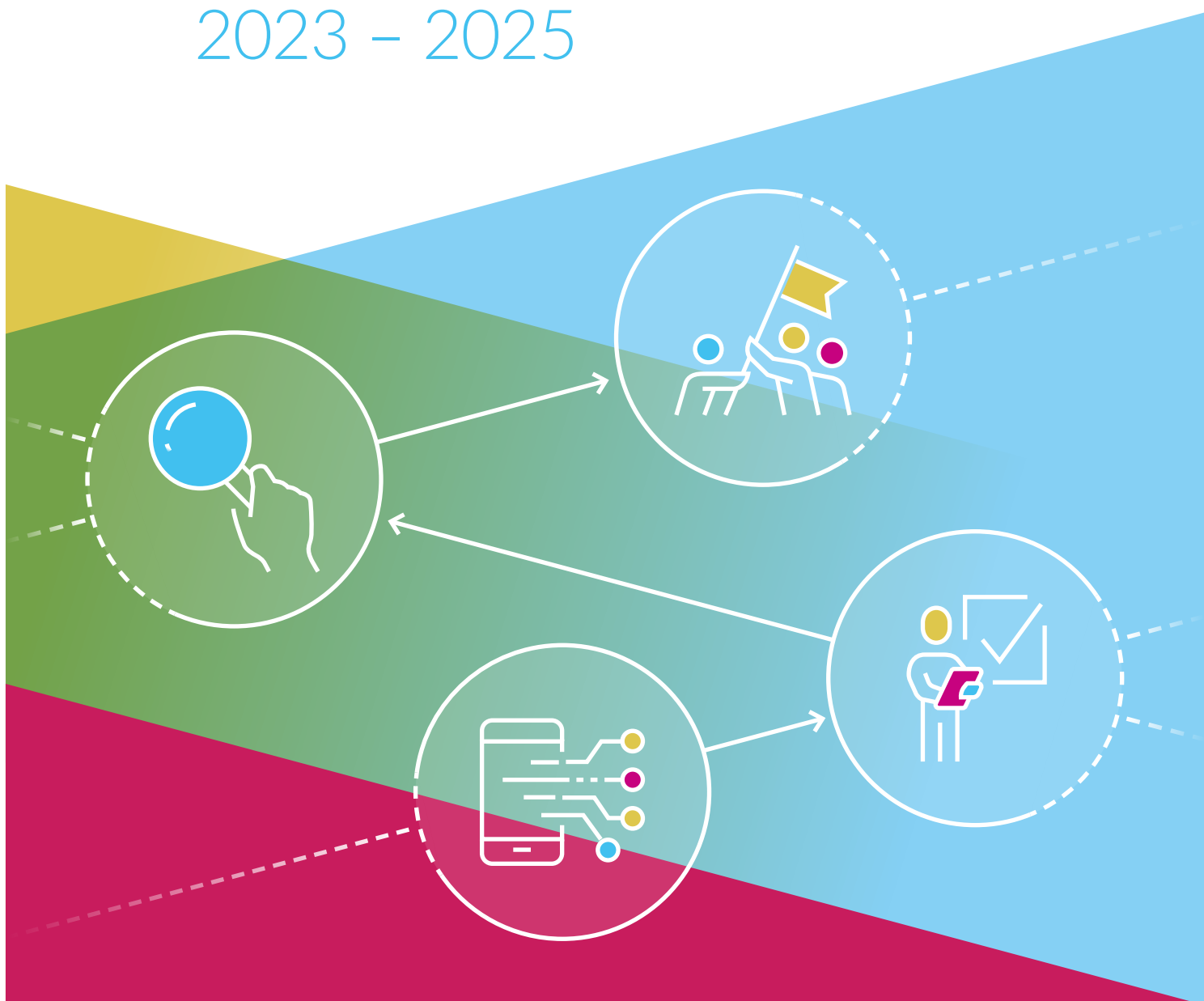




# Ireland's Fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2023 – 2025





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# Foreword from Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform

On behalf of the Government, I am very pleased to present Ireland's fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is based on the belief that democratic government must be accountable, accessible and transparent to its citizens. This is the essence of democracy.

As a government we remain committed to developing a just and inclusive society. We have made a commitment to continue and reinvigorate participation in OGP in the Programme for Government (2020).

Ireland has been a member of the OGP for almost a decade now. The Government's decision to seek membership of the OGP was based on the belief that the aims of OGP would strongly reinforce and add further depth to Ireland's ongoing program of wide-ranging democratic reform.

Across Government, extensive work is being done to strengthen transparency, accountability and strengthen citizen participation. Government alone

cannot solve complex policy issues. We have learned from experience that when citizens and civil society organisations are engaged in public policy making, it leads to more evidence-based decisions and leads to policies and services that are well designed to respond to people's needs.

In 2021, my Department established Ireland's OGP Round Table. This is a multi-stakeholder forum, made up of representatives from the Civil Service and from Civil Society. This Round Table works collaboratively to ensure a consistent, value-adding and meaningful approach to the co-creation of national action plans, containing concrete commitments to advance the agenda of open government, democracy and to monitor their subsequent implementation.

Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan, which covers the period of 2023-2025, makes commitments under the following **four themes**:

			
<p>Increase and promote the practices and impact of Open Research and Open Data.</p>	<p>Engage more fully and more effectively with citizens about policies and plans that are going to affect their lives.</p>	<p>Make Government more transparent and accountable through development of a modernised ethics statutory framework.</p>	<p>More effective engagement and communication with the community and underrepresented groups.</p>

The **seven commitments** that will be delivered and monitored under Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan are:

<b>A</b>	To improve the quality and quantity of data published on the open data portal Data.gov.ie and to increase the engagement with data publishers and users and directly between publishers and users.
<b>B</b>	Establish an open research partnership and agree a framework for creating a culture of open research in criminal justice.
<b>C</b>	To produce and promote a best practice model of public consultation and involvement in policy development.
<b>D</b>	To support more inclusive policy making working with the Community and Voluntary Sector.
<b>E</b>	To strengthen, modernise, simplify and streamline the statutory framework for ethics/standards in public office with a robust institutional framework for oversight, investigation and enforcement.
<b>F</b>	To ensure effective engagement with communities, particularly under represented communities, on local elections.
<b>G</b>	Working with NGO partners to adapt and, where necessary develop bespoke messaging, to raise awareness of Domestic Sexual and Gender- Based Violence (DSGBV) and the supports available among marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.

These commitments will be delivered through the leadership and collaboration across five Government Departments.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in the development of this Action Plan. These include the Open Government Partnership Round Table, the Secretariat, civil servants, and the many individuals, communities and civil society organisations who have given their valuable insights to make this an Action Plan that reflects the issues at the heart of Open Government in Ireland.

It is with pride that I look back at what the Government of Ireland has accomplished as a member of the Open Government Partnership. I look forward to the next two years as we advance the commitments set out in this National Action Plan.

# Foreword from Civil Society (OGP) Round Table Members

This National Action Plan is the result of the continuing work of the Round Table of civil servants and civil society representatives to identify concrete steps to develop more transparent, accountable and participatory governance in Ireland. We thank the public for their engagement with the public engagement process through written submissions and online sessions, and we thank our civil service colleagues for their courtesy and their diligence as we developed this Plan together. We are glad to see progress in opening up areas like justice, and the prospect of improved dialogue in relation to Open Data.

That said, there are key issues to be addressed for the future. For us, there is a lot of room for increasing the ambition level for open government in Ireland. Some of the commitments provide for continuity or incremental change rather than anything transformational. In particular, we are disappointed that more progress could not be made to build dialogue with citizens at community level and as a result, some of our members do not endorse the commitments in this area.

Open government needs ambition, and that requires political commitment. Reforming the structures of Ireland to be fit for the mid-21st century, to make them straightforwardly accountable and to involve citizens in decisions which affect them ultimately requires changes in the structures of power. Politicians as well as administrators and civil society all need to play their role in delivering this change.

More specifically, we think that many of the commitments in this plan could have been more concretely stated, and more specific in the detail of how they will be delivered. Some of the commitments provide detail and a plan for the whole 2023-2025 period. Others are shorter and less specific about milestones and as a result progress will be more difficult to monitor. The Round Table carried out a well-designed public engagement process but its impact on the final plan is not as apparent as we would have liked.

We call for sufficient resources to be committed to design, implement, monitor and properly assess initiatives around open government. A lack of resources on the civil society side has certainly hampered our activities and effectiveness in relation to this plan.

Whilst we have some misgivings, we welcome the progress being made. We look forward to playing a full role in the planned review of the Round Table's structure and we hope that it will result in Ireland developing a clearer process for opening up government - making government transparent accountable and responsive to those it serves and having citizens participate in decisions that affect them. This process can then provide the basis for civil society, elected officials and public servants to work together for change.

We would welcome feedback from the public about the plan, and the implementation of open government in Ireland.

# 1

## Open Government Partnership and background to Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan



# 1. Open Government and Democracy in Ireland

Open government is defined as “a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth”.<sup>1</sup> Ireland is a strong democracy with a firm commitment to open government as demonstrated by our performance on relevant global rankings and our participation in international open government initiatives including the Open Government Partnership.

Some relevant indicators:

- In 2022, Ireland ranked 9.13 out of 10 on the *Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index*, ranking eighth globally and seventh regionally in Western Europe and being classified as a full democracy.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2022, Ireland ranked 10 out of 180 countries on the *Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)* conducted by Transparency International.<sup>3</sup>
- Ireland ranked above the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average in many measures of reliability and fairness in the 2021 *OECD Trust Survey*. Eighty three percent of Irish respondents were satisfied with access to information about administrative procedures and seventy-six percent believed that any application they make for a government benefit or service would be treated fairly.<sup>4</sup> For both of these specific indicators, these are the highest rankings among OECD countries.
- The 2021 *OECD Trust Survey* outcomes for Ireland also demonstrated confidence in our public institutions with seventy-five percent for An Garda Síochána and sixty-eight percent for the Courts and Legal System, while a sixty-eight percent trust score in Civil Servants

compares well with the OECD average of fifty percent.<sup>5</sup> The majority of respondents (seventy percent) were also satisfied with the education system and administrative services (sixty-three percent).

The *OECD Public Governance Committee (PGC)* launched the five year *OECD Reinforcing Democracy Initiative* at a Ministerial Meeting of the PGC in November 2022. Ireland is represented on the PGC by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform (DPENDR). In this context, Ireland is also chair of the *OECD Trust Advisory Board* for 2023/2024.

## The Open Government Partnership

The Open Government Partnership is a global initiative launched in 2011. Its vision is “of open governments working in partnership with civil society and people to strengthen democracy and deliver better societal outcomes.”<sup>6</sup>

OGP's membership consists of 75 countries and 104 local governments representing more than two billion people. Ireland and the other members have committed to upholding the principals of open and transparent government by endorsing the Open Government Declaration.<sup>7</sup>

Their shared mission is to “inspire, connect and enable an ever-growing community of reformers and champions from government and civil society to take action together”.

OGP is not a ‘talking shop’ and the focus is on developing and implementing a National Action Plan to take practical steps towards increased transparency, accountability and participation.

The OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) reports on how all countries meet the guidelines in

1 Source: OECD Recommendation to Council on Open Government at <https://web-archiv.eu.org/2018-05-04/478780-oecd-recommendation-of-the-council-on-open-government-en.pdf>

2 <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2022/>

3 Source: <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/ireland>

4 Source: OECD Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/building-trust-to-reinforce-democracy\\_b407f99c-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/building-trust-to-reinforce-democracy_b407f99c-en)

5 Source: OECD Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/building-trust-to-reinforce-democracy\\_b407f99c-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/building-trust-to-reinforce-democracy_b407f99c-en)

6 Source: [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/strategy-2023-2028/#toc\\_1](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/strategy-2023-2028/#toc_1)

7 Source: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/process/joining-ogp/open-government-declaration/>



co-creating their plans and delivering commitments over the period.

## The Open Government Partnership in Ireland

Ireland became a member of OGP in July 2014, publishing the first OGP National Action Plan (2014 – 2016), followed by the second, NAP2 (2016 – 2018) and the third, NAP3 (2021 – 2023).

NAP1 promoted citizen participation in policymaking, strengthened governance and accountability and advanced the Government's Open Data strategy. Its major achievements included legislation to regulate lobbying, protect whistle-blowers and reform of the Freedom of Information and ethics regimes.

NAP2 aimed to improve policymaking and the delivery of services, further strengthen our systems of governance and accountability and prevent corruption.

NAP3 commitments focused on reviewing *Ireland's Statutory Framework for Ethics in Public Life*, Freedom of Information (FOI) regime, and *Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015*. Progressing civic participation with the objective of further enhancing proactive and meaningful participation and engagement with citizens in the decisions that affect them. Strengthening inclusion and civic deliberation in local decision making for Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs).

In 2020, the Irish Government made a commitment to continue and reinvigorate participation in OGP in the Programme for Government. In 2021, as part of reinvigorating Ireland's OGP involvement and arising from the OGP Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) 2019 Report Recommendation, Ireland established a multi-stakeholder forum called the OGP Round Table.<sup>8</sup> The Round Table consists of six Civil Society members and six government Department members (see annex A for list of members). The role of the Round Table is to work together to monitor and co-create the National Action Plans and broadly to progress the open government agenda in Ireland. There was extensive discussion and consultation between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Open Government Association of Ireland (OGAI), to devise the Round Table multi-stakeholder forum terms of reference. Ireland's Round Table members then took on the challenge of engaging in an expedited process devised to co-develop the third National Action Plan that was published in 2021. The Terms of Reference for the Round Table can be found [here](#). The OGP Round

Table have also been involved in the full process of the development of the NAP4 – further details are provided below.

## Irish Government Policy

The work of the Round Table supports and aligns with extensive work across all of government to strengthen transparency, accountability and participation. The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) has responsibility for Government Reform that includes taking the lead on policy development that progress transparency and accountability. In this role DPENDR holds responsibility for supporting Ireland's membership of OGP and provides the Secretariat and Co-chair for the OGP Round Table meetings.

The work of the Round Table supports and aligns with extensive work across all of government to strengthen transparency, accountability and participation. These include but are not limited to:

- **Citizens Assembly** (Department of an Taoiseach) – promotes deliberative democracy, giving voice to people living in Ireland and placing them at the heart of important legal and policy issues facing Irish society.<sup>9</sup>
- **National Civic Forum** (Department of Rural and Community Development) – supports participative and deliberative approaches for developing public policy through formal dialogue with the Government and the Community and Voluntary Sector.
- **Government strategy for the community and voluntary sector** (Department of Rural and Community Development) – supports the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024. The strategy outlines a vision to “create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members.
- **Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working** (Department of Rural and Community Development) – adopted by Government in 2022 and disseminated to all Government Departments, the values and principles underpin all engagements between the state and civil society organisations.
- **National Counter Disinformation Strategy Working Group** (Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media) – plans to coordinate sectoral efforts to combat disinformation and provide a joined-up

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ireland-end-of-term-report-2016-2018/>

<sup>9</sup> Source: <https://citizensassembly.ie/about/>

approach that aims to reduce the creation and spread of false and harmful material to combat the damaging impact of disinformation on Irish society and democracy.

- **National Youth Assembly Ireland** (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth) - consultative forum for young people between the ages of 12 – 24 years to ensure the voice of children and young people are heard by government and decision- makers.
- **Preparation of legislation to strengthen transparency and accountability** (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform) including the Freedom of Information Act 2014, Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and Standards in Public Office Act 2001.

The principles of OGP also align with Better Public Services, the Public Service Transformation 2030 Strategy, published in May 2023. It is a transformation strategy to deliver for the public and build trust. It is framed around three core themes:

### 1. Digital and Innovation at scale



### 2. Workforce and Organisation of the Future



### 3. Evidence-informed policy and services designed for and with our public



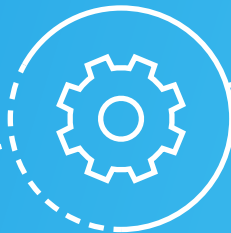
Open Government underpins all three pillars and is particularly relevant to the third pillar “evidence-informed policy and services designed for and with our public”. Trust is one of the key outcomes underpinning the strategy. In delivering the strategy, the Public Service will be guided by drivers of trust i.e. responsiveness, reliability, integrity, openness, and fairness to ensure it serves the public with transparency and integrity and builds trust in government and public services.

Further information on Ireland's membership of the OGP is available on Ireland's Open Government website.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Source: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/d79a2-open-government-in-ireland/>

# 2

## Summary - The commitments in Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan (NAP4)



## 2. Summary - The commitments in Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan (NAP4)

This Fourth OGP National Action Plan (NAP4) seeks to build on the lessons and success of the third OGP National Action Plan (NAP3). It consists of a focused set of commitments, which will be delivered by five government Departments to further enhance transparency, civic participation, and public accountability. These commitments will be reported on and monitored by the OGP Round Table members.

In NAP4 government makes commitments under the following four themes:

			
<p>Increase and promote the practices and impact of Open Research and Open Data.</p>	<p>Engage more fully and more effectively with citizens about policies and plans that are going to affect their lives.</p>	<p>Make Government more transparent and accountable through development of a modernised ethics statutory framework.</p>	<p>More effective engagement and communication with the community and underrepresented groups.</p>

The seven commitments made are as follows:

	Transparency	Civic Participation	Public Accountability
<b>Fourth National Action Plan commitments:</b>			
A. To improve the quality and quantity of data published on the open data portal Data.gov.ie and to increase the engagement with data publishers and users and directly between publishers and users.	✓	✓	✓
B. Establish an open research partnership and agree a framework for creating a culture of open research in criminal justice.	✓	✓	✓
C. To produce and promote a best practice model of public consultation and involvement in policy development.		✓	✓
D. To support more inclusive policy making working with the Community and Voluntary Sector.	✓	✓	✓
E. To strengthen, modernise, simplify and streamline the statutory framework for ethics/standards in public office with a robust institutional framework for oversight, investigation and enforcement.	✓	✓	✓
F. To ensure effective engagement with communities, particularly under represented communities, on local elections.	✓	✓	✓
G. Working with NGO partners to adapt and where necessary, develop bespoke messaging, to raise awareness of Domestic Sexual and Gender- Based Violence (DSGBV) and the supports available among marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.	✓	✓	✓

Section 3 contains the details of the commitments, including the ambition, objective(s) and delivery milestones. The Round Table will receive regular updates on the delivery milestones.

#### In addition:

- The Round Table will monitor the implementation of the commitments in this National Action Plan over the life of the plan.
- The members of the Round Table will review the process used to complete the NAP4, capture lessons and make recommendations for strengthening the process to develop NAP5.
- Ireland will participate fully in the review of NAP3 and NAP4 by the OGP. This review will be carried out by the OGP's Independent Review Mechanism.
- A survey will be carried out across all Government Departments to seek additional information on the full range of policies and programmes underway to promote the open government agenda.
- The role of the Round Table will be reviewed and recommendations made to strengthen this important forum. This review will include consideration of the role, composition and functioning of the Round Table in relation to the development of the next action plan (NAP5) and in relation to developments generally across the public service to improve transparency, participation and accountability.

# 3

## Detailed commitments under NAP4



## 3. Detailed commitments under NAP4

### Theme 1: Increase and promote the practices and impact of Open Research and Open Data

#### A. Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform

<b>Country</b>	Ireland		
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	To improve the quality and quantity of data published on the open data portal <a href="https://data.gov.ie">Data.gov.ie</a> . To increase the engagement with data publishers, users and directly between publishers and users.		
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	<p>Open data is about making data held by public bodies available and easily accessible online for reuse and redistribution. This facilitates public visibility of government data, underpins democracy and reinforces our social contract with the public. Open Data and the transparency and scrutiny that comes with it is critical to all data management in the public sector. Once available, data can be used by a range of stakeholders for a range of purposes, including the improvement of public services, policy development, and to spark innovation across the public sector, civil society and the private sector.</p> <p>This commitment is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the quality and quantity of data published on the open data portal Data.gov.ie; and</li> <li>• To increase engagement with data publishers and users, and engagement between publishers and users.</li> </ul>		
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform		
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Civil Society</b>	<b>Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc.)</b>
	All Public Sector bodies including Government Departments	Network of open data users.	<i>The Open Data Strategy 2023 -2027</i> lays out the intent for stakeholder engagement with the business community, information and archival professionals, the public, the Oireachtas, the Government, the European Union (EU), the media, and the research community in addition to public bodies and civil society/third sector.
<b>Period Covered</b>	2024-2025		

#### Problem Definition

##### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

The public consultation and the civic society and Round Table engagement process carried out to support the development of NAP4 raised various issues with availability of data. This consultation highlighted 'Data Access' as a priority.

Data held by public bodies is a valuable resource and should be managed carefully so that the public gain the benefits. When data is open and available to all it facilitates innovation, the delivery of public services, and individual benefits in accessing services easily.

When data is not open this potential is restricted. In addition, if data is not open and transparent this can undermine trust in public services and government.

## 2. What are the causes of the problem?

To make data open, public bodies must plan for data openness at the design stage of projects and programmes, capture data ethically, organise it logically, store it effectively and ensure it is accessible and searchable appropriately. Without this degree of planning, it is time consuming and costly to make data open.

There is already a strong agenda and participation in improving open data across public bodies that can now be built upon. Barriers to making data available openly include lack of data skills, lack of technical skills and lack of a strategic approach to data.

### Commitment Description

#### 1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

Ireland has recently published the second open data strategy *National Open Data Strategy 2023-2027*. During the period of the first strategy 2017-2022, Ireland made notable strides in the development of Open Data. The national open data portal was established and now hosts almost 18,000 datasets from almost 145 publishers. Supports have been put in place for public bodies, including access to training, support for portal development and the establishment of a network of open data liaison officers across public bodies. During this period Ireland ranked highest for Open Data Maturity in the EU for three years running.

The new national open data strategy (2023-2027) seeks to build on this foundation. The goal is for Ireland to continue to drive excellence in the provision of Open Data to promote transparency and innovation in Ireland. It provides a framework for the actions that public bodies will take on Open Data over the next five years. Opportunities are laid out across three pillars for unlocking the power of Open Data in Ireland;

Guiding goals and actions are provided for:

- Data publishers
- The development of the Open Data platform and
- Data users.

The Strategy lays out the direction to maintain the high level of Open Data use set during the COVID19 pandemic, and to enable the use of Open Data to improve public services and spark innovation across the public and private sectors to benefit the people of Ireland.

#### 2. What solution are you proposing?

A continued programme of support will assist public bodies to implement the new *Open Data Strategy 2023-2027*.

This will include:

- Further development of the national Open Data portal to improve the quality and quantity of data published on the portal.
- Data management training framework for public bodies.
- Webinars and communication events on Open Data both within the public sector and with the wider public.
- The Open Data Engagement Fund that seeks applications from organisations and individuals to run projects demonstrating the value of open data.
- Providing technical support under the Green and Social Hours programme to support data management for small companies, civil society organisations (CSOs) and students.



### Commitment Description

The public consultation held to develop NAP4 brought forward suggestions to improve open data including the need for dialogue between relevant stakeholders and quick fixes to issues in accessing data. In response to this a particular focus will be placed on:

- Exploring mechanisms for further engaging community and voluntary bodies with the Open Data programme and supports;
- Open Data webinars and communications directed including the public as users of Open Data;
- Promoting engagement between data publishers and the public to assess the public's priorities for data access; and
- Networking and holding events around thematic data areas including climate and environmental data to bring data publishers and data users together to promote better communications between the two.

### 3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

- Public bodies taking a strategic approach to open data, with improved capacity and skills to do so.
- Improved quality and quantity of data published on the open data portal Data.gov.ie. which can be used by all stakeholders to improve services for the public.
- Contributing to the vision laid out in the Open Data Strategy to create easy access to high quality government data, promoting trust and stimulating innovation.

### Commitment Analysis

Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	Open data is about making data held by public bodies directly available and easily accessible online for reuse and redistribution. These commitments are fundamentally about increasing transparency of public bodies.  The principle pursued is that public data is open by design and default and unless specified as personal or sensitive data, will be available to the public.
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	The delivery of these commitments will make more data available for scrutiny by the general public increasing accountability.
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	Public engagement centrally and by public bodies directly is an important component of this commitment.  By encouraging data collection by the public in certain fields and harnessing the power of civic groups for data collection.

### Commitment Planning

Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
Publish the Open Data Strategy and Hold the annual Open Data Conference	Open Data Strategy  Conference recording, papers	Q4 2023	<b>Lead:</b> DPENDR
			<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>
			<b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Service Bodies (PSBs)</li> </ul>
			<b>CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy indicates full range of stakeholders</li> </ul>
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
Further development of the Open Data portal	Increased number of datasets available  Increased number of publishers  Increased number of users  Improved quality of datasets and presentation	Q4 2025	<b>Lead:</b> DPENDR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSBs</li> </ul>
			<b>CSOs</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society/third sector organisations</li> </ul>
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business community, information and archival professionals, the public, Government, the EU, the media, and the research community</li> </ul>
Fund and support the Engagement Fund	Open Data projects delivering and showcasing uses and value of open data with additional services provided to the public on the benefits of using open data	Q4 2024	<b>Lead:</b> DPENDR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSBs</li> </ul>
			<b>CSOs</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society/third sector organisations</li> </ul>
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business community, information and archival professionals, the public, the research community</li> </ul>
Programme of engagement and communications	Webinars, presentations and communication events on Open Data both within the public sector and with the wider public	Q4 2025	<b>Lead:</b> DPENDR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSBs</li> </ul>
			<b>CSOs</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society/third sector organisations</li> </ul>
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business community, information and archival professionals, the public, the research community</li> </ul>
Organise the distribution of support under the Green and Social Hours programme	Data management support for small companies, non-government organisations (NGOs), students	Q4 2025	<b>Lead:</b> DPENDR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSBs</li> </ul>
			<b>CSOs</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society/third sector organisations</li> </ul>
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business community, information and archival professionals, the public, the research community</li> </ul>

## B. Department of Justice

<b>Country</b>	Ireland		
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	Establish an open research partnership and agree a framework for creating a culture of open research in criminal justice.		
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	<p>This project will involve creating an open research partnership with criminal justice researchers, policymakers, oversight bodies, agencies, third sector criminal justice services for victims, offenders and communities, civil society and minority advocacy bodies, and research infrastructure which will provide the structure and opportunities to agree a framework for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) co-creating open research and a culture which supports this;</li> <li>(b) exchanging and applying knowledge openly across the sector;</li> <li>(c) using research to inform criminal justice policy and practice in Ireland; and</li> <li>(d) determining collectively how to coordinate and embed a culture of open research among criminal justice researchers and in the criminal justice sector in a locally appropriate way.</li> </ul>		
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	<p>The project will be coordinated by a consortium that includes Maynooth University (Chair: Dr. Ian Marder), Dublin City University, South East Technological University, Technological University Dublin and the University of Limerick.</p> <p>Department of Justice (DoJ) is aligned to the project and will be the lead Department for the purpose of the Open Government Partnership Roundtable and Ireland's fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan (NAP4) reporting.</p>		
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<p><b>Government</b></p> <p>Department of Justice will be the lead Department for the purpose of the Open Government Roundtable and NAP4 reporting.</p> <p>The project will be coordinated by a consortium that includes Maynooth University, Dublin City University, South East Technological University, Technological University Dublin and the University of Limerick among others.</p> <p>A number of Departments and agencies are also involved including, Department of An Taoiseach, An Garda Síochána, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Irish Prison Service, Probation Service and the Office of the Inspector of Prisons.</p>	<p><b>Civil Society</b></p> <p>Among the civic society partners are: Crime Victims Helpline, Victim Support at Court, Black and Irish, Ana Liffey Drug project, Childhood Development Initiative, Restorative Justice Services, Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders, Traveller Mediation Service, Irish Council for Civil Liberties, Irish Penal Reform Trust, Irish Network Against Racism, Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development.</p>	<p><b>Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc.)</b></p> <p>A number of independent state funded, or self-funding bodies are also involved including the Judicial Council, and the Irish Criminal Bar Association.</p>
<b>Period Covered</b>	2024-2025		

## Problem Definition

### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

Criminal justice has not been a significant focus in discussions about open research in Ireland. This has implications for policy makers, academia and civil society. Bringing partners together to agree a framework for open research in criminal justice in Ireland will be a first step in building relationships and enabling planning for new collaborative research to support law, policy and practice development.

The theme of open data, research and evidence arose clearly through the public consultation and the civic society and Round Table engagement process carried out to support the development of NAP4. This commitment will contribute to addressing the need for open data and research strengthening transparency and participation.

### 2. What are the causes of the problem?

Criminal justice is underrepresented in open research discussions and with Irish criminal justice in a period of change, it is timely to develop an open research culture to help provide further evidence base to inform these changes.

## Commitment Description

### 1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

Some small studies have been state funded including collaborative funding involving the Department of Justice, the Policing Authority and the Irish Research Council, but some have been limited in their openness.

The Department of Justice, Probation Service, Courts Service, Policing Authority and other stakeholders have begun to establish specific, albeit ad hoc and partially open for research discussions.

### 2. What solution are you proposing?

This project plans to bring together a broad and varied group of research and criminal justice stakeholders and provide a national level platform to determine collectively how to develop open research in an applied, interdisciplinary field. By bringing together an interdisciplinary group, the project will develop an open research network that is able to examine collectively how to advance open research on criminal justice in Ireland, in a way that sustains after the lifespan of the project.

The project proposes to bring partners together in workshops to contribute to a series of outputs that will establish how academics and other stakeholders can, and will, work together to stimulate and embed open research relating to criminal justice in the coming years. All partners will be invited to contribute to the project at every stage, including the design and delivery of workshops and the development of written outputs. The National Open Research Forum is funding the initial stage of the partnership and the funding will cover a study of related partnerships in other countries to inform the development and sustainability of the partnership.

### 3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

This project will:

- create a diverse partnership that will build understanding and relationships between the research, policy and practice communities with a view to co-creating and agreeing a framework for building a culture of open research in criminal justice in Ireland, including identifying principles, priorities and actions;
- raise awareness of the nature, importance and application of open research with stakeholders beyond academia (e.g. policymakers and practitioners); and
- promote interdisciplinary working between people involved in open research on criminal justice in Ireland.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	This partnership represents one of the largest to date to involve such a broad group of stakeholders in co-creating an approach to research collaboration. In addition, the communities and stakeholder groups to which this project is directly relevant will be represented as project partners.
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	The findings of this project will be of interest to academics working across all disciplines who are interested in partnership working to develop applied, policy-relevant approaches to open research in their areas. The project involves an international study to identify best practice in open research partnerships on criminal justice, which will be disseminated widely to support those who wish to develop partnership working in other policy areas. The lessons from the partnership itself will be disseminated to those who might be interested in developing open research partnerships to influence policy and practice in other public and social policy fields, such as open research and social policy scholars.
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	<p>The communities and stakeholder groups to which this project is directly relevant will be represented as project partners. They are:</p> <p><b>Group 1:</b> Early, mid and advanced career and postgraduate criminal justice researchers in disciplines across social sciences and humanities (criminology, law, psychology, education, social policy, social work, anthropology, design innovation, equalities, ethics and sociology) and from numerous universities and technological universities across Ireland.</p> <p><b>Group 2:</b> Criminal justice policymakers, including government departments.</p> <p><b>Group 3:</b> Criminal justice oversight bodies relating to policing and prisons.</p> <p><b>Group 4:</b> Criminal justice agencies working right across the criminal justice process.</p> <p><b>Group 5:</b> Third sector criminal justice services for victims, offenders and communities.</p> <p><b>Group 6:</b> Civil society and minority advocacy bodies.</p> <p><b>Group 7:</b> Research infrastructure, including funders and research support professionals.</p>

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
<p>Conduct a study on open research partnerships in criminal justice; publish a working paper and open access article on the findings.</p> <p>Deliver three workshops with partners from all stakeholder groups represented.</p> <p>Co-create a set of agreements with partners to be published as a working paper and open access article.</p> <p>Disseminate findings at European criminology, European open research and Irish social policy conferences, and write for Irish national media and European higher education outlets.</p>	<p><b>Phase 1</b></p> <p>Draft project plans and circulated for feedback. Complete consortium agreement and submit to National Open Research Forum (NORF).</p> <p>Engage and support the research assistant undertaking the study exploring open research partnerships in criminal justice.</p> <p>Plan and organise Workshop 1.</p>	End January 2024	<p><b>Lead:</b> DoJ and Maynooth University</p>
	<p><b>Phase 2</b></p> <p>Deliver Workshop 1. Collate and analyse the outcome and circulate draft 'principles of engagement' document for feedback.</p> <p>Plan and organise Workshop 2.</p>	March 2024	
	<p><b>Phase 3</b></p> <p>Deliver Workshop 2, collate and analyse outcomes.</p> <p>Publish first working paper on study of international partnerships with Maynooth University Social Science Unit (MUSSI) and develop an article for an open access journal.</p> <p>Plan and organise Workshop 3.</p>	April 2024	
	<p><b>Phase 4</b></p> <p>Deliver Workshop 3, collate and analyse outcomes.</p> <p>Circulate draft open research framework, priorities and action plan for feedback, with final version included as an agreement in the second working paper and publish with MUSSI.</p> <p>Using open-authorship approach disseminate findings through publication and presentations and explore other dissemination opportunities.</p>	July 2024	
	<p>Write and submit final report to NORF.</p>	September 2024	

## Theme 2: Engage more fully and more effectively with citizens about policies and plans that are going to affect their lives.

### C. Department of An Taoiseach & Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform

<b>Country</b>	Ireland
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	To produce and promote best practice model of public consultation and involvement in policy development.
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	Produce 'best practice' templates for public engagement in public consultation and policy development, drawing upon existing models used within government departments, which will encourage greater consistency in involving the public and offer greater clarity about how this will be done.  It will also give guidance to departments as to when and how the public might be consulted setting out clear roles for all stakeholders.
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) & Department of An Taoiseach (DTAO)
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Service Management Board and by extension all Government Departments</li> </ul> <p><b>Civil Society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principally the civil society representatives represented on the Open Government Partnership Round Table</li> <li>Also, civil society organisations engaged with government Departments across policy areas</li> </ul>
<b>Period Covered</b>	2024-25

#### Problem Definition

##### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

The importance of communication and public engagement by Government at every level is an essential part of good policy-development and a well-functioning democracy.

Government departments already involve and consult the public in a variety of ways when developing and reviewing policies. However to continue to evolve and develop in a progressive way, there is scope to offer guidance on how consultation should be done in a structured way so that there is greater clarity about when and how the public should be consulted and the scope of their involvement, depending on the issue at hand.

In addition, in the absence of clear guidelines, there may be an element of duplication and repetition across the civil service, which could be minimised by producing an agreed 'best practice' model for public consultation in the context of policy development. This would also give clarity to civil society organisations about when they might expected to be consulted.

##### 2. What are the causes of the problem?

There is a clear demand for greater 'democratisation' of policy development, or the idea that people should be integrally involved, or at least have a say, in policies that affect them. Many policies, if they are to be successful, require consent and participation of the people who are the 'target' of them, for example climate action or health policies. There is some lack of clarity amongst the civil service about how these two demands should be met: what are the best ways of consulting and involving the public and when should particular mechanisms or instruments for consultation be deployed.

The public consultation and the civic society and Round Table engagement process carried out to support the development of this NAP raised various issues with public consultation. This consultation identified a theme of 'Agenda Setting and Formats' and indicated room to improve participation and dialogue.

## Commitment Description

### 1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

Individual Departments have undertaken considerable work in this field. For example, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth have developed a national strategy on children and young people's participation in decision-making.

The Department of Rural and Community Development have developed a guide for inclusive community engagement in local planning and decision-making.

This is to name just two progressive developments instituted by Departments in recent years to involve the public to a greater extent than before in policies and practices that affect them. There is an opportunity to build on these and other efforts and to shape an agreed framework that could be applied across the civil service and which would reduce duplication and encourage consistency.

The updating of the *2016 Principles and Guidelines for Public Consultation* was an action under the NAP3 commitment to 'Progressing civic participation with the objective of further enhancing the proactive and meaningful participation and engagement with citizens in the decisions that affect them.'

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was brought on board to develop high-level principles and draft guidelines based on this research and to conduct stakeholder engagement. Two workshops were held in May 2023 to discuss a high-level framework for the revised guidelines and principles. The first workshop included non-state community and voluntary members of the Cross Sectoral Group, which oversees the implementation of the Government's Community Strategy. The second workshop included public service officials.

The IPA completed its work on the guidelines and shared a set of updated guidelines with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

### 2. What solution are you proposing?

The IPA's update of the *2016 Principles and Guidelines for Public Consultation* provides a useful foundation and work to date highlights the need for a broader framework, which anticipates a variety of methods, diverse audiences, and topics, which have greater degrees of complexity and sensitivity.

This work will be further developed to produce 'best practice' templates for public engagement in public consultation and policy development, drawing upon existing models used within government departments, which will encourage greater consistency in involving the public and offer greater clarity about how this will be done. It will also give guidance to departments as to when and how the public might be consulted setting out clear roles for all stakeholders.

This will take advantage of and incorporate existing good practice, which is already operative in the system. and will involve consideration of and implementation of some or all of the following:

- Provide a central hub specifying a framework for guidance along with examples of best practice;
- Set out in a more considered way which tools and instrument should be used for specific purposes; and
- Share of best practice and facilitating innovation.

### 3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

Produce greater consistency amongst government departments on the purposes and use of tools for public consultation and participation in policy development.

Produce greater certainty about how and when the public should be involved in policy development as well as clarifying the parameters of their involvement which delineates their role and involvement from that of the civil service and Ministers.



Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	By producing a clear framework for public participation, which clarifies what role of the public is, depending on circumstances.
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	By producing a framework for public participation in policy development, it will provide a standard against which government departments can be assessed.
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	By producing an agreed upon framework, incorporating a range of models and methods, of how and when citizens can and should be involved, it will encourage departments to engage with citizens.

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
Survey government departments for consultation tools/ instruments/models already in use	Survey results that produces data on how government currently conducts public consultation	Q1 2024	<b>Lead:</b> D/Taoiseach & DPENDPR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All government departments</li> </ul> <b>CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OGP and others</li> </ul>
Based on survey results and follow-up workshops, produce agreed model or guidelines for how and when the public will be consulted	Guidelines for public consultation	Q2 2024	<b>Lead:</b> D/Taoiseach & DPENDR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSBs</li> </ul> <b>CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OGP representatives and others</li> </ul> <b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business community, information and archival professionals, the public, the research community</li> </ul>
Produce best practice template for public consultation that provides a common orientation across the civil service	Framework for best practice incorporating examples already in use across civil service	Q4 2024	<b>Lead:</b> D/Taoiseach & DPENDR
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Govt. depts.</li> </ul> <b>CSOs</b>
Disseminate, monitor and encourage use of the framework	Data on use, examples and case studies of use	2025	OGP and others
	Feedback on value of framework from Departments, and other stakeholders		

## D. Department of Rural and Community Development

<b>Country</b>	Ireland
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	To support more inclusive policy making in the Community and Voluntary (C&V) Sector.
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	To support more inclusive policy making in the Community and Voluntary Sector
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Government Departments</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• State Agencies</li> </ul> <p><b>Civil Society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Participation Networks (PPNs)</li> <li>• Community and Voluntary Organisations (C&amp;V)</li> </ul>
<b>Period Covered</b>	2024-2025

### Problem Definition

#### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

This commitment will address the following issues:

1. Continued availability of a Civic Forum for dialogue between the state sector and the community and voluntary sector which was established in 2022.
2. Absence of an agreed roadmap for further development of the PPNs at local level, which is currently being developed.
3. Possible lack of diversity and inclusion in the PPNs.
4. Absence of data on the usage of the approved *Values and Principles for engagement and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector* by Government Departments.

The public consultation and the civic society and Round Table engagement process carried out to support the development of NAP4 raised various issues with agenda setting and formats as well as barriers to participation. This consultation highlighted the need for “structured participation options that are truly representative and support collaborative deliberations a priority”.

#### 5. What are the causes of the problem?

The causes of the above problems are as follows:

1. Prior to 2022 there was no Civic Forum in place as a forum for dialogue with the community and voluntary sector at a national level.
2. As the role and membership of the PPNs has expanded, there is a need for a clear agreed roadmap for their further development and an implementation plan to deliver on this roadmap.
3. Lack of research into the levels of diversity and inclusion of the PPNs and of possible solutions to the problem.
4. *Values and Principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector* were adopted by Government in 2022 – there is no monitoring currently taking place on how government departments are putting the Values and Principles into practice.

## Commitment Description

### 1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

The first Civic Forum for dialogue between the state and the community and voluntary sector took place at the Aviva stadium on 21st November 2022. A report on the proceedings has now been received and is available on [www.gov.ie/en/news/37401-national-civic-forum-for-dialogue-with-the-community-and-voluntary-sector/](http://www.gov.ie/en/news/37401-national-civic-forum-for-dialogue-with-the-community-and-voluntary-sector/). Arising from the feedback on the first Civic Forum, it has been agreed to develop a *Terms of Reference* for the Civic Forum and to provide a clear statement of its purpose and positioning having regard to the sectoral fora hosted by several other Departments and Agencies. The Civic Forum is co-designed with the sector through a sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development.

The second national Civic Forum took place on 15th November 2023. Its theme was *'Bringing the values and principles to Life'*. The format, which was co-designed with a sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group, included six current examples of state bodies and non-governmental organisations co-designing public policies. A report from the Civic Forum will be prepared.

A Working Group was established to oversee the development and implementation of the Roadmap of future actions following the publication of the report on the PPN Structural Review in June 2022. Its members come from a range of PPN stakeholder groups, including PPN staff and volunteers, civil society groups, local authorities and relevant government departments. Participatory and co-design processes were used to ensure that stakeholders were actively involved in designing the actions that will affect PPNs over the coming years. The Group is the main forum for developing and making recommendations to the Minister on future actions arising from the review report and stakeholder feedback.

DRCD is also commissioning a research project to:

- explore the demographic characteristics of groups and individuals involved in PPNs;
- investigate the diversity involved;
- establish an evidence base on the area; and
- make recommendations on increasing the involvement of under-represented groups in PPNs, drawing on the *'Values and Principles for engagement and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector'* and the *'Guidelines for Inclusive engagement in local planning processes'*.

It is envisaged that the research will involve extensive consultation with groups found to be under-represented on PPNs.

*The Values and Principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector* were approved by Government and were launched in 2022.

### 2. What solution are you proposing?

The following actions are proposed to address the problems identified over the next two years:

1. Finalise and Implement the roadmap for the PPNs to support inclusive policymaking and enhance input into local decision making from 2024 onwards.
2. Promote more inclusion and diversity in the membership of the PPNs, implementing the recommendations of the planned research from 2025 onwards.
3. Continue to host a Civic Forum for dialogue between the Community and Voluntary Sector and the state to strengthen collaboration and partnership working.
4. Monitor the use by government departments of the agreed values and principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector.

### Commitment Description

#### 3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

The proposed action will contribute to the overall aim of strengthening and developing participative approaches to the development of public policy and programming. All of the actions will be implemented in collaboration with representatives of the Community and Voluntary sector.

There will be a Civic Forum for dialogue with the community and voluntary sector held in 2024 and 2025. The outcomes will be recorded, shared and evaluated in collaboration with representatives of the Cross-Sectoral Group, which oversees the implementation of the Government's five-year strategy for the Community and Voluntary sector.

More inclusion and diversity will be achieved in the membership of the PPNs. The research on barriers to involvement in PPNs will be undertaken in 2024, and will include a range of recommendations based on its findings, which will aim to increase diversity among PPN membership, where required, and to develop a youth engagement strategy. The Department will work with PPN stakeholders to implement the recommendations arising from the research, and will monitor progress in accordance with the arrangements to be agreed.

The Roadmap for the PPNs will set out a wide range of actions agreed by the Working Group of PPN stakeholders, which will be implemented in accordance with the priorities agreed following extensive consultation and engagement with all stakeholders involved. The Roadmap will set out those responsible for each action as well as a timeframe for their delivery, which is expected to begin to roll out in 2024.

Government departments will demonstrate evidence of their use of the *Values and Principles for engagement and collaborative working with the community and voluntary sector*. DRCD will seek reports from Government Departments and compile this for sharing with the Cross-Sectoral Group.

### Commitment Analysis

Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	N/A
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	N/A
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	<p>The proposed action will improve the participation of civil society organisations in a number of ways;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will provide for the continuation of a Civic Forum for dialogue between the state and the community and voluntary sector, co-designed with representatives of the C&amp;V sector.</li> <li>• It will further strengthen the role of the PPNs at local level, engaging c 18,000 organisations, through the implementation of an agreed Roadmap.</li> <li>• It will enhance inclusion and diversity in the membership of PPNs following the implementation of agreed recommendations arising from research into this topic.</li> <li>• It will monitor the use of the <i>Values and Principles for engagement and collaborative working with the community and voluntary sector</i>, by all Government Departments, including identification of what more can be done to support Departments in embedding the values and principles.</li> </ul>

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
<p>Civic Forum co-designed in Q3 2024</p> <p>Civic Forum held in Q4 2024</p> <p>All inputs collated and published</p> <p>Outcomes will be evaluated in collaboration with C&amp;V sector representatives</p>	<p>Civic Forum held in 2024</p> <p>The outcomes will be recorded, shared and evaluated in collaboration with representatives of the Cross-Sectoral Group (which oversees the implementation of the Government's five-year strategy for the Community and Voluntary sector)</p>	<p>Q3 2024</p> <p>Q4 2024</p> <p>Q4 2024</p> <p>Q1 2025</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Departments and Agencies, Local Government</li> </ul>
			<p><b>CSOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Society Organisations</li> </ul>
<p>Civic Forum co-designed in Q3 2024</p> <p>Civic Forum held in Q4 2025</p> <p>All inputs collated and published</p> <p>Outcomes will be evaluated in collaboration with C&amp;V sector representatives</p>	<p>Civic Forum held in 2025</p> <p>The outcomes will be recorded, shared and evaluated in collaboration with representatives of the Cross-Sectoral Group (which oversees the implementation of the Government's five-year strategy for the Community and Voluntary sector)</p>	<p>Q3 2025</p> <p>Q4 2025</p> <p>Q4 2025</p> <p>Q1 2026</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Departments and Agencies, Local Government</li> </ul>
			<p><b>CSOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Society Organisations</li> </ul>
<p>Issue request to all Government Departments</p> <p>First Monitoring Report</p> <p>Review of report with the Cross Sectoral Group on Community Development</p>	<p>First Monitoring Report prepared</p> <p>Monitoring report including examples of embedding of values and principles and identification of what more can be done to support Departments in embedding the values and principle will be produced for review in collaboration with the Cross-Sectoral Group</p>	<p>Q4 2023</p> <p>Q1 2024</p> <p>Q2 2024</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<p><b>Government</b></p> <p>Government Departments and Agencies</p>
<p>Issue request to all Government Departments</p> <p>Second Monitoring Report</p> <p>Review of report with the Cross Sectoral Group on Community Development</p>	<p>Second Monitoring Report prepared</p> <p>Monitoring report including examples of embedding of values and principles and identification of what more can be done to support Departments in embedding the values and principle will be produced for review in collaboration with the Cross-Sectoral Group</p>	<p>Q4 2024</p> <p>Q1 2025</p> <p>Q2 2025</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Departments and Agencies</li> </ul>

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
<p>PPN Implementation Roadmap agreed</p> <p>The Working Group will remain in place to oversee the implementation of the Roadmap in conjunction with the National Advisory Group</p>	<p>Implementation Roadmap agreed and published</p> <p>Oversight meetings held</p>	<p>Q1 2024</p> <p>2024-2025</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>
			<p>Supporting Stakeholders</p> <p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Departments and Agencies</li> </ul> <p><b>CSOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PPNs</li> </ul> <p><b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities</li> </ul>
<p>Commencement of research into barriers to participation in PPNs</p> <p>Extensive consultation with all PPN stakeholders</p> <p>Report completed</p> <p>Implementation and monitoring arrangements agreed with PPN stakeholders</p>	<p>Research commenced</p> <p>Inclusive research consultation processes completed</p> <p>Research report completed and published</p> <p>Implementation and monitoring arrangements agreed</p>	<p>Q4 2023</p> <p>End Q2 2024</p> <p>Q3-Q4 2024</p> <p>2025</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>
			<p>Supporting Stakeholders</p> <p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Departments and Agencies</li> </ul> <p><b>CSOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PPNs</li> </ul> <p><b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities</li> </ul>

## Theme 3: Make Government more transparent and accountable through development of a modernised ethics statutory framework

### E. Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform

<b>Country</b>	Ireland		
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	To strengthen, modernise, simplify and streamline the statutory framework for ethics/standards in public office with a robust institutional framework for oversight, investigation and enforcement.		
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	To bring forward legislation to modernise and simplify the statutory framework for ethics in public office, with the aim of creating a 'fit-for-purpose', user-friendly regime that contributes to strengthening the public's trust and confidence in public officials and the democratic process by enhancing transparency and accountability of elected and appointed public officials.		
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery & Reform (DPENDR).		
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Civil Society</b>	<b>Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc.)</b>
	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Department of Justice; Office of the Attorney General; Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO).	Transparency International Ireland, Think Tank on Action for Social Change (TASC), Irish Council for Civil Liberties, Uplift.	Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO); European Commission.
<b>Period Covered</b>	2024 - 2025		

#### Problem Definition

##### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

Ireland's current statutory regime for Ethics in public life (the Ethics Acts) dates originally from the mid-1990's

As well as disclosing interests, this statutory framework provides that evidence of tax compliance must be furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) by all members of both Houses of the Oireachtas, the Attorney General and appointees to senior office in public bodies. The legislation also requires the drawing up of codes of conduct for ordinary members of the Houses, for office holders (e.g. Ministers of the Government and Ministers of State) and for public servants. These codes are published by the Standards in Public Office Commission.

Instances of potential gaps in the framework for ethics have become matters of public debate. Relevant recommendations of the *Review of Structures and Strategies to Prevent, Investigate and Penalise Economic Crime and Corruption* (the 'Hamilton Report'), published in December 2020, also fall to be considered in the context of reform of the statutory framework.

If, in due course, legislation is passed by the Oireachtas, elected and appointed public officials will be subjected to enhanced accountability and transparency obligations and procedures in order to help bring to light and address conflicts of interest issues and thereby support the public's trust and confidence in public officials and the democratic process.

## Problem Definition

### 2. What are the causes of the problem?

Minimising the risks arising from conflicts that can occur between the interests that public officials are elected/employed to represent and their personal interests is a challenge common to all public administrations. These conflicts are natural and, to a greater or lesser extent, the inevitable consequence of the fact that public officials occupy more than one social role. Ireland's current statutory framework for addressing these conflicts of interest has a number of points that require attention:

- there are separate regimes at national and local level in regard to ethics requirements;
- lack of knowledge and understanding among public officials in regard to ethics requirements and rules that apply to them;
- uncertainty regarding responsibilities for advice, development of guidelines and Codes of Conduct;
- anomalies that may impact on the credibility of the ethics regime;
- uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of penalties for persons who are found to have breached ethical requirements;
- bureaucracy and effectiveness issues – processes are paper based and there are no review obligations.

## Commitment Description

### 1. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

The *2015 Public Sector Standards Bill* (the PSSB) represented Government's initial proposals for a comprehensive overhaul of the Ethics regime. Introduced in January 2016, this legislative proposal was last discussed in the Dáil at Committee Stage in April 2017. As it had not completed the legislative process, it lapsed when the Dáil was dissolved in January 2020 in advance of that year's General Election.

The Government made a further commitment in the *2020 Programme for Government* to 'reform and consolidate the Ethics in Public Office legislation'.

The Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform subsequently carried out a comprehensive review of the statutory framework for ethics in public life in 2021/2022. This review element's included:

- Review of the existing ethics legislative framework and reassessment of the *2015 Public Sector Standards Bill*;
- Review of the recommendations of relevant Tribunals of Inquiry;
- Review of recommendations of the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) based on operation of the current regime;
- Review of current EU/International best practiceand;
- Public Consultation - Consultations with various parties.

This Review completed, a Report was submitted to the Government in December 2022. The Government approved the publication of the report and agreed to the preparation of draft legislation to reform the regime informed by the outcome of the Review.

In line with this, the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform is currently preparing a general scheme of legislation, using the lapsed *2015 Public Sector Standards Bill* as the point of departure. The intention is to bring proposals for reform to Government for approval to publish by end quarter 1 2024.

Engagement is ongoing with various stakeholders to ensure that a new statutory framework will be effective and efficient to implement/administer and that it effectively addresses the needs of the public.



## Commitment Description

### 2. What solution are you proposing?

The Department is preparing legislative proposals to reform, up-date and consolidate Ireland's legislative framework for standards in public life. The intention is to provide a uniform and values-based framework covering the ethical conduct of public officials, which will cover *inter alia* various situations of conflicts of interest such as; gifts and other advantages, and post-employment situations.

This will include new statutory prohibitions on the use of insider information; seeking or accepting benefits (including gifts and favors etc.) to further private interests; and local elected representatives dealing professionally with land in certain circumstances.

Under the proposal, the legal obligation for public officials to disclose as a matter of routine, actual and potential conflicts of interest that arise in the context of the performance of their duties will be strengthened. This will include shared definitions, previously agreed, applying at national and local level. In particular, greater consistency and certainty on the rules governing limits on the receipt of gifts and travel benefits by public officials will be clearly outlined.

The intention is that this will be complemented by a more effective, streamlined and efficient process for the submission of periodic statements of interests, notably providing that no declaration (or nil statement) will be required unless there has been a significant change and a streamlined and improved complaints and investigations procedure.

Statutory offences are envisaged for breach of obligations in relation to gifts; ad hoc disclosure, use of confidential information; tax compliance and periodic disclosure.

It will also seek to provide for high quality and effective training for public officials on issues such as ethics, conduct in situations of conflicts of interest. Overhaul of the oversight structures, new responsibility for advice and guidance and significant streamlining of declaration processes are also envisaged.

### 3. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

- An up-to-date, 'fit-for-purpose', easy to understand and user-friendly statutory framework for standards in public life that continues to ensure that conflicts between the public interest and private interests of public officials are regulated correctly, ensuring accountability and thereby contribute to the quality and efficacy of public administration.
- A streamlined, improved and transparent investigations procedure.
- A more effective and efficient process for the submission of periodic statements of interests.
- Consolidated local and national ethics requirements ensuring accountability at all levels.
- Enhanced knowledge and understanding among public officials with regard to ethics requirements and rules that apply to them.
- Over-arching integrity principles established in legislation to apply to all public officials.
- Enhanced transparency and public accountability that contributes to strengthening the trust of citizens in democracy and its institutions.

## Commitment Analysis

Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	Declarations of interests by senior elected and appointed officials would be published by SIPO. Private declarable interests (such as liabilities over certain thresholds and, as the case may be of interests of their spouse, civil partner or of a child of the person or his or her spouse) would also be disclosed confidentially to SIPO for review, but maintained on a confidential basis. Subject to data protection considerations, the declarations of interests by senior elected and appointed officials would be published and made available online by SIPO. This will help improve citizens' access to information, whilst also making elected public officials more transparent to their electors.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	<p>An enhancement of legal obligation for public officials at national and local level to disclose as a matter of routine actual and potential conflicts of interest that arise in the context of the performance of their duties can foster greater accountability to the public and facilitate transparent monitoring and evaluation systems.</p> <p>Building on the existing regime, it is intended that there will be further statutory prohibitions on matters such as: the use of insider information; seeking or accepting benefits (including gifts and favours etc.) to further private interests; and local elected representatives dealing professionally with land in certain circumstances. This can also help reinforce accountability.</p>
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	<p>Citizen participation underpins a thriving democracy. The legislative proposals are informed by the recommendations of the <i>Review of the statutory framework for ethics in public life</i> undertaken by the Department in 2021/2022. This Review included a public consultation process as well as consultations with various parties. As a result, it had access to up-to-date evidence to inform its policy and legislative recommendations. Responses were received <i>inter alia</i> from non-government organisations (NGOs) such as Transparency International Ireland. As previously stated, declarations of interest by senior elected and appointed officials would be more accessible to <i>inter alia</i> citizens, citizen groups and act as an incentive for them to proactively engage with Government.</p>

Commitment Planning		
Milestones	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
Publication of a General Scheme of legislation for reform of the statutory framework for Standards in Public Life (subject to Government approval)	Q1 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery & Reform
		<p><b>Supporting Stakeholders</b></p> <p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO)</li> <li>• The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</li> <li>• The Department of Justice</li> <li>• Office of the Attorney General</li> </ul> <p><b>CSOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society organisations</li> </ul> <p><b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)</li> <li>• European Commission</li> </ul>

Commitment Planning		
Milestones	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
Preparation of a Standards in Public Office Bill with the Office of the Attorney General and pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme if elected to do so by parliamentary committee	Q2/Q3 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery & Reform
		<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b> <b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO)</li> <li>The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</li> <li>The Department of Justice</li> <li>Office of the Attorney General</li> </ul> <b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GRECO).</li> <li>European Commission</li> </ul>
Publication of the Standards in Public Office Bill and its introduction to the Irish Parliament for consideration (subject to Government approval)	Q4 2024	<b>Lead:</b> Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform
		<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b> <b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO)</li> <li>The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</li> <li>The Department of Justice</li> <li>Office of the Attorney General</li> </ul> <b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GRECO)</li> <li>European Commission</li> </ul>
Consideration of the Standards in Public Office Bill by Dáil and Seanad Éireann (subject to Government and parliamentary approval)	2025	<b>Lead:</b> Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform
		<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b> <b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO)</li> <li>The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</li> <li>The Department of Justice</li> <li>Office of the Attorney General</li> </ul> <b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Houses of the Oireachtas</li> <li>Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform</li> <li>(GRECO)</li> <li>European Commission</li> </ul>

## Theme 4: More effective engagement and communication with the community and underrepresented groups.

### F. Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage

<b>Country</b>	Ireland		
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	To ensure effective engagement with communities, particularly under represented communities, on local electoral events.		
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	Promote understanding of the Irish electoral system and voter registration through open, accessible communications. Encourage gender balance and greater diversity in local elected Councils.		
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)		
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Civil Society</b>	<b>Other Actors (Parliament, Private Sector, etc.)</b>
	County and City Management Association (CCMA)	Women for Election (WfE) See Her Elected (SHE) National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) Community, Youth, social and other groups	Local Government An Coimisiún Toghcháin Political parties Houses of the Oireachtas Association of Local Government (AILG) Local Authorities Members' Association (LAMA)
<b>Period Covered</b>	2024-2025		

#### Problem Definition

##### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

A potential gap in awareness of the voting system in Ireland, including in particular voting eligibility and recent changes to the electoral registration process, particularly among younger and minority audiences.

To address the under representation of women and minority groups in local elected Councils.

The public consultation and the civic society and Round Table engagement process carried out to support the development of NAP4 raised various issues with barriers to participation. This consultation highlighted "Removing barriers" including supporting pathways for participation and capacity building as a priority.

##### 2. What are the causes of the problem?

Sporadic engagement with the electoral system; people turning 18 and maybe not being aware of the registration process; new arrivals in the country who may not be aware of their voting entitlements and a possible lack of awareness of recent changes to the registration process.

Barriers or obstacles to the participation of women and underrepresented groups in local government such as party political culture and practices and traditional views of politics.

## Commitment Description

### 3. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

- A series of public awareness campaigns to promote [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) the electoral registration website.
- Communications material/website that is fully accessible and in plain English, and adapted for different audiences, e.g. younger people.
- Electoral registration information material translated and available in multiple languages.
- Funding provided to local authorities to support local action on the electoral register.
- Funding provided to Non-Government Organisations, like Women for Election, See Her Elected and the Immigration Council of Ireland, to provide training to and build capacity of women, migrants and minorities to participate in local government.
- Funded organisations that support minority and migrant communities (e.g. Immigrant Council of Ireland and other local organisations through the annual call for funding to local authorities).
- Funded Women for Election, National Women's Council of Ireland, and the Immigration Council of Ireland to carry out research into the barriers faced by women and immigrants in running for local election.
- Funding provided to political parties and local authorities to undertake initiatives to encourage greater participation of women and minority groups in local government.
- Funding provided for the establishment of local and regional level caucuses of women councillors.
- As a family/caring friendly initiative, a pilot programme was launched in 2023 to enable a number of local authorities to invest in equipment necessary for hybrid meetings.
- Introduced legislation providing for maternity leave for councillors in 2022 and an administration support allowance for councillors eligible for maternity leave to employ someone to help them in carrying out their administrative work in 2023.

### 4. What solution are you proposing?

Support, including through funding allocations, further Local Authority (LA) action on the electoral register, in addition to engagement with a range of stakeholders and the provision of accessible, plain English assets in multiple languages focusing on [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) between now and the local/European elections in June 2024.

Working with local government stakeholders, launch a public information/communications campaign in Q1 2024 on the role of the councillor in the context of the work of a local authority.

Work to introduce draft legislation to allow for a fuller range of parental leaves for councillors by end 2025.

Continue to build the capacity of all people interested in seeking local government election in 2024 and beyond by supporting organisations like Women for Election, See Her Elected and the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Extend programme of funding to more local authorities to facilitate hybrid meetings as a caring/family friendly measure from Q1 2024 and beyond.

### 5. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

Improved awareness of the electoral registration process, resulting in a greater number of young people and people from minority groups registered to vote.

Greater public awareness of the [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) website.

Improvements in data quality of the register.

An increased proportion and number of women candidates in the Local Elections 2024 and more women elected to local Councils.

An increased number of people from minority groups running as candidates and elected in Local Elections 2024.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	<p>Greater public understanding, particularly among young people and minority groups, of the electoral registration process and electoral process.</p> <p>The same information will be available to all in an accessible manner and across multiple languages with additional registration options for some groups to support greater participation.</p> <p>Greater public awareness of local government and the role of the councillor, and its accessibility for those interested in running for election.</p>
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	<p>Supporting Local Authorities will improve data quality and reporting capacity in respect of the electoral register. Local Authorities are required to report annually to the Electoral Commission on work they have undertaken and how they have measured the outcomes. The Electoral Commission will publish a report on the register and its processes annually based on these reports and its own research.</p> <p>A more representative local government reflective of the communities they serve.</p>
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	Proactively engaging with and building the capacity of women and people from minority groups to run for local elections.

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
Public info campaign on the role of the councillor  Extension of programme to support Local Authorities in investing in facilities to enable hybrid meetings	Campaign has reached target number of people  Greater public understanding of role  Minimum of 4 additional LAs supported each year	Q1 2024 with website and other public information tools accessible thereafter  Annually to December 2025	<b>Lead:</b> DHLGH
			Supporting Stakeholders
Further awareness initiatives supported including in relation to <a href="http://www.checktheregister.ie">www.checktheregister.ie</a>	Increase in numbers registered  Increase in data quality	Q1 2024	<b>Government</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Govt. Information Service</li> </ul>
			<b>Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WfE, SHE, NWCI, ICI, WCI, AILG, LAMA</li> </ul>
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities, CCMA, LGMA</li> </ul>
			<b>Lead:</b> DHLGH
			Supporting Stakeholders
			<b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc.)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities</li> </ul>

## G. Department of Justice

<b>Country</b>	Ireland
<b>Number and Name of the Commitment</b>	Working with NGO partners to adapt, and if necessary, develop bespoke messaging, to raise awareness of Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) and the supports available among marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.
<b>Brief Description of the Commitment</b>	Together with NGO partners working with and on behalf of marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities, Cuan (the DSGBV Agency) will develop and disseminate information to ensure that the content of the national level DSGBV awareness campaigns (as detailed in Zero Tolerance, Ireland's Third Commitment Lead National Strategy) are reaching marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.
<b>Commitment Lead</b>	Cuan
<b>Supporting Stakeholders</b>	<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Garda Síochána</li> <li>• Tusla</li> <li>• Department of Education</li> <li>• National University of Ireland</li> <li>• Department of Justice</li> </ul> <p><b>Civil Society</b></p> <p>The key national messaging for the DSGBV Campaign is co-developed with -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dublin Rape Crisis Centre</li> <li>• National Women's Council Ireland</li> <li>• Women's Aid</li> <li>• Safe Ireland</li> <li>• Men's Aid</li> <li>• Men's Development Network</li> </ul> <p>Cuan, in partnership with organisations that work with or on behalf of marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities, will look at what is required to adapt the national level DSGBV messaging, and if necessary create bespoke messaging, to ensure that information on DSGBV supports and services reaches marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.</p>
<b>Period Covered</b>	2022 to 2026 is the period covered by the Third National Strategy on DSGBV

## Problem Definition

### 1. What problem does the commitment aim to address?

The goal of Ireland's third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, which was published in June 2022 is to create a society where there is zero tolerance for all forms of DSGBV and the attitudes which underpin it. Built around the 4 pillars of the Istanbul Convention, this ambitious, whole of Government Strategy was co-designed with the Sector and its publication was accompanied by a detailed implementation plan which ran from its publication to the end of 2023. A new implementation plan for 2024 has been drafted and is expected to be published shortly.

In relation to the action in the Strategy to “raise public awareness of DSGBV in all its forms and across all groups in society and work to challenge existing myths, misconceptions, and established beliefs in relation to DSGBV”, there is a specific focus on having inclusivity as a central feature of the awareness raising campaigns.

A sub-action requires Cuan to create prevention and protection awareness raising material specifically designed to meet the needs of Travellers and the needs of other traditionally hard-to-reach communities. There is also a reference to creating material specifically designed to reach migrant communities, including material to reassure migrant victims, including those that are undocumented, that they will be fully protected and provided with necessary support services in cases of DSGBV.

### 2. What are the causes of the problem?

The Strategy recognises that while both men and women can be victims / survivors of DSGBV, women and girls are affected disproportionately as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. As a result, the emphasis within the Strategy is particularly on meeting the needs of women and girls. However, the Strategy also recognises and acknowledges the need to provide support for all victims / survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. It acknowledges the need to reflect lived experiences and particular victim / survivor groups, including migrants, Travellers and Roma, people with disabilities and LGBTI+ people, and recognises the additional risk factors created by overlapping forms of discrimination.

Neither domestic nor sexual violence discriminate based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or socio-economic status. Domestic violence and sexual violence impacts on the lives of women and children of all backgrounds, and some men: in contrast, society does not treat all victims or survivors of abuse equally. Social biases influence how society perceives survivors of violence, and stereotypes often create barriers to care and assistance, often coupled with women's individual and family social position, negatively affecting help-seeking pathways. By taking an intersectional approach to DSGBV, the Strategy recognises that DSGBV is a problem that requires consideration of all parts of an individual's identity to ensure equality of outcomes for all.

As such all actions included in this Strategy are required to take a horizontal, intersectional approach, to ensure inclusion of socially excluded groups and this is something that needs to be incorporated into the wider awareness raising work in order to ensure that the messages reach all of society.



## Commitment Description

### 3. What has been done so far to solve the problem?

Under the Second National Strategy on DSGBV, which ran from 2016-2021, there was a requirement for the State to run a national awareness campaign spanning the six years of the strategy. A decision was taken in consultation with an advisory group of Stakeholders to do a two part campaign with the first three years focusing on domestic violence, called 'What would you do?' and the second part of the campaign focusing on sexual violence called 'No Excuses'.

The Department of Justice has, since the publication of the second national strategy on DSGBV in 2016, worked with an advisory group-comprising specialist NGO domestic and sexual violence representative bodies, relevant state bodies and academic partners to co-design the messaging for the national awareness campaign. The campaigns are designed to raise awareness of, and engage society in the prevention of, all forms of DSGBV and to speak directly to victims to reassure them of support and encourage them to seek help.

The Third National Strategy builds on what has been previously achieved and requires Cuan to have an increased focus on reaching marginalised and harder to reach communities. Under the initial implementation plan for Zero Tolerance, the third national strategy on DSGBV, there are a number of actions related to awareness raising campaigns where Cuan is now leading on. These include:

- (1.1.1) prevention campaigns using the bystander and positive masculinity models;
- (1.1.2) highlighting pathways to safety and supports;
- (1.1.5) raising awareness on consent; and
- (1.1.7) about intimate image abuse.

Campaigns developed to date:

- Intimate Image Abuse Campaign (Action 1.1.7): Phase 2 of this campaign launched in May and focused on threatening to share intimate images without consent. Again this is a multi-media, high impact campaign.
- Consent (Action 1.1.5): DoJ supported DRCC to research and launch the 'WeConsent' campaign that was launched in March and a national level campaign 'Let's Have the Consent Conversation' launched in November.
- Always Here, a campaign to raise awareness of the help and support available to victims of Domestic Violence launched in December 2023.

### 4. What solution are you proposing?

To address the specific needs of marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities, Cuan will work in partnership with organisations that work with and on behalf of marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities, to look at adapting the national level messaging, and where necessary, to co-design bespoke messaging, to better reach communities that are harder to reach. Cuan will also work with those organisations to identify the most appropriate media to transmit the messages to the different communities, and will work with them to design an appropriation evaluation framework for assessing the reach, impact, recall and understanding of the messaging among the communities it is intended to reach.

### 5. What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?

The co-design of impactful messaging which contributes to a society that recognises and rejects all forms of DSGBV and rejects the underlying attitudes that facilitate this unacceptable behavior, including through the co-design of appropriate messaging intended to reach marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.

The continued co-design of impactful messaging that empowers victims to reach out for help and support, safe in the knowledge that the systems will respond to their needs and protect them from further victimisation and trauma, including through the co-design of appropriate messaging intended to reach marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities.

The co-design of an appropriation evaluation framework for assessing the reach, impact, recall and understanding of the messaging among the communities it is intended to reach.

Commitment Analysis	
Questions	Answer (if not applicable, just answer with N/A)
1. How will the commitment promote transparency?	<p>Working to ensure the national level campaign messaging reaches marginalised and harder to reach communities is necessary if we are to ensure equality of access to help and support for all living in Ireland. This is particularly important to addressing the additional risk factors created by overlapping forms of discrimination.</p> <p>It is also necessary if we are to shift the attitudes across all of society toward Zero Tolerance for DSGBV.</p>
2. How will the commitment help foster accountability?	<p>By working in partnership with organisations that represent and work directly with the communities we are trying to reach, we will ensure that an inclusive approach is taken to achieving the aims of the Strategy as regards awareness raising.</p> <p>It will also provide for the organisations that represent the different communities to be directly involved in creating bespoke approaches that meet the needs of different communities and it provides for their involvement in developing evaluation framework for assessing the reach, impact, recall and understanding of the messaging among the communities it is intended to reach.</p> <p>This will ensure accountability and transparency in fulfilling the awareness raising actions in the Third National Strategy in a way that takes account of the intersectional needs of those who are victims of DSGBV.</p>
3. How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	As above

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Expected Completion Date	Stakeholders
			As Above
Working with the advisory group established to develop national level campaign messaging, Cuan will create high impact awareness raising campaigns that will help people recognise all forms of DSGBV and which will signpost victims to supports	A schedule of campaigns for 2024, 2025 and 2026 will be agreed each year by Cuan and the Advisory Group	Continuous development and output to 2026	<b>Lead:</b> D/Justice / DSGBV Agency Supporting Stakeholders <b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul> <b>CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul> <b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>
The Victims' Forum was established by the Department of Justice to facilitate information exchange and examine avenues of improvement in relation to victims' rights. A subgroup of the Forum has been working with the Department to adapt messaging and materials created to raise awareness of the rights of victims of crime in order to ensure this information reaches and is understood by marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities. This subgroup, and others, will be invited to work with Cuan to similarly adapt, and if necessary create new, DSGBV campaign messaging to better reach marginalised and traditionally harder to reach communities	As national level materials are created they will be brought to the Subgroup of the Victims Forum for review and adaptation  If necessary, bespoke messaging can be created for individual communities  Cuan and the Advisory Group, together with the Subgroup will look at the most appropriate mechanism to evaluate the reach, impact, recall and understanding of the messaging among the harder to reach communities it is intended for	Continuous development and output to 2026	<b>Lead:</b> Supporting Stakeholders <b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul> <b>CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul> <b>Others (e.g., Parliament, Private Sector etc)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>

# 4

## Delivery of Ireland's Third Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2021- 2023 (NAP3)



# 4. Delivery of Ireland's Third Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2021-2023 (NAP3)

## Summary of NAP3 commitments

The commitments made in NAP3 were to:

1. Review of Ireland's Statutory Framework for Ethics in Public Life.
2. Review of Ireland's Freedom of Information (FOI) regime.
3. Review of the operation of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.
4. Progressing civic participation with the objective of further enhancing the proactive and meaningful participation and engagement with citizens in the decisions that affect them.
5. Strengthening inclusion and civic deliberation in local decision-making.

## Delivery and monitoring of NAP3 commitments

Policy owners for each commitment were assigned and listed in NAP3 with key milestones and delivery dates. Policy owners who were members of the OGP Round Table were responsible for delivering these commitments and updates on progress was communicated to the OGP Round Table on a regular basis. These updates were discussed with an opportunity to clarify issues and ask questions. Minutes of the Round Table meetings can be found [here](#).

## Summary of achievements and progress under NAP3

Through the delivery of the commitments made in NAP3, Ireland has strengthened transparency, accountability and participation, and progressed the open government agenda. Some highlights include:

- Recommendations published to strengthen ethics in public life with progress to strengthen legislation.
- Review of Ireland's Freedom of Information regime progressed and the formulation of legislative proposals.
- Review of lobbying regulation and progress to strengthen legislation.

- *Values and Principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector* were adopted by Government in 2022.
- The first Civic Forum for dialogue between the state and the community and voluntary sector took place on 21st November 2022.
- Review of the Public Participation Network structures was commissioned in 2021 to fulfill the commitment made in the *Programme for Government* to "Carry out a comprehensive review of Public Participation Networks to ensure that they are fit for purpose for climate action and community development".
- Roadmap progressed to strengthening inclusion and civic deliberation in local decision making by improving effectiveness of Public Participation Networks.
- Research commenced aimed at increasing diversity of the membership of the Public Participation Networks.
- Initiation of an independent review of local authority Strategic Policy Committees.
- The *2016 Principles and Guidelines for Public Consultation* updated by Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

See Annex B for a more detailed report of achievements and progress.

## Additional activities undertaken by the Secretariat, Co-Chairs and OGP Round Table members to support the OGP agenda during the timeframe of NAP3:

The Secretariat, Co-Chairs and members of the OGP Round Table have been active promoters of the open government agenda during the timeframe of NAP3. They have actively engaged with, and represented Ireland at international fora including events organised by OGP, OECD and the European Commission.

- The Secretariat participated in the sixth Meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Working

Party on Open Government that was held in Rome, Italy on 30th and 31st March 2023. Ireland is also a participant in the OECD's Innovative Citizen Participation Network.

- A member of the Secretariat was chosen to represent Ireland at the Open Government Leadership Collaborative Europe programme that takes place between October 2023 to April 2024. The theme of this year's academic course is "Mainstreaming Public Participation" (Building a refreshed and ever-growing coalition of open government leaders). The Open Government Leadership Collaborative (OGLC) programme seeks to enhance the leadership capacity of reformers within the context of their work in mainstreaming inclusive participation across governing institutions. This program is a transformative opportunity for individuals who want to hone their individual and collective leadership capacity as Open Government reformers.
- The eighth OGP Global Summit took place in Tallinn, Estonia on 6th – 7th September 2023. Ireland was represented by two officials from the Public Service Transformation Policy Unit, DPENDR and two civic society members of the OGP Round Table. The main thematic areas of the OGP Global Summit were anti-corruption, civic space and participation, climate and environment, digital governance, open justice, and democratic resilience.
- A member of the Secretariat attended the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) Summer School on "Open Government: Transparency, Accountability, Participation and Public Integrity" that took place in Barcelona between the 6th and 8th November 2023. These workshops focused on addressing key challenges and relevant issues, related to the priorities of the EUPAN Spanish Presidency regarding Open Government Policies, providing participants with the opportunity to analyse, discuss, and develop concrete solutions. The ultimate purpose of the Summer School was to strengthen cooperation among network members, thereby contributing to the constitution of the European Network of Open Government.

# Annex A: Ireland's Open Government Partnership Round Table

## Civil Society members

Antóin Ó Lachtnáin	Co-Chair Civil Society; Chair Open Government Association Ireland, Director of Digital Rights Ireland and Exmuris
Shana Cohen	Think-Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC)
Johnny Sheehan	The Wheel
Kathryn McCabe	Individual and Change Agency
Fiona Descoteaux	Innovative Communities
Seamus Boland	Irish Rural Link
Cliona Kelliher	Kildare Public Participation Network 2021 - March 2023
Catherine Lawlor	Transparency International Ireland, 2021 - May 2022

## Public Sector members

Philip McGrath	Co-Chair Public Sector, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (non-voting) (2021- August 2023)
Sarah Glavey	Co-Chair Public Sector, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (non-voting) (Aug 2023 - Present)
Ciara Morgan	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (2021-2023)
Anne O Mahony	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (2023- present)
Kieran Moylan	Department of Rural and Community Development
Barry Vaughan	Department of the Taoiseach
Andrew Patterson	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Diarmuid O'Leary	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Antoinette Doran	Department of Justice

## Secretariat

Victoria Gbafah	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (March 2023 – Present)
Jackie Fisher	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (October 2022 – Present)
Liam Gleeson	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (October 2022 – March 2023)
Ailís Henry	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (June – November 2022)
Críona Brassill	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (September 2021 - June 2022)

## Board representation

There is a Government target to achieve 40 per cent representation of each gender in the membership of all State Boards. While the Open Government Partnership Round Table is not a State Board, its terms of reference embrace the spirit of the Government target. The Round Table (excluding the Secretariat) currently has six female members and seven male members. To meet the gender balance target, the permanent Open Government Partnership Round Table with thirteen members would need to continue to have at least six members of each gender.



# Annex B – Detailed Achievements in the Delivery of NAP3 2021-2023

## Detailed report on achievements in the delivery of NAP3 commitments.

### 1. Review of Ireland's Statutory Framework for Ethics in Public Life

- Government approved the publication of the Ethics Review report and preparation of a General Scheme based on the recommendations on 13th December 2022. This was published on 7th February 2023. Its recommendations focus on five main themes:
  - » A legislative framework for Ethics to be underpinned by a set of overarching integrity principles;
  - » New specific statutory prohibitions, including on the use of insider information;
  - » Strengthening disclosures requirements to improve transparency and examining whether the regime should encompass more office holders;
  - » Strengthening the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO); and
  - » Post-term employment restrictions for elected officials/public servants that address matters not already covered by lobbying regulation and should align closely with that legislation.
- The Department is preparing a General Scheme. An indicative outline has been agreed and drafting of the heads is progressing. Awareness raising activities of the review report and its recommendations is ongoing as the General Scheme is being prepared. An update on progress was brought to Government earlier in 2023. It is intended that the General Scheme will be brought to Government for approval to publish in early 2024.

### 2. Review of Ireland's Freedom of Information (FOI) Regime

- A Memorandum for Information updating Government on progress on the review was brought to Government on 13th December 2022 and [published](#). The update sets out the review themes and gives an indication as to the direction of reform. The themes are:
  - » A more coherent approach to information governance and access;
  - » Supplementing formal FOI requests; and
  - » Improving the request process.
- The review report is nearing completion and it is intended to seek Government approval to the final review report in early 2024. The Minister intends to then bring legislative proposals, informed by the review, to Government.

### 3. Review of the Operation of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

- The review recommendations informed the drafting of an [amendment Bill](#) to strengthen the existing legislative framework. The [Regulation of Lobbying and Oireachtas Allowances \(Amendment\) Act 2023](#) was enacted in June 2023 and will:
  - » Improve the operation and functionality of the Lobbying Register;
  - » Strengthen the existing legislation and its enforcement; and
  - » Make failure to comply with the post term employment restrictions set out in Section 22 of the Regulation of Lobbying Act as amended a relevant contravention and introduce civil and administrative sanctions which SIPO can apply to those who contravene the 'cooling off' provisions
- A two-phased approach is being taken to the commencement of the 2023 Act. The provisions in the 2023 Act that relate to updating and improving the lobbying register will commence on 1st January 2024. This is to allow the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) time to update the lobbying register and the associated guidance, and to make lobbyists aware of the upcoming changes. The remaining

provisions which relate to new sanctions, including those relating to contravention of the section 22 post term employment cooling off provisions, will commence on 1st June 2024. This is to allow SIPO time to develop the processes to ensure the efficient operation of the new sanctions and to conduct awareness raising activities with lobbyists and relevant designated public officials.

#### 4. Progressing civic participation with the objective of further enhancing the proactive and meaningful participation and engagement with citizens in the decisions that affect them

##### Publication of Values and Principles

- The *Values and Principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector* were approved by Government and were launched in 2022.
- All Government Departments have recently reviewed their Statements of Strategy. DRCD used this opportunity to remind Departments of the Values and Principles and of the recent publication of a guide to engagement of the marginalised in local planning processes.
- DRCD is responsible for disseminating the Values and Principles and has written to all Departments shortly to seek an update on how the Values and Principles have been embedded in the Departments' engagements with the C&V sector.

##### Civic Forum

- The first Civic Forum for dialogue between the state and the community and voluntary sector took place at the Aviva stadium on 21st November 2022. A report on the proceedings has now been received and is available on gov.ie. <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/37401-national-civic-forum-for-dialogue-with-the-community-and-voluntary-sector/>
- Arising from the feedback on the first Civic Forum, there has been agreement to develop a *Terms of Reference* for the Civic Forum and to provide a clear statement of its purpose, having regard to the sectoral fora hosted by several other Departments and Agencies.
- The second Civic Forum took place on November 15th 2023. The theme of the event was 'Putting the values and principles into practice' and it included six examples of collaborative engagements between the state and non-governmental organisations across diverse policy areas.

##### 2016 Consultation Principles and Guidance

- Background research commenced in December 2022 with a review of academic literature and best practice guidelines, which included the National Disability Authority Participation Matters, the Organisation for Economic Co Operation and Development (OECD) citizen participation guidelines and government policy.
- The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was brought on board to develop high-level principles and draft guidelines based on this research and to conduct stakeholder engagement.
- Two workshops were held in May 2023 to discuss a high-level framework for the revised guidelines and principles. The first workshop included non-state community and voluntary members of the Cross Sectoral Group, which oversees the implementation of the Government's Community Strategy. The second workshop included public service officials.
- The overall purpose of the May workshops was to generate input from these stakeholders in designing the draft principles and guidelines. The workshops took place online to facilitate attendance from across the country. The feedback from these workshops were incorporated into the draft guidelines.
- A set of updated guidelines was submitted by IPA to DPENDR and further steps are planned to test these guidelines with users.

#### 5. Strengthening inclusion and civic deliberation in local decision making for Public Participation Networks (PPNs)

##### PPN Roadmap

- A Working Group was established to oversee the development and implementation of the *Roadmap of future actions* following the publication of the report on the PPN Structural Review in June 2022. Its members come from a range of PPN stakeholder groups, including PPN staff and volunteers, civil society groups, local authorities and relevant government departments. Participatory and co-design processes

were used to ensure that stakeholders were actively involved in designing the actions that will affect PPNs over the coming years. The Group is the main forum for developing and making recommendations to the Minister on future actions arising from the review report and stakeholder feedback.

- The Working Group has agreed a draft Roadmap. DRCD, with input from Working Group members, has now appointed an independent service provider to consult more widely with the PPN stakeholders on the draft Roadmap and make recommendations on its content based on the feedback received. The consultation process aims to give the broader PPN stakeholder community the opportunity to feed back on the draft Implementation Roadmap developed by the Working Group and DRCD.
- The Draft PPN Implementation Roadmap along with a survey questionnaire was circulated in July 2023. The Independent Service Provider developed the survey questionnaire to give all those involved in or with PPNs an opportunity to have their say on the draft Roadmap. Online focus groups have taken place with a sample of survey respondents to garner further insights, and a small number of one-to-one interviews are also being held. Feedback from the consultation will be used to help finalise the draft Roadmap.
- Once the Working Group has considered any necessary changes to the Roadmap, it will be submitted to the Minister of State for approval. It is anticipated that this may be by the end of the year.
- The Working Group will remain in place to oversee the implementation of the Roadmap and ensure it enhances the effectiveness of the PPNs.

## 6. Research on Diversity in PPNs

- DRCD is also commissioning a research project to:
  - » explore the demographic characteristics of groups and individuals involved in PPNs;
  - » investigate the diversity involved;
  - » establish an evidence base on the area; and
  - » make recommendations on increasing the involvement of under-represented groups in PPNs, drawing on the *'Values and Principles for engagement and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector'* and the *'Guidelines for Inclusive engagement in local planning processes'*.
- It is envisaged that the research will involve extensive consultation with groups found to be under-represented on PPNs.
- Draft *Terms of Reference* for the research were circulated to the PPN National Advisory Group, and to PPN staff and Secretariat networks for their observations and feedback.
- The request for tender was published on the eTenders on 11th July and remained open until 8th September 2023. The tenders received have been evaluated, and the contract has been awarded and initial works have commenced.
- An Oversight Group of PPN stakeholders will be established to provide advice and monitor the project. A call for expressions of interest in participating in the Group has been circulated among stakeholders.

## 7. Strengthening inclusion and civic deliberation in local decision making for other Local Authority Committees' functions, membership and procedures with which the PPNs engage

- The independent review of local authority Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) is progressing. The independent reviewer has engaged with the representatives of all participants/stakeholders involved in SPCs at local level, including through a series of visits to six local authorities to examine the operation of SPCs in those areas. A survey also issued to all SPC participants in all local authorities.
- The review itself is expected to be completed in Q1 2024.

# Annex C: How Ireland prepared its Fourth OGP National Action Plan

This annex outlines the process by which Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan (NAP4) was developed. The process is captured with the hope that it will be informative to the public, civil society and the civil service and may be a useful reference for other OGP member countries. This process will be reviewed by members of the Round Table in order to capture lessons and insights to improve the development, implementation and monitoring of future National Action Plans.

At the outset the objectives were:

- Members of the Round Table to co-create NAP4, drawing on wider public consultation and engagement;
- NAP4 to be completed according to the guidelines and template provided by OGP;
- NAP4 to be approved by the Management Board of the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform;
- NAP4 to be submitted for approval to the Irish government; and
- Following approval by the Irish government, NAP4 to be submitted to OGP.

## Timeline

**September 2022** in-person facilitated workshop with OGP Round Table members to generate potential themes for NAP4.

**November 2022 to January 2023** OGP Round Table members agreed the thematic areas for public consultation; Open Justice, Integrity in Public Life, Participative Democracy, Strengthening Access to Public Information (Transparency and Publishing), Participatory Budgeting, Citizen Access to Government, Strengthening Trust, and Public Service Dialogue.

**February 2023** advance notice of Public Consultation published on the Irish OGP and Government Information Service websites.

**March 2023** promotional video with Minister Paschal Donohoe (DPENDR) and Marianne Cassidy (Assistant Secretary, DPENDR) with OGP Round Table members. Seventy-one submissions were received within the submission period from 8th March to 6th April 2023.

**May 2023** five on-line *Thematic Workshops* held to consider potential commitments attended by submission owners, Department representatives and OGP Round Table members.

**May to July 2023** the Secretariat contacted submission owners where further clarity was required following the workshops.

**June 2023** – the facilitator (*The Brave Lab*) provided a first draft report on thematic workshops to the secretariat. Following deliberation by the members of the OGP Round Table, the final draft was submitted by *The Brave Lab* to the Secretariat.

**July to August 2023** OGP Round Table members ranked potential commitments for NAP4 based on the facilitator's final consultation report.

**September to December 2023** The Secretariat engaged closely with the policy owners within relevant Departments in response to the output from the public consultation. The OGP initially ranked twelve potential commitment areas for further exploration. Following extensive consultation with relevant policy owners, eleven potential commitments were proposed by Government Departments. Further deliberation among the OGP Round Table members resulted in seven final commitments being proposed and considered for inclusion in NAP4. DPENDR Management Board was updated on the progress to develop NAP4 on 20th November and approved the further development of the NAP4.

**December 2023** NAP4 was drafted by the Secretariat using the template provided by OGP following further feedback from the OGP Round Table. A draft of NAP4 was shared with Round Table members for high-level observations. It was then submitted to DPENDR Management Board.

**January 2024** The Fourth OGP National Action Plan (2023 – 2025) was submitted to the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

**February 2024** NAP4 was subsequently brought by the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform for the agreement of Government where it received approval. Formal submission of fourth OGP National Action Plan to the Open Government Partnership was followed by the official launch of NAP4 by Minister Donohoe.

## Phases of the Development of NAP4:

### Phase 1: Engagement, consultation and participation

As civic participation is at the heart of open government, stakeholders were engaged and their participation sought as follows:

**Round Table** – a forum to engage civic society members and members from Government Departments

- OGP Round Table meetings were held every six weeks during the period January to November 2023 to build regular stakeholder engagement and relationships.
- The Co-Chairs also met regularly between these meetings.
- The OGP Round Table is composed of civic society and Civil Service members. It monitored the progress of NAP3 and the development of NAP4.
- There was ongoing encouragement to actively engage with all meetings and events.

#### Engagement of Government Departments

- Six Government Departments are represented on the OGP Round Table.
- In addition, a letter was sent to all Departments by Assistant Secretary Marianne Cassidy (DPENDR) seeking their engagement with the development of NAP4.

#### Public Consultation:

- Advance notice of Public Consultation was published on the OGP Gov.ie webpage and Government Information Service websites.
- OGP portal launched on Gov.ie webpage on 6th March 2023 with guidance note and questionnaire.
- Open call for submissions from the public for the fourth OGP National Action Plan from 6th March to 8th April 2023.
- Minister Donohoe launched a promotional video to the public for submissions for the next National Action Plan.
- Ongoing updating of Ireland's OGP website with progress of public consultation, OGP Round Table Agenda and Minutes, promotional videos and information on Open Government demonstrating the ethos of civic engagements and an open, transparent and publicly accountable process.
- Seventy-one submissions were received.
- The OGP Round Table Secretariat issued personalised acknowledgements of receipt which outlined the next steps of the process as they were received (6th March – 8th April).

#### Workshops:

- Five separate workshops were held to develop potential commitments for NAP4 and the policy owners for specific themes were invited to the relevant workshops.
- Submission owners were invited to the workshops where their submission would be discussed.
- *The Brave Lab* (facilitation company) wrote up findings from all five workshops and included feedback from *What We Learned* session. The report was submitted to the OGP Round Table for their consideration. This report is published separately and can be found [here](#).

## Phase 2: Development of Commitments

- Based on consideration of the findings of the report the OGP Round Table ranked twelve potential commitment areas, and agreed a focus and prioritisation on six of these ranked commitments.
- Departments with policy responsibility for the commitment areas were asked to develop potential commitments taking into account the feedback from the consultation report.
- Eleven of the initial proposed commitments were developed by the potential policy owners and reviewed by the OGP Round Table.
- The Secretariat engaged with owners of the commitments and all of the OGP Round Table members and suggested the commitments be tested against the following criteria:
  - » Respond to the Public Consultation output and ranking.
  - » Be ambitious enough to have a tangible impact on the public.
  - » Be feasible; looking at resources and timelines, within policyholder's Department within two-year period of the NAP4.
  - » Have political backing as reflected in the *Programme for Government*.
  - » Have the potential to build on the foundation of NAP3.
  - » Be clearly within scope of OGP values.
  - » Reflect previous Independent Review Mechanism feedback.
  - » Not just reiterate the high-level commitments given elsewhere but spell out in a tangible way how the actions in the commitments are being/will be moved forward.
- Policy holders represented on the OGP Round Table presented and outlined the value and impact of their proposed commitments at several meetings of the OGP Round Table.
- Discussion took place among OGP Round Table members on the proposed commitments and there was broad agreement not to cut any of the proposals and to develop all commitments further.
- Civil society members of the OGP Round Table provided feedback at these meetings and in writing.
- The Secretariat asked the commitment owners to update their proposed commitments based on feedback received and using the template provided by OGP.
- Seven detailed completed OGP commitment templates were received from five Departments - the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Justice, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform and the Department of the Taoiseach.
- Ireland's fourth OGP National Action Plan, which covers the period of 2023-2025, makes commitments under the following four themes:
  1. Increase and promote the practices and impact of Open Research and Open Data.
  2. Engage more fully and more effectively with citizens, and the Civil and Voluntary sector, about policies and plans that are going to affect their lives.
  3. Make Government more transparent and accountable through development of a modernised ethics statutory framework.
  4. More effective engagement and communication with the community and underrepresented groups.
- These detailed commitments were reviewed further by the OGP Round Table members at meetings, through written feedback and some verbal feedback outside of the meetings.
- Round Table members deliberated in an iterative process aimed at strengthening the seven commitments.

Figure 1: Themes and Commitments for NAP4



### **Phase 3: Finalisation, approval and submission of the fourth OGP National Action Plan**

- The Co-Chairs and Secretariat drafted the NAP4 and circulated it to the members of the OGP Round Table for final observations.
- All commitment owners approved the final text of their commitments.
- The Co-Chairs reviewed the feedback provided by OGP Round Table members and finalised the plan.
- The Secretariat submitted the NAP4 to the Management Board of the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform for approval.
- The Secretariat submitted the NAP4 to the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform for approval to submit to Government. The Minister brought the National Action Plan to Government for its consideration in February 2024. The Government approved NAP4 in February 2024.
- Ireland submitted the National Action Plan to the OGP for consideration.
- The plan was published in February 2024.

### **Phase 4: Review and communication of the fourth OGP National Action Plan**

In this phase, the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform will review the process of developing Ireland's fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan with a view to informing future iterations of the plan and lessons learnt from the process.

Key steps will include:

- In-person workshop with OGP Round Table members to gather feedback on the process of developing the plan, the role of Open Government in Ireland and the revitalising of the OGP Round Table membership and processes.
- Stakeholder engagement and updates and communications around the publication of NAP4.





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