OGP provides another avenue to develop and strengthen our efforts in these areas. The commitments in this plan stretch us to improve in areas that are important to both New Zealanders and to government.

Rather than building on existing government work programmes, these commitments set out targeted, discrete pieces of work that will make a difference to openness, transparency and accountability and will help foster greater public participation in government.

These commitments will:

- further open up the government budgeting process
- improve access to official information and government practices around its release
- enhance access to government-held data
- improve people's access to legislation and government regulations
- improve how we engage with people in developing and delivering on our OGP commitments
- support the development of sound policy practices, including how government engages with people around issues that matter to them.

## Commitment 1: Open Budget

We will ensure the Budget process is open and transparent and there is an accountable process for public participation.

**Objective:** To promote public discussion/debate and participation through accessibility of the budget and include relevant groups outside of government in the formative phase of the Budget, ensuring they are informed about the process and issues.

**Status quo:** The Budget can be perceived as a closed process between agencies and the Government and information is not regarded as accessible. The Government has begun work to ensure that Budgets become focused on outcomes for citizens rather than funding for agencies.

**Ambition:** Making the Budget more accessible will promote discussion and debate. It will help ensure that central government spending is open and transparent. It will enhance public participation and confidence in the Budget process.

**Lead agency:** [The Treasury](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/) (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/>)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – May 2018

Commitment: Open Budget			
<b>OGP values</b>	Access to information, civic participation, public accountability, technology and information		
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New		
<b>Lead implementation organisation</b>	The Treasury		
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>	
Ask key stakeholder groups how the Budget could be made more accessible	January 2017	May 2017	
Invite feedback on the previous Budget – this means making it available in forms people can engage with, which could include machine readable data, plain English published material and visual presentations	January 2017	May 2018	
Provide Budget data in machine readable form – this could include open source formats	May 2017	May 2018	
Work with agencies that have expertise in presenting Budget data in ways that make it easy to understand	May 2017	May 2018	

## Commitment 2: Improving official information practices

We will improve government agency practices around requests for official information under the Official Information Act (OIA).

**Objective:** To make government information more accessible by adopting a consistent set of agency practices in response to requests for official information.

**Status quo:** Practice around how agencies handle requests for official information is not uniform, agencies are burdened by increasing administrative load around official information requests, and people find it hard to navigate the systems.

**Ambition:** We are committed to improving how government responds to requests for official information.

**Lead agencies:** [State Services Commission](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/) (<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/>), [Ministry of Justice](https://www.justice.govt.nz/) (<https://www.justice.govt.nz/>)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – June 2018

Commitment: Improving official information practices		
<b>OGP values</b>	Access to information, civic participation, public accountability, technology and information	
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New	
<b>Lead implementation organisations</b>	State Services Commission, Ministry of Justice	
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Ensure information about the OIA (how to make requests, etc) and responses to requests are easy to access on agency websites. This could include development of single OIA web pages for agencies	November 2016	March 2017
Publish OIA statistics (how many requests, time taken to respond, etc)	November 2016	March 2017
Develop a clear statement of government policy on proactive release of Cabinet papers and related material	October 2016	June 2017
Develop a suite of consistent measures about OIA performance	November 2016	November 2017
Improve access to official information by publishing responses to requests on government websites and developing principles for more proactive release	November 2016	February 2017
Agencies will be supported to deliver through the development of appropriate guidance and training	November 2016	June 2018

### Commitment 3: Improving open data access and principles

We will enhance access to information by reviewing and strengthening the principles under which New Zealand releases open data and information.

**Objective:** To review and strengthen the principles under which New Zealand releases open data and information.

**Status quo:** New Zealand has a set of principles guiding the management of government data and information, including proactive release in reusable formats. But the New Zealand principles lack the 2016 level of specificity in the Open Data Charter for data, and include wider information management principles that are still required.

**Ambition:** New Zealand has fully modernised and world-leading principles for government-held data and information that provide a strong foundation for open access to data and information, building capability for data reuse, improving the openness of government operations and supporting informed participation by citizens in government decisions through the availability of open data.

**Lead agencies:** [Land Information New Zealand](http://www.linz.govt.nz/) (http://www.linz.govt.nz/), [Department of Internal Affairs](https://www.dia.govt.nz/) (https://www.dia.govt.nz/)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – June 2017

Commitment: Improving open data access and principles		
<b>OGP values</b>	Access to information, public accountability, technology and information	
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New	
<b>Lead implementation organisations</b>	Land Information New Zealand, Department of Internal Affairs	
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Review potential adoption of the International Open Data Charter, using public feedback	October 2016	November 2016
Review New Zealand Data and Information Management Principles	October 2016	November 2016
Determine what principles will guide release of, and access to, New Zealand open data and information, using public feedback	November 2016	December 2016
Engage with citizens and government on application of the new/amended open data principles	1 February 2017	28 February 2017
Implement new/amended open data principles	March 2017	June 2017

## Commitment 4: Tracking progress and outcomes of open government data release

We will help government agencies improve public access to, and outcomes of, non-personal, government-held data by openly tracking progress on efforts to open up data stores.

**Objective:** To help drive the government agency culture change required to gain value from open government data.

**Status quo:** Open data is not currently managed through a set of consistent or cohesive objectives across government. One result of this is that government agencies have a limited understanding of how and why to address barriers to releasing open data.

**Ambition:** Government agencies will be knowledgeable about what data they should and should not publicly release and why, how to remove obstacles to reuse, and will be consistently applying these filters to their data holdings. This will increase the amount and quality of data released.

**Lead agencies:** [Land Information New Zealand](http://www.linz.govt.nz/) (<http://www.linz.govt.nz/>), [Department of Internal Affairs](https://www.dia.govt.nz/) (<https://www.dia.govt.nz/>), [Statistics New Zealand](http://www.stats.govt.nz/) (<http://www.stats.govt.nz/>)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – June 2018

Commitment: Tracking progress and outcomes of open government data release		
<b>OGP values</b>	Access to information, civic participation, public accountability, technology and information	
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New	
<b>Lead implementation organisation</b>	Land Information New Zealand, Department of Internal Affairs, Statistics New Zealand	
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Develop an open government data action plan, based on feedback gathered from the open data community and government officials	October 2016	February 2017
Publish the action plan	March 2017	April 2017
Develop a public dashboard for reporting against the action plan goals	April 2017	June 2017
Seek public feedback on the proposed public dashboard	May 2017	June 2017
Regularly update the public dashboard on government progress toward the goals	July 2017	Ongoing

## Commitment 5: Ongoing engagement for OGP

We will build a flexible and enduring platform for engagement between the New Zealand government and New Zealand communities around the Open Government Partnership.

**Objective:** To ensure that government and communities are able to engage on open government topics using a variety of stable methods – including online platforms and face-to-face meetings and other forums – as part of a wider engagement plan.

**Status quo:** In facilitating the development of New Zealand’s National Action Plan for the OGP, the State Services Commission (SSC) has built an online platform to engage with New Zealand communities, using both government tools and software provided by an independent vendor. The SSC wants to build on this to improve engagement over the life of the next action plan. It is also supported in its work by an independent Expert Advisory Panel and a government officials group. The SSC intends to expand the ways people can get involved over the duration of the plan.

**Ambition:** The SSC is committed to building a stable, fit-for-purpose platform for New Zealanders to engage with their government, using the technology and channels that people expect to use in a modern society. It will work toward ways of managing New Zealand’s participation in OGP that will reflect a spirit of co-creation with communities.

**Lead agency:** [State Services Commission](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/) (<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/>)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – June 2018

Commitment: Ongoing engagement for OGP		
<b>OGP values</b>	Access to information, civic participation, technology and information	
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New	
<b>Lead implementation organisation</b>	State Services Commission	
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Work with the Department of Internal Affairs to improve government’s access to, and use of, digital public engagement tools	November 2016	June 2018
Work with the Expert Advisory Panel to decide how best to report on progress against OGP milestones	November 2016	March 2017
Engage with New Zealanders to develop the approach to the next plan	October 2017	January 2018

## Commitment 6: Improving access to legislation

We will improve access to legislation by ensuring there is a single source for this information online.

**Objective:** To improve access to legislation by publishing all subordinate instruments (regardless of who drafts them) on the New Zealand Legislation (NZL) website. The result will be a single, comprehensive, official, public source of all New Zealand’s legislation.

**Status quo:** There is no single place where people can see all of New Zealand’s legislation. All Acts of Parliament are published in full on the NZL website. Subordinate instruments (often referred to as regulations) are made under the delegated law-making authority of Parliament. Those that are drafted by the Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) are called legislative instruments and are also published in full on the NZL website. Those that are drafted by government departments and agencies, and by other non-governmental bodies, are published either in the *Gazette* or on a variety of different websites, in newspapers or are not readily available to the public. This has a direct impact on the cost of doing business in New Zealand, people’s ability to comply with the law, and people’s rights.

**Ambition:** We are committed to improving access to legislation – access to the law is central to the rule of law, and people expect easy access to legislation.

**Lead agency:** [Parliamentary Counsel Office](http://www.pco.parliament.govt.nz/) (<http://www.pco.parliament.govt.nz/>)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – June 2018

Commitment: Improving access to legislation		
<b>OGP values</b>	Access to information, civic participation, public accountability, technology and information	
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New	
<b>Lead implementation organisation</b>	Parliamentary Counsel Office	
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Consultation and engagement with all involved actors, including all government and regulatory agencies and Crown entities that produce legislation or regulation	March 2016	Ongoing through project
Consideration for approval by Cabinet	November 2016	August 2017

## Commitment 7: Improving policy practices

We will improve knowledge of tools and techniques policy makers can use to create more open and user-led policy.

**Objective:** To ensure that policy advice to government is better informed by insights from those most affected by government policy and programmes, by input from diverse points of view, and by data and evidence.

**Status quo:** Commitments to consult interest groups have long been part of New Zealand policy making – for example, it is written into New Zealand’s CabGuide (Guide to Cabinet and Cabinet Committee Processes) and regulation analysis practices. We can improve consultation practices, for example, by exploring digital tools and evolving fit-for-purpose participatory decision-making practices. There is also an array of new approaches, to engage directly with ‘customers’, or those that will be affected by government decisions, that can add value to the design of policy and subsequently deliver greater public value.

**Ambition:** We will create accessible, easy-to-digest guidance material on: being an ‘intelligent customer/user’ of data and evidence; methods for gathering and generating insights from others, particularly those directly affected by policy and public services; using collaborative approaches, so that policy is informed by a broad range of input and expertise and meets user needs; testing and improving policy and services with citizens-as-users.

**Lead agency:** Head of the Policy Profession, the [Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet](https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/) (<https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/>)

**Timeline:** October 2016 – June 2017

Commitment: Improving policy practices		
<b>OGP values</b>	Civic participation, public accountability, technology and information	
<b>New or ongoing commitment</b>	New	
<b>Lead implementation organisation</b>	Head of the Policy Profession, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	
<b>Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Map evidence and insights ecosystem, existing practice, expertise and guidance sources	September 2016	October 2016
Test buy-in and support for all-of-government guidance	October 2016	November 2016
Design prototype and refine the format of the guidance for optimal usability	October 2016	December 2016
Co-produce contents with, and for, the government policy community	December 2016	April 2017
Launch and commence change management and communications campaign	April 2017	June 2017

## Appendix A – Plan development and engagement

### *He waka eke noa*

A canoe we are all in, with no exception

Being part of the Open Government Partnership is to recognise that government and citizens are all in the same *waka* – the Māori term for canoe.

The engagement approach developed for *New Zealand's National Action Plan: 2016-18* was catalysed by a call for a more inclusive approach by civil society, reinforced through the Independent Review Mechanism. There was a desire to increase the scope and span of engagement in three key areas to:

- broaden engagement, so more civil society voices could be heard
- partner with civil society more effectively, so new commitments could be designed together
- dedicate more time to consultation.

The engagement that facilitated this plan represents an increase in the scope of consultation and the partnership used to develop commitments. However, we acknowledge that this plan would have benefitted from more time, specifically to:

- enable wider awareness-building activities – encouraging greater involvement
- leverage complementary events, like conferences and community meetings
- allow more time for comment from, and commitment-building with, New Zealand communities.

Given the short timeframe, we are especially grateful to our partners in civil society and government who were able to engage, at pace, in the complexities of designing commitments, which will further enhance the openness of government in New Zealand.

### Developing this plan

#### *Schedule and submissions*

The change in publishing date of New Zealand's action plan, from June to October, was posted on SSC's website in April 2016. It invited comment and four submissions were received. The responses covered these topics:

- two expressed concern in the delay and criticised the approach taken to engagement in our previous action plan, with one suggesting that an online wiki approach, supported by workshops and public meetings, would deliver better collaboration with civil society
- one suggested creating a commitment around organic food and public transportation
- one suggested public consultation in connection with universities and town events.

#### *Start Local conference*

As part of developing an engagement plan and exploring possible commitments with civil society, SSC developed a workshop as part of the *Start Local. Let it*

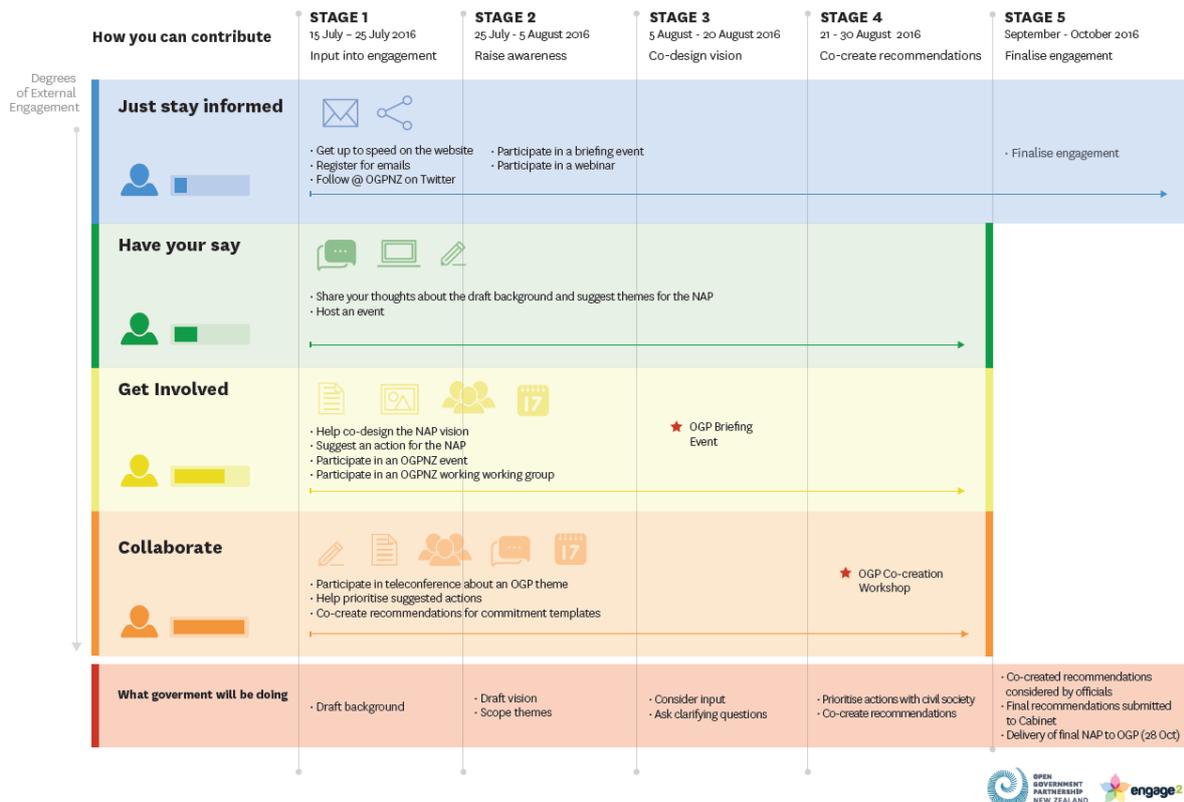
happen, make it work conference in June 2016. The conference was sponsored by Inspiring Communities, Victoria University's Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, and Local Government New Zealand. Four key themes were discussed between government and civil society:

- the need to strengthen relationships, communication, and accountability between government (central and local), iwi and civil society
- for the national action plan to emphasise outcomes, not outputs
- the need for definitions and language used in and around the action plan to encourage New Zealanders to play a part in shaping open government
- open data being seen as a critical enabler of open government, including open information about government.

### Independent facilitators

In July 2016 SSC commissioned engage2 to raise awareness about the OGP and to invite New Zealanders to participate in the development of the national action plan.

Engage2 designed an engagement programme to encourage people to comment on the proposed background and vision sections of the draft action plan, to suggest actions and to work with government officials to jointly draft recommendations for government to consider for inclusion.



### NZ's national action plan 2016-18 development timeline

In July 2016 SSC released the [timeline](#) (PDF, 52KB). It was also on engage2's website in July 2016.

## Civil society contributions

The civil society groups Hui E! and the Environment and Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa New Zealand (ECO) surveyed their networks to facilitate and support community engagement. Hui E! provided a selection of prioritised submissions on behalf of its civil society membership through engage2's wiki site.

Hui E!'s submissions communicated the need for:

- increased connections between government and civil society
- affirmations of the right of civil society and citizens to speak freely
- increased openness, transparency and accountability within the [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz) website.

A member of its leadership team joined with SSC in September 2016 to further shape commitments aimed at advancing community engagement.

## Stage 2

Stage 2 of the engagement ran from 25 July to 5 August 2016. During this stage 28 people provided 29 inputs on the background and vision of the draft action plan.

### Numbers of submissions by stakeholder type

Stakeholder type	Number of submissions
Business	1
Citizen	18
Community Group	2
Local Government	1
Other	6

### Number of submissions by theme

Theme	Number of submissions
Public Integrity	17
Public Resources	6
Public Service	5

### Summary of online feedback

Feedback about the draft strongly emphasised the need for more engagement by government with New Zealand communities. There were also themes around improving agency practices around the Official Information Act, anti-corruption measures, and fiscal transparency.

There were clear differences across submitters' opinions, with statements asking that open data be a critical feature of the plan and those opposing its inclusion. A number of statements requested that specific data programmes not be included in the action plan. Some submissions suggested that the programme in the action plan should continue the work begun in *New Zealand's Action Plan: 2014-16* and

others asked us to be more ambitious and not include extensions of the previous commitments. We have taken on board feedback from the OGP's independent reviewer, and other submitters, and opted to start afresh with a suite of new commitments.

### *Stage 3*

Stage 3 of the engagement process ran from 5 to 24 August 2016. It included public meetings, a wiki site where people could provide ideas for commitments, teleconferences, webinars, and a conference workshop.

#### **Public meetings**

Public meetings were held in Auckland and Christchurch on 17 and 23 August respectively. Awareness was built through an online event tool, stakeholder networks, community group newsletters, social media and the engage2 blog.

#### *Auckland*

The Auckland event on 17 August was supported by Victoria University's Institute for Governance and Policy Studies. This support included hosting the event on its Auckland campus and providing materials for the event.

The workshop was noted by participants as a positive first step in increasing openness and broader views in the development of the action plan. For some participants this was their first engagement with OGP, rather than using the online engagement platforms.

There were three key areas of discussion:

1. Engagement from government
2. Strengthening practices around the Official Information Act
3. Transparency and accountability in decision-making in government.

Overarching approaches to the action plan were discussed including:

- ensuring that the government was willing to listen to, and act in response to, the concerns of New Zealand communities
- ensuring the new plan included new commitments, rather than simply reflecting ongoing government work
- that the action plan should be made up of a number of small steps building toward a more transparent and accountable future for New Zealand.

#### *Christchurch*

There were five key areas of discussion in Christchurch. These were:

1. The need for increased opportunity for engagement with government, at both central and local government level, where there was a presumption of equality between the two parties inherent in the process
2. The challenge civil society organisations have in responding to government requests for engagement, given tight resources
3. The need for access to government-held data and questions about the use of copyright on government websites
4. The strengthening of the application and approach used by government with requests for official information

5. The use of the *International Association for Public Participation's* spectrum of public participation to define and communicate the level of government engagement.

### **Conference attendance**

#### *OS//OS*

*Open Source//Open Society (OS//OS)* ran on two days in Wellington in August. This conference explored how technology and open ways of working can transform life, work, organisations and society. On 23 August SSC co-hosted a session at the conference to develop commitments and themes for the next action plan.

Three themes were discussed:

1. How can government make it easier for people to find out about opportunities to engage in decision-making processes? How can we make the decision-making process more transparent?
2. How can technology increase engagement with government?
3. How could young people be more involved in engagement with government?

Outputs from this discussion were included in a co-creation workshop in Wellington on 26 August where government officials, community groups and individuals worked together to draft possible commitments for the plan.

### **Online feedback**

In August, 64 people provided 87 submissions on the wiki site.

Of the 87 submissions, eight themes emerged:

1. Community group capacity and participation in government
2. Fiscal transparency
3. Involving citizens in public policy and programme development
4. The Official Information Act
5. Ongoing OGP engagement
6. Open data
7. Standards and culture around open data/open information
8. Transparency.

## Number of submissions by theme

Stage 3 Theme	Number of Actions
Civil Society capacity and participation	16
Fiscal transparency	8
Involving citizens in public policy and programme development	15
Official Information Act	13
Ongoing OGP engagement	1
Open data	13
Standards & culture around open data / open information	8
Transparency	13

### Stage 4

Stage 4 of the engagement process ran from 21 to 30 August 2016.

#### *Co-creation workshop*

A co-creation workshop was held in Wellington on 26 August 2016. This included a webcast of the scene-setting presentations live from 9am for those who could not travel to the event.

Thirty people participated in the workshop: individuals; representatives of non-government organisations; and officials from government agencies (including the Department of Internal Affairs, Land Information New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Treasury, the Ministry of Justice, and the State Services Commission).

The workshop was divided into two stages. In the first, submissions were discussed and prioritised. In the second, participants attempted to complete OGP commitment templates, drawing on the submissions under each theme.

These templates were provided to SSC to continue the conversation with government agencies that might have accountability to deliver the proposed commitments.

### Engagement highlights

- 845 stakeholders directly informed about the opportunity to participate in the process from 8 to 30 August 2016
- 87 submissions on the wiki site
- 30 people participated in the co-creation workshop in Wellington.

While this programme marks a sizeable increase in the scope of engagement and awareness-raising activities within the development of this action plan over the 2014-16 plan, we recognise there remains a great deal of scope for improvement. We see the greatest areas for improvement to be around the time allocated for commitment and plan development and in making better use of technology to further increase public involvement.