



Ireland's Open Government Partnership Draft National Action Plan 2016-2018

November 2016

Draft issued for public consultation

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Foreword

Foreword by Paschal Donohoe, T.D.

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform



As Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, I am leading the Government's efforts to create *with citizens* a second National Action Plan as part of the [Open Government Partnership](#). As part of this international initiative, every two years, Ireland makes commitments to make the State ever more transparent, ever more accountable and ever more inclusive in how it reaches decisions.

I would like to thank all those who contributed ideas, either through our consultation portal www.ogpireland.ie, by participating in one of the Civic Forums held to discuss this plan, or directly with my Department's staff. All the submissions received, reports on the Civic Forums and an explanation of how they have fed into this draft plan can be read on the portal.

As stated in the [initial consultation document](#), complex policy issues cannot be solved by Government alone. When citizens are engaged in public policy making it leads to more informed decisions. Policies and services can then better respond to people's needs. How the public might respond to policies and to new or reformed services will be better understood. Citizens and service users can better understand the reasons behind some decisions and have more confidence that things are moving in the right direction.

The contributions that were made as part of that initial consultation are deeply appreciated. All, including those that were critical, are equally valid. They come from a belief that we can improve how the state conducts its business. The commitments set out in this draft National Action Plan are framed at a high level. They cannot reflect in detail the depth of knowledge, experiences and ideas shared during the initial consultation. We will establish an Implementation Review Forum that will allow people to see how their contributions are reflected in implementing the commitments in this plan. The first Implementation Review Forum will take place in April 2017.

The final National Action Plan will run until the end of June 2018. The commitments chosen by the Government for inclusion in this plan are those that can be delivered in that time. The Open Government Partnership is built on continuous engagement with the public and Civil Society. The Government is committed to improving that engagement and to progressing the ambitions of the Partnership further in future plans.

This draft second National Action Plan, for the period to June 2018, sets out commitments across four themes:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Increased Citizen Engagement, to improve policies and services |  |
| 2. Increased Transparency, to better understand government activities and decisions |  |
| 3. Open Data, for transparency and innovation |  |
| 4. Anti-Corruption and Strengthened Governance and Accountability, to ensure integrity in public life |  |

I would welcome your views on this draft, which you can submit through our consultation portal at www.ogpireland.ie, or directly with my Department's staff at ogpireland2018@per.gov.ie or 01-604 5741.

Note on the Co-Creation Process

Note on the Co-Creation Process

CiviQ

Prepared by CiviQ and TCI Engagement



Background

In August 2016, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) launched a process to consult the public and civil society groups in preparing Ireland's Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-2018.

The consultation process was designed following discussions with members of the Joint-Working Group that was involved in drafting Ireland's first National Action Plan 2014-2016. At the outset, the consultation process was a challenge, because the time available for creating the National Action Plan 2016-2018 was reduced due to the time taken to form a government after the general election. The Department, responding to some of the criticisms from some Civil Society groups set out in the Independent Review Mechanism's Mid-Term Report, wanted to reach as many people as possible and for the identification of potential commitments to be as transparent and independent as possible.

For these reasons, following a request for tenders, the Department commissioned CiviQ and TCI Engagement to help deliver the consultation, in a way that was as open, inclusive and transparent as possible, within the constraints of the timeframe.

CiviQ and TCI Engagement's Methodology

In response to the need for an effective and inclusive consultation, CiviQ and TCI Engagement focused on engaging a broad range of perspectives and information from civil society, citizens, businesses, and minority or marginalised groups. They used a combination of traditional consultation tools and new digital methods. This focus was essential to ensure that: 1) the initial set of proposed actions in the draft National Action Plan 2016-2018 were drawn from a broad social base for whom OGP can have substantive impact and 2) deliberations in civic forums were diverse and inclusive.

The process strived to further promote inclusion and knowledge sharing by openly publishing all opinions and knowledge to enable stakeholders to learn from each other; ensure inclusion of potentially omitted knowledge or views; and to transparently show how a person's input was reflected in the final plan.

Initial Consultation

Stage one of the consultation process, which ran from 22nd August-30th September, aimed to obtain possible commitments to include in Ireland's second National Action Plan.

The initial consultation encouraged the greatest possible engagement by individuals and civil society groups. The early steps focused on designing a national communication campaign which included two Facebook campaigns - one targeting young people aged between 18 and 25 years, and another targeting citizens' around the country with an interest in politics and community. Other interested parties were contacted by email and telephone. Additional methods used to promote and raise awareness of the consultation included a dedicated Webpage as well as Press and Radio advertisements. A phone line was available for citizens to ask questions and to make submissions.

Online portal – encouraging an open discussion

The initial consultation document, "Have your say - Creating a New National Action Plan 2016-2018" was published online via CiviQ's open consultation portal at www.ogpireland.ie. The main aim of this online approach was to reach as many people as possible, encourage discussion, and inspire a sense of community. Individuals and civil society groups viewed the consultation document online and made submissions on possible actions to include in the second National Action Plan. Given that it was an 'open' portal, individuals could view, share and comment on other peoples' suggestions. Submissions were also received by post and telephone. These were manually inputted to the system to ensure all voices were represented together.

Civic Forums – obtaining further input and insight

Two civic forums were held in order to obtain further input and insight from civil society. These were held on Wednesday 14 September 2016 (Kilkenny) from 2-4.30pm and Tuesday 27 September 2016 (Dublin) from 6-8pm. The forums were attended by 15 and 23 participants respectively. These forums, facilitated by TCI Engagement, provided a cooperative environment for individuals and civil society groups to openly discuss and debate possible actions/commitments to include in the second National Action Plan. The forums focussed on the three categories identified in the consultation document; Strengthening Governance and Accountability, Increased Transparency and Open Data, and Strengthening Citizens Engagement.

To share knowledge, and help build a sense of community, the views and proposals shared at each table were published on the web via a live blog. In addition, written submissions that had been received via the online portal, were presented at the forum and/or were made available on tablets at each table or in printed format. A number of wide ranging actions emerged from the forums, complementing those raised via the online submission portal process. Findings from the forums were

published on the OGP Ireland website. Submissions were also updated by citizens after the forum, building on what was learned or shared during the event.

Considering the feedback

Following the close of the first stage of the consultation, CiviQ analysed, reviewed and combined all of the feedback received to provide an independent report which includes a list of possible actions to include in Ireland's second National Action Plan. These actions were developed in respect of the following principles:

Actions should

- Demonstrate ambition with transformative potential
- Be relevant to the values of transparency, accountability and public participation
- Be specific, time-bound and measurable.
- Be as inclusive as possible of the range of submissions received

The independent report was published online in an interactive table at www.ogpireland.ie/actions. Each action is linked to the related submissions and comments from the civic forums, demonstrating the relationship between citizen's input and output.

Consultation on the Draft National Action Plan 2016-2018

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform considered the list of possible commitments to develop this Draft National Action Plan. This draft is published for public comment on the consultation portal www.ogpireland.ie. CiviQ have contacted Civil Society groups and those who made contributions to let them know that the draft is available for review. CiviQ have also initiated a social media awareness campaign to advertise the draft plan's publication.

Comments from the public on this draft plan are invited on the portal, where people will be able to view, share and comment on other peoples' suggestions. Comments on this draft National Action Plan can also be made by post, telephone and email. Those who made submissions are encouraged to contact the Department if they have any questions on their submission.

Contact details:

Website and Portal: www.ogpireland.ie

Email: ogpireland2018@per.gov.ie

Telephone: 01 604 5741

Post: Ian Devlin, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 7-9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2. D02 V223

Commitment 1: Promote Transparent Climate Policy Development

To improve public policy in the area of Climate Action by strengthening transparency and participation in formulating Climate Action targets.

Objective: To integrate the transparency requirements of United Nations Climate Change agreements into the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan so that open government reforms can help advance climate action.

Status quo: At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015 countries adopted a legally binding global climate Agreement that seeks to avoid the impacts of climate change by limiting global warming to below 2°C. Among the core principles of the Paris Agreement are the concepts of enhanced transparency, accountability and participation.

Consultation is at the heart of work being undertaken to create both the first National Mitigation Plan (NMP) and the National Adaptation Framework (NAF). Some non-statutory consultations have already taken place and statutory consultations will be undertaken during the development of the NMP and NAF during 2017.

The co-chairs of the Open Government Partnership, the World Resources Institute and the Government of France have produced guidance for integrating climate commitments in OGP National Action Plans.

As part of the 2016 Program for Partnership Government it has been agreed that the Government will establish a National Dialogue on Climate Change that will involve extensive public consultation. This will incorporate the key infrastructural, land use and economic issues to be considered in our long-term transition to a new low carbon future.

Ambition: To inform decision making on climate action through consulting interested members of the public.

Lead implementing organisation: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Timeline: Commencement in January 2017; End date TBC.

Commitment 1: Promote Transparent Climate Policy Development			
OGP values	Civic participation, Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment		
Other actors involved - government	<p>A Whole of Government approach is required. All Government Departments, State Agencies as well as Local Authorities and sectoral representatives will be central in holding a constructive Dialogue. Sectoral representatives will be drawn from a broad range of bodies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Groups; • Environmental and other Non -Governmental Organizations; • Members of the Farming Community; • Business and Trade Union representatives; • Youth organizations; • Churches and religious groups; as well as • Organizations promoting Women’s Rights and Human Rights. 		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Initiate the implementation of the National Dialogue on Climate Change	New	January 2017	June 2018

Commitment 2: Support Public Participation Networks

To support Public Participation Networks through the operation of the National PPN Advisory Group and other supports.

Objective: Drawing on initial experiences of the operation of Public Participation Networks, continue to pro-actively work to provide necessary supports and promote best practice.

Status quo: The primary responsibility and accountability for decision-making within the local authority resides in the elected council. As part of a revitalisation of local government, the approaches to engage the public in local authority policy formulation and service design will go beyond the range of communication, consultation and community participation mechanisms used in the past. Approaches to stimulate greater public participation will complement rather than diminish, compete with, or substitute for local representative democracy. The participation of members of local communities, whether as individuals or as members of local sectoral, community or other groups in public life and their right to influence the decisions that affect their lives and communities are at the centre of democracy. Open and inclusive policy-making enhances transparency and accountability, and builds civic capacity.

A National PPN Advisory Group has been established, representative of relevant stakeholders, and chaired by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. A PPN User Guide has been developed to provide practical assistance to PPNs. Resources have been provided to recruit dedicated resource workers for each PPN. A PPN Data Base comprising a robust data and information management system that all PPN's can use is being rolled out. A series of training and information events have been provided at a number of different geographical locations to support PPNs and local authorities.

The public consultation for this National Action Plan highlighted the need to ensure that PPNs are supported through the dissemination of best practices across local authorities.

Ambition: To ensure that Public Participation Networks provide the community and voluntary and environmental sectors with meaningful engagement with Local Authorities.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2017

**Commitment 2:
Support Public Participation Networks**

OGP values	Civic participation, Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government		
Other actors involved - government	National PPN Advisory Group, Local Authorities		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
<p>Put in place a fully representative and transparently nominated National PPN Advisory Group.</p> <p>With National Advisory Group guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with all stakeholders, including PPNs, community-based PPN member organisations and local authorities to promote best practice. - Update and improve the PPN User Guide. - Continue ongoing training/capacity building programmes for local PPN participants. - Roll out a capacity building programme for local authority members and officials. - Develop a national communications/awareness-raising plan for PPNs. - Roll out and update as necessary Client Relationship Database for all PPNs. 	New	January 2017	June 2017

Commitment 3: Improve Access to Justice

We will improve access to justice by reducing the cost of accessing justice, by assisting vulnerable persons and individuals with limited decision-making capacity, and by introducing more open and transparent oversight of legal practitioners.

Objective: Improve access to justice by reducing its cost, assisting those who require support and improving oversight of legal practitioners.

Status quo: The Legal Aid Board provides legal advice, for a nominal fee, on certain civil matters to those below certain income thresholds. However, there have been criticisms that high legal fees for those above the income thresholds reduces access to justice. The opaque nature of how those legal fees are calculated has also been criticised. The recently established Legal Services Regulatory Authority is charged with the oversight of legal practitioners, legal services and creating a more transparent legal costs regime in the State as provided for under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

The Irish Government recently began a scheme, Abhaile, of free legal and financial advice, as well as professional assistance, to certain borrowers who find themselves at risk of losing their home due to mortgage arrears. This initiative will seek to encourage engagement of borrowers and creditors in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, prevent unnecessary recourse to the courts, and minimise repossession for distressed borrowers.

Ambition:

A) Reduce the cost of accessing justice by:

- introducing new legal business models, such as Legal Partnerships. This will help to integrate the dual model of legal representation in Ireland and will enable legal entities to become more efficient in dealing with their clients
- implementing a new system to adjudicate on the costs associated with legal proceedings. This new independent process will involve publishing determinations in respect of legal cost disputes. This action will help to create openness, consistency and clarity around the costs of accessing justice
- introducing a quicker and cheaper informal arrangement for the resolution of complaints surrounding the costs of legal representation. This informal mechanism may be accessed by aggrieved clients prior to going to full adjudication
- classifying unjustifiable overcharging of clients as 'serious misconduct'. This would be adjudicated by the new independent oversight body for legal practitioners. A robust penalties and professional disciplinary scheme will be applied to those found to have grossly overcharged clients

- encouraging greater use of alternative dispute resolution. We will introduce a new framework to promote mediation as a viable, effective and efficient alternative to court proceedings thereby reducing legal costs, speeding up the resolution of disputes and relieving the stress involved in court proceedings.

B) Introduce a new statutory framework to assist vulnerable persons and individuals with decision-making capacity difficulties to exercise their legal capacity. The new framework will replace the outdated "Wards of Court" system and establish a modern statutory framework to support decision-making by adults with capacity difficulties. The aim is to safeguard the person's autonomy to the greatest extent possible by offering a continuum of decision support options most appropriate to the person's needs.

C) Create more open and transparent oversight of legal practitioners by:

- establishing a new independent regime to regulate solicitors and barristers. This will end reliance on self-regulation by the legal professional bodies and will open up governance and reporting mechanisms to public and parliamentary scrutiny
- introducing an independent complaints system to deal with professional misconduct by legal practitioners
- making the way legal costs are charged more open and transparent through the introduction of new rules for solicitors and barristers. This will require legal practitioners to inform their clients in much greater detail how their legal costs are calculated.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Justice and Equality

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

Commitment 3: Improve Access to Justice	
OGP values	Public accountability
New or ongoing commitment	New
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Justice and Equality
Other actors involved - government	Department of Health, Decision Support Service

Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
A1) Introduce new legal business models, such as Legal Partnerships	New	January 2017	June 2017
A2) Implement a new system to adjudicate on the costs associated with legal proceedings	New	January 2017	June 2017
A3) Introduce a quicker and cheaper informal arrangement for the resolution of legal representation cost complaints	New	January 2017	June 2017
A4) Classify unjustifiable overcharging of clients as 'serious misconduct'	New	January 2017	June 2017
A5) Introduce a new framework to promote mediation as an alternative to court proceedings	New	January 2017	June 2017
B) Introduce a new framework to assist vulnerable persons and individuals with limited decision-making capacity	New	January 2017	June 2017
C1) Establish a new independent regime to regulate solicitors and barristers	New	January 2017	June 2017
C2) Introduce an independent complaints system to deal with professional misconduct by legal practitioners	New	January 2017	June 2017
C3) Make the way legal costs are charged more open and transparent through the introduction of new rules for solicitors and barristers	New	January 2017	June 2017

Commitment 4: Enhance Citizen Engagement in Policy Making

To build capacity within public offices to engage citizens in policy making in a way that is accessible and meaningful, with the ultimate objective of leading to better outcomes and greater understanding.

Objective: To build capacity and help to create a culture of openness and responsiveness to the citizen in policy making across the public sector.

Status quo: Ireland's first Open Government Partnership National Action Plan, 2014-2016, acknowledged that citizen participation requires accessible and timely information about policy and service development proposals, clear ways to engage with policy makers, and a culture of openness on the part of the public service. Updated guidance on consulting the public was prepared under the National Action Plan. In addition, one of the aims of the Civil Service Renewal Plan is to 'promote a culture of innovation and openness by involving greater external participation and consultation in policy development'. A series of Open Policy Debates has been established for a range of policy areas. It promotes regular open discussion, early on in the policy development process. It allows a wide range of academics and practitioners to hear informed, expert, opposing and challenging views.

Many helpful suggestions were made in the submissions received as part of the process to draft this Action Plan. The milestones set out below to fulfil this commitment aim to address the shortcomings identified in those submissions and advance the ideas for improvements.

Ambition: To promote meaningful citizen engagement in policy making and in turn to increase the legitimacy of decision-making, improve the public's knowledge and awareness of complex policy challenges, help decision-makers to make better decisions, and lead to better policies and improvements in the quality of service provision.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

Commitment 4: Enhance Citizen Engagement in Policy Making	
OGP values	Civic participation
New or ongoing commitment	Ongoing

Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Department of Children and Youth Affairs		
Other actors involved - government	All government departments and public bodies		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Create a Consultation Portal. This will act as a central repository for public consultations. It will make consultations easier to engage with and promote best practice in how they are run. It will contribute to the evaluation and monitoring of citizen engagement efforts.	New	January 2017	June 2017
The Civil Service Learning and Development Project Team will ensure that an awareness of best practice in external engagement and consultation is embedded in relevant training modules of the new curriculum, including Policy Making, Communications, Change Management and Project Management.	New	December 2016	March 2017
Create a practitioners network to support citizen engagement. This will be used to gather and share best practice and innovations in citizen engagement, including the provision of accessible information on key policy issues and 'legislative footprints' on current legislative initiatives.	New	December 2016	March 2017
The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will establish a Children and Young People's Participation Hub, as a national centre for excellence on the participation of children and young people. The Hub will support Government departments and other organisations by providing training, developing good practice toolkits and supporting organisations to effectively involve children and young people in decision-making, including young children and those who are seldom heard.	Ongoing		June 2017

Commitment 5: Enhance Customer Engagement

To ensure that the delivery of public services is focused on the needs of the customer, including those with diverse needs.

Objective: Build on long-standing efforts to provide quality public services, focusing on actions that build capacity and help to create a culture of openness and responsiveness to the customer.

Status quo: Customer engagement efforts fall within the broader idea of Citizen Engagement and democratic reforms that include public participation, public involvement, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and collaborative governance, which all recognise and build upon the idea that citizens should have a say in the decisions that affect their lives¹.

Improving in how the Public Service engages with its customers, and improving service design and delivery, is a core part of the Public Service Reform Programme. Existing initiatives include:

- The Quality Customer Service (QCS) Officers Network
- Customer Charters and Customer Action Plans
- Surveys of Civil Service Customers
- Developing 'Universal Design for Customer Engagement' toolkits
- Promoting the use of Plain Language

The consultation process to create this action plan identified the need to promote knowledge of these initiatives across public sector bodies and to ensure that the design of services takes account of customers with diverse needs. A review of citizens' complaints procedures undertaken as part of Ireland's first OGP National Action Plan 2014-2016 and a [Review of Customer Charters and Customer Service Action Plans in the Civil Service](#) under the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 set out the progress that has been made in the area of customer engagement and identified steps for further progress.

The development of a new Public Service Reform Plan for the period 2017-2019 is underway. This will continue the focus on improving customer service. Transposing the recent EU Directive on the Accessibility of Public Sector Bodies Websites will help address digital exclusion.

¹ Lukesmeyer, C.J. Public Deliberation: A Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement. America Speaks, 2006.

Ambition: To ensure that public services are designed and delivered in ways that focus on providing value to the customer or user of those services by making customer engagement integral to the design and delivery of those services.

The milestones to fulfil this commitment, set out below, will enhance the capacity to evaluate and report on longstanding initiatives to improve customer experiences.

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

Commitment 5: Enhance Customer Engagement			
OGP values	Civic participation, Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Department of Justice and Equality Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Centre for Excellence in Universal Design OGCIO		
Other actors involved - government	All government departments and public bodies		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Enhance reporting on progress made in meeting standards and commitments in Customer Charters and provide reports in open data formats. We will similarly report on efforts to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of plain language • Promote universal design • Address Digital Exclusion • Comply with the Public Sector Duty under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 	New	January 2017	June 2018
Design and introduce structured reporting on responses to any issues identified in surveys of Civil Service customers and provide reports in open data formats.	New	January 2017	June 2018

Encourage public bodies to engage with their customers in the development, delivery and review of services.	New	January 2017	June 2018
Provide training in Customer Service and Communication Skills to improve the quality and consistency of customer engagement across the Civil Service	Ongoing		June 2018

Commitment 6: Improve Access To Government Services Through Technology

Objective: To improve services to our citizens through enhanced use of technology.

Status quo: The global technological shift has increased both the demand and expectation for Governments to make it simpler for citizens to use services through technology and digital platforms. Citizens expect their Government to harness technology and to build solutions that are shared across the public service. There is an increasing demand for reduced duplication of effort to make the citizen's transactions with the State easier, more flexible, and less time consuming.

Ambition: The Government will champion the role of new technology and drive innovation by making it easier for citizens to engage with the State. This ambition will include meeting citizens' demands for digital services by introducing readily accessible, intuitive, and secure applications. These solutions will increase service speed, effectiveness, and will create better value for money in the provision of public services.

The Government will meet this ambition by eliminating duplication of engagement through a single customer view using a *'tell us once'* principle; by replacing multiple Government issued cards with one safe and secure smart Public Services Card, making the citizen's engagement with the State quicker and more seamless. The Government's ICT strategy will provide enhanced outcomes for customers by using a secure Government Network, sharing commonly needed applications across the public service and by implementing a Government Cloud to safely store and maintain data and applications.

The State recognises that not all citizens will have the capacity to access digital or web-based solutions and will cater for this too.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform & Department of Social Protection

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

Commitment 6: Improve Access to Government Services through Technology			
OGP values	Civic participation, Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	Ongoing		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, OGCI, Department of Social Protection		
Other actors involved - government	All government departments and public bodies		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer will continue to work with the Department of Social Protection to increase the uptake of MyGovID and the Public Services Card, including its use by Government agencies, and to develop the SAFE authentication model. This will also enable Citizens to access Government services online with confidence.	Ongoing		June 2018
Create a Government service gateway or portal. The gateway would initially be a means of directing the service user, especially where they are new users of Government services, to the services they require. The portal would then be used to present new or less well known information or services and be the means for single sign-on/authentication and verification/update of general information (e.g. simple address information), using the “tell us once” principle.	Ongoing		June 2018

Commitment 7: Participatory Budgeting

To enable further citizen engagement in local authority budgeting

Objective: Undertake a feasibility study on possible means of enabling further citizen engagement in local authority budgetary processes.

Status quo: The budgetary process established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, will be considered in the context of a further programme of local government reform and development to be undertaken pursuant to the Programme for a Partnership Government for the purpose of a report for Government and the Oireachtas by mid-2017 on potential measures to boost local government leadership and accountability, and to ensure that local government funding, structures and responsibilities strengthen local democracy. Having regard to these active considerations it is considered that the opportunity for the timely commencement of this action and the means by which further citizen engagement might be enhanced will be informed by this process.

Ambition: The results of the feasibility study will inform and guide the next steps on how further citizen engagement in local authority budgetary processes can be facilitated.

Lead implementing organisation: Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

Timeline: January 2017 to December 2017

**Commitment 7:
Support Public Participation Networks**

OGP values	Civic participation, Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government		
Other actors involved - government	National PPN Advisory Group, Local Authorities, The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) and the County and City Managers' Association		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) & County and City Managers' Association to undertake feasibility study, in consultation with key stakeholders, on enabling further citizen engagement in local authority budgetary processes.	New	January 2017	December 2017

Commitment 8: Improve Transparency of Government Service Providers

Government will improve transparency of organisations delivering services on its behalf, whether they are funded by grant or contract for service.

Objective: To increase the release of data, preferably machine readable data, on organisations delivering services on the Government's behalf. This will include audited financial data, compliance data and on-going performance delivery data.

Status quo: The Government established the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) in 2013 to deliver better value and sustainable savings for the taxpayer, integrate procurement policy, strategy and operations, enable consistency and standardise the approach to public procurement, deliver broader policy goals in a consistent fashion and strengthen procurement spend analytics and data management. The legislative provisions of the EU Procurement Directives provide for the publication of tender and award notices for contracts above the applicable EU thresholds. However, the Office of Government Procurement has gone further to promote greater openness and transparency and the policy is that buyers are required to publish tender and award notices for contracts above €25k for goods and services and €50k for works on eTenders.

In Ireland, billions of Euro are dispersed every year by the Government to non-profit bodies to deliver services that in other jurisdictions are often delivered directly by the state. In relation to grant funded services, each grantor collects detailed compliance and performance data but it is generally not published at an individual grantee organisation level. In 2014, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform published a Circular (13/2014) to improve the management of and accountability for grants from exchequer funds. In 2015 the Government co-funded Benefacts.ie to centralise, digitise and publish all regulatory data on all non-profits in Ireland. While Benefacts has greatly improved transparency, it is based solely on audited regulatory filings and does not include compliance or performance data collected by grantors.

Ambition: We will assess the appropriateness of standard transparency clauses for all large service contracts and grant agreements in an Irish context. We will identify the improvements required in data infrastructure and compliance practices to facilitate the proactive release of data on all large service contracts and grant agreements, as appropriate.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Timeline: June 2018

Commitment 8: Improve transparency of government service providers			
OGP values	Access to information, Public accountability, Technology and innovation		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform		
Other actors involved - government	Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Defence, Local Government sector. All government departments that, directly or indirectly, grant fund organisations to deliver services on their behalf.		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Undertake a strategic assessment of contracting data infrastructure and contracting transparency compliance practices to identify changes required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver data to the Open Contracting Partnership’s Open Contracting Data Standard Intermediate level, and • be able to deliver on the requirements of a standard transparency clause in all large service contracts if such a clause were to be implemented 	New	Jan 2017	June 2018
Assess the impact of transparency clauses in other jurisdictions, and consult with public bodies and industry representatives on the introduction of a standard transparency clause in order to inform a final decision on implementation of a standard transparency clause in service contracts.	New	Jan 2017	June 2018
Undertake a strategic assessment of grant funding data infrastructure and grant funding compliance practices to identify changes required to:	New	Jan 2017	Sept 2017

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver data equivalent to the Open Contracting Partnership's Open Contracting Data Standard Basic level • be able to deliver on the requirements of a standard transparency clause in all major grant agreements 			
<p>Consult with public bodies and grant funded bodies on the introduction of a model transparency clause in order to inform a final decision on implementation of a standard transparency clause in grant agreements.</p>	New	Jan 2017	June 2018

Commitment 9: Enhance Fiscal Transparency

To introduce Performance Reports on government expenditure, which will show what is achieved with the resources allocated to each spending programme.

Objective: To support better resource allocation decision making, and improve people's understanding of what resources are available and the costs over time, of the various choices involved in public spending.

Status quo: Fiscal transparency has been advanced recently by the creation of the website whereyourmoneygoes.gov.ie which tries to make it easier to understand Government spending on public services. The performance budgeting initiative aims to strengthen focus on what is being delivered through that spending on public services and to build this information into the policy-making and accountability processes. At its core it is concerned with ensuring that policy development and resource allocation decisions are better informed. The introduction of the initiative laid the foundation for a more systematic engagement by parliamentarians and the public on the impact of public policies and on resource allocation decisions.

The initiative has been subject to ongoing review since its introduction, and has evolved considerably over the last number of years. One of the most significant developments has been the reformatting of the Revised Estimates Volume (REV), published each December, to include performance information. Following the publication of REV 2016, a detailed review was carried out of the performance information provided and detailed feedback was provided to the main Government Departments.

A comprehensive guidance note was also developed to assist Departments in selecting and reporting on appropriate performance indicators.

Ambition: To provide greater transparency on resource allocation and related public policy decisions and to strengthen focus on what is being delivered through public services, with public funds.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

**Commitment 9:
Enhance Fiscal Transparency**

OGP values	Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	Ongoing		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform		
Other actors involved - government	All government departments and public bodies		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has proposed to submit a Performance Report to the Oireachtas by end Quarter One each year, starting in 2017. This report will provide information on the performance of each Vote and the linkages between results and allocated resources. It is intended that this will allow for meaningful engagement between the Oireachtas and Government Departments on resource allocation and public policy decisions.	New	January 2017	June 2018

Commitment 10: Introduce Modern Document Management Procedures

Objective: To propose a Public Service Records Management Plan to facilitate coherent and comprehensive records management in the Public Service that will assist Public Service bodies in carrying out their functions effectively in addition to supporting the requirements of National Archives, Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

Status quo: Records management relates to a broad set of corporate responsibilities and enables Public Service bodies carry out their functions effectively in addition to supporting the smooth operational requirements of National Archives, Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation

In 2005 the Civil Service Centre for Management Organisation Development (CMOD) issued guidance regarding records management ('Old rules are still good rules - Record Management Guidelines). Over time, organic record keeping practises have evolved including the proliferation of disparate record keeping systems of varying quality based on digital technologies. The advantages of digital systems in creating, copying and distribution of documents has diluted the underlying systems which were traditionally used to manage files and to ensure the context, reliability and integrity of the record.

Ambition: The Ministers for Public Expenditure and Reform, and Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, will shortly bring a memorandum to Government requesting approval for a proposed Public Service Records Management Plan to deliver the policies, guidelines, structures and systems necessary to facilitate coherent and comprehensive records management. The Plan, will also address the issue of electronic and digital records, as well as giving direction to public bodies with regard to records not meriting long-term preservation management.

Lead implementing organisations: National Archives, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Timeline: January 2017 to January 2020

**Commitment 10:
Introduce Modern Document Management Procedures**

OGP values	Governance, Transparency		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	National Archives, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform		
Other actors involved - government	All government departments		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Present a Public Service Records Management Plan to the Government for decision	New	Q4 2016	Q1 2017
More milestones will be added to show how this commitment will be delivered subject to Government's approval of the Plan. If approved it is envisaged the plan will be delivered over three years.	New	Q1 2017	Q1 2020

Commitment 11: Develop an Open Data Strategy 2017-2020

To increase the volume and quality of government data being published in an open format.

Objective: Improve access to information and strengthen transparency by scaling up the volume and quality of open data available on the Government's open data portal: data.gov.ie

Status quo: Governance structures are in place via the Open Data Governance Board (ODGB) and a Public Bodies Working Group (PBWG) provides technical advice to support the Open Data Initiative. The Foundation document for the development of the Public Service Open Data Strategy and the Open Data Technical Framework are publicly available. Consultation with stakeholders has commenced. Data.gov.ie portal has been developed and enhanced and the number of datasets has grown to approx. 4500. A number of public bodies are actively engaged with the initiative but more engagement is required to bring other public bodies on board to make their data available as open data. Greater promotion of the portal amongst potential users is also required.

Ambition: To develop and implement an Open Data Strategy setting out short and long term goals over 2017-2020 including:

- building the number of datasets accessible through the open data portal: data.gov.ie
- monitoring compliance with the Technical Framework to ensure open data is in line with best practice
- raising awareness and promoting usage through multiple communication channels, such as participation at seminars, conferences, producing blogs, newsletters, etc.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2020

**Commitment 11:
Develop an Open Data Strategy 2017-2020**

OGP values	Access to information		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.		
Other actors involved - government	All government bodies		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Complete ongoing consultation with all stakeholders on proposed Open Data Strategy.	Ongoing		December 2016
Develop a Draft Open Data Strategy 2017-2020. Seek feedback on the Draft Open Data Strategy 2017-2020 including public consultation and then finalise and publish the Open Data Strategy 2017-2020.	New	Jan 2017	April 2017
Begin implementation of the Open Data Strategy 2017-2020 actions.	New	July 2017	2020

Commitment 12: Invest in Data Infrastructure that will result in better Open Data

To ensure the success of the Open Data Strategy it is essential that we invest in data infrastructure, such as systems, people, standards, unique identifiers, and processes to produce accurate, timely and linkable Open Data sets on topics citizens want to see.

Objective: Strengthen the quality and quantity of potential Open Data sets by investing in data systems, people, standards, unique identifiers and processes.

Status quo: There is much room to improve data infrastructure across the public sector. While some bodies have world class systems for their own purposes, other systems are aged, having suffered from a lack of new investment since the on-set of the recession. With a few notable exceptions, systems are generally not built to effectively share data or easily produce Open Data sets to the highest standards.

Ambition: The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) will work with DSP, Revenue, DJEI, CSO and other stakeholders to develop the concept of a National Data Infrastructure, including the initiation of pathfinder projects that will demonstrate the value of linking data from multiple sources. One of the objectives of this work will be to facilitate better sharing and a stronger analytics capability through the use of individual, business and location identifiers. Aligned with this, Data Sharing and Governance legislation will be enacted. The central aim will be to ensure an integrated / cohesive approach in terms of information flows between and within public organisations while ensuring best practice in regard to privacy, security and data protection.

The OGCIO, supported by the ICT Advisory Board and Heads of Civil Service HR and PAS, will work with Human Resources staff to develop an ICT Human Resource Strategy. By aligning with the wider Civil Service HR Strategy and industry best practice, this strategy should result in better quality data infrastructure, and ultimately, more and better quality open data.

The OGCIO will build on existing relationships and practice sharing with the most advanced data-enabled EU countries (specifically the Nordics and the Netherlands), taking advice as appropriate, to define the gap between Ireland and EU exemplars and identify strategies to make up the ground. In doing so, Ireland will seek to maximise our innovative use of data and our readiness for the European Single Market, and confirm that our operational, policy and legislative plans will establish Ireland as an eGovernment leader while maintaining compliance with Data Protection requirements.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

Commitment 12: Invest in Data Infrastructure that will result in better Open Data			
OGP values	Access to information		
New or ongoing commitment	New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.		
Other actors involved - government	All government bodies		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
The OGCIO will work with DSP, Revenue, DJEI, CSO and other stakeholders to develop the concept of a National Data Infrastructure, including the initiation of pathfinder projects that will demonstrate the value of linking data from multiple sources	New	Jan 2017	June 2017
D/PER will work with Parliamentary Counsel to complete the drafting of the Data Sharing and Governance Bill and progress it through the Oireachtas to enactment.	New	Jan 2017	June 2017
The OGCIO, supported by the ICT Advisory Board and Heads of Civil Service HR and PAS, will work with Human Resources staff to develop an ICT Human Resource Strategy.	New	Jan 2017	June 2017
The OGCIO will build on existing relationships and practice sharing with the most advanced data-enabled EU countries (specifically the Nordics and the Netherlands), taking advice as appropriate, to define the gap between Ireland and EU exemplars and identify strategies to make up the ground.	New	Jan 2017	June 2017

Commitment 13: Develop a Code of Practice for the Governance of Charities

To ensure charities, particularly those assisted by public funds, are held to the same high governance standards as other areas of public expenditure

Objective: Strengthen the corporate governance standards of charities in order to promote transparency, accountability and improve citizen trust in this important sector.

Status quo: In Ireland, billions of Euro are dispersed by the Government to charities to deliver services that in other jurisdictions are often delivered directly by the state. In recent years, a number of these bodies have been subject to investigations due to lax governance standards. The charities sector, through Charities Institute Ireland, has developed Fundraising Principles while the wider not-for-profit sector has developed The Governance Code, which is a voluntary governance code. DPER Circular (13/2014) 'The Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds' focuses primarily on accounting for funds.

Ambition: To develop appropriate, proportional, clear and supported standards of governance for charities, including areas such as financial governance, transparency, recruitment and tenure. These standards will deliver better outcomes for our society through better focused charities where volunteers, staff, service recipients and all other stakeholders will have a common point of reference for governance standards.

Lead implementing organisations: Charities Regulator.

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

Commitment 13: Develop a Code of Practice for the Governance of Charities	
OGP values	Governance, Anti-Corruption, Transparency
New or ongoing commitment	New
Lead implementation organisations	Charities Regulator
Other actors involved - government	All government departments that fund services via the charities sector

Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Conduct consultation with all stakeholders and develop first draft of a Code of Practice for the Governance of Charities	New	January 2017	September 2017
Seek feedback on the first draft and then publish finalised Code of Practice for the Governance of Charities	New	October 2017	March 2018
Work with charity sector representatives to design a structured, supported rollout process	New	April 2018	June 2018

Commitment 14: Strengthen Anti-Corruption Measures

To minimise the opportunities for corruption, investigate potential corruption and respond to corrupt behaviours.

Objective: To strengthen the legislative framework to prevent, investigate and respond to corruption in the public and private sectors.

Status quo:

A) The Public Sector Standards Bill 2015 was published in December 2015, and completed Second Stage in the Dáil in January 2016. The Bill aims to significantly enhance the existing framework for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest and minimising corruption risks, to achieve a shift towards a more dynamic and risk-based system of compliance and to ensure that the institutional framework for oversight, investigation and enforcement is robust and effective. This Bill consolidates the current legislative framework governing the ethical obligations of public officials and gives effect to the recommendations of the Mahon Tribunal.

Among the key reforms of the Public Sector Standards Bill 2015 were:

- the introduction of a Public Sector Standards Commissioner, with additional powers and resources, to replace the Standards in Public Office Commission and to oversee a reformed complaints and investigations process;
- the establishment in legislation of a set of integrity principles for all public officials;
- the strengthening of the legal obligation for public officials to disclose, as a matter of routine, actual and potential conflicts of interest, reinforced by a significant extension of the personal and material scope of disclosures for public officials and graduated disclosure requirements;
- the establishment of a more effective (IT-based) process for the submission of periodic statements of interests;
- the imposition of statutory prohibitions on the use of insider information, on the seeking by public officials of benefits to further their private interests, and on local elected representatives from dealing professionally with land in certain circumstances; and
- the establishment of a statutory board to address potential conflicts of interest as public officials take up roles in the private sector.

B) The Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 2010 would benefit from consolidation and renewal, as has been recommended by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and other evaluation bodies.

They have recently been reviewed with a view to being replaced by a new Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Bill.

C) The mechanisms for appointing and overseeing the judiciary are somewhat dated and could be improved to prevent the opportunity for potential corruption.

Ambition:

A) Finalise and enact the Public Sector Standards Bill to put in place a framework which modernises, simplifies and streamlines the current legislative framework for ethics with a robust and effective institutional framework for oversight, investigation and enforcement.

B) A new Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Bill will be published and enacted to replace the outdated and overlapping Prevention of Corruption Acts which date back to 1889. The new Bill will replace existing offences and supplement them with new offences including those which will incriminate trading in influence, intimidation, misuse of confidential information by a public official, and facilitating corruption.

The Bill will clarify the liability of corporate bodies for offences. It will also extend the range of penalties available to a court when a person is convicted to include forfeiture of public office.

C) The prevention of corruption in the judicial sector will be enhanced by reforms in governance and accountability by establishing a judicial council. The Judicial Council legislation will provide for the establishment of a Judicial Conduct Committee, the function of which will be to promote and maintain high standards of judicial conduct.

In addition to investigating complaints into the conduct of individual judges, the Judicial Conduct Committee will also be given responsibility for preparing and submitting draft guidelines concerning judicial conduct and ethics to the Board of the Council, for adoption by the Council. It is also envisaged that the Judicial Conduct Committee would have a role in providing advice on judicial conduct and ethics, both in general terms and to individual judges.

Lead implementing organisations: (A) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, (B, C) Department of Justice and Equality

Timeline: January 2017 to June 2018

**Commitment 14:
Strengthen Anti-Corruption measures**

OGP values	Civic participation, Public accountability		
New or ongoing commitment	Ongoing and New		
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Department of Justice		
Other actors involved - government			
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
A) Progress the Public Sector Standards Bill through the Oireachtas to enactment	Ongoing		June 2017
B) A new Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Bill will be published and enacted	Ongoing		December 2017
C) Judicial Council legislation will be published and enacted	New	January 2017	December 2017

Commitment 15: Establish a Register of Beneficial Ownership

To hold information on the beneficial ownership of companies incorporated in Ireland.

To hold information on the beneficial ownership of companies incorporated in Ireland.

Objective: To strengthen transparency over who ultimately owns and controls companies and other legal entities, to effectively detect, disrupt and prevent money laundering and terrorist financing.

Status quo: Ireland is committed to implementing the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations on transparency and beneficial ownership. Ireland is transposing the EU 4th Anti-Money Laundering Directive which requires Member States to create registers of beneficial ownership information of companies (article 30). The EU 4th Anti-Money Laundering Directive is currently being amended to greater enhance counter terrorist financing and transparency provisions which may have an impact on beneficial ownership registers.

Ambition: We will work to ensure that beneficial ownership information of companies can be used effectively to detect, disrupt and prevent money laundering and terrorist financing. We will work to ensure accurate and timely beneficial ownership information of companies is collected and available to those with a legitimate interest. This requires mechanisms to ensure law enforcement and other competent authorities, including tax authorities, have full and effective access to accurate and up to date information.

Lead implementing organisations: Department of Finance

Timeline: To be decided at EU level

Commitment 15: Establish a Register of Beneficial Ownership	
OGP values	Anti-Corruption
New or ongoing commitment	New
Lead implementation organisations	Department of Finance

Other actors involved - government	Department of Justice and Equality; Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Companies Registration Office; Central Bank of Ireland		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	New or ongoing	Start date	End date
Establish central registers of beneficial ownership information of companies, put in place effective arrangements for reporting, sharing and exchanging this information and consider the feasibility of making it public.	New	December 2016	To be decided at EU level