



Open Government Partnership (OGP) – 11th Round Table Meeting Minutes – 20th April 2023

1. Welcome and updates since last meeting

- The Co- Chairs welcomed members to the meeting. The 9th March minutes were agreed and will be uploaded to the Open Government Partnership website. 71 submissions have been received under the Public Consultation phase. The Secretariat will adjust indicative timelines and workshop dates in line with this increased volume of submissions to take account of capacity available.

2. Updates on commitments under the Third Open Government’s Partnership National Action Plan 2021-2023:

Ciara Morgan (DPENDR) and (DoF) provided an update as follows:

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 13 December 2022. The review report was published on 7 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.

A General Scheme is being prepared by the Department. An indicative outline has been agreed and drafting of the heads is progressing. There will be awareness raising activities of the review report and its recommendations carried out as the General Scheme is prepared. Responsibility for this work has been transferred to the Minister for Finance.

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 13 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.

It is intended to seek Government approval to the final review report in Q2 2023. The Minister intends to bring legislative proposals, informed by the review, to Government in 2023.



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. This Bill was published in September. The Bill was considered in the Dáil at Report and Final stages on 1st March 2023. It will be considered next in the Seanad (Second Stage is scheduled for 20 April) and it is intended that it will complete its passage through the Oireachtas and be enacted in the first half of 2023. Responsibility for this work has been transferred to the Minister for Finance.

Kieran Moylan (DRCD) provided an in-depth update as follows;

(See attached separate PDF document)

Diarmuid O Leary – (DHLGH) provided an update as follows;

- Ireland’s OGP National Action Plan 2021 –2023 commits DHLGH to “commence the review of the Strategic Policy Committees during 2022 and to consult with stakeholders, including the PPN Advisory Group, in drafting the TORs and as part of the review process.
- This process began in September 2022 and is ongoing.
- A Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) has been constituted to oversee, advise and guide the SPC review, chaired by DHLGH. Members of the Stakeholder Working Group comprise representatives of all those involved in local authority SPCs, including councillor representatives (AILG), the CCMA, the SPC stakeholder representative pillars including PPN reps, as well as Government Departments (D/ECC and D/RCD) and the LGMA.
- The SWG has met virtually four times since October, most recently on 29 March. Its work to date has involved setting out its own terms of reference and, more importantly, the terms of reference for the independent review itself.
- The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) has been appointed to carry out the independent review, which it is hoped will commence later this month. It is envisaged that the SWG will meet with the IPA at appropriate intervals to advise and guide the review process.
- The review will take approximately 6 months. Once complete, the IPA’s report will be submitted to the SWG. The SWG will provide commentary on the final report, and will then submit the report and commentary to the Minister. It is intended that the review will complete its work well in time to allow any necessary amendments to be made by the Minister to the guidelines for SPCs in advance of the 2024 local elections.
- Further information about the review and the Stakeholder Working Group, including minutes of its meetings, is now available online here:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f96ec-a-stakeholder-working-group-swg-for-the-review-of-local-authority-strategic-policy-committees/>



Victoria Gbafah – (DPENDR) provided an update as follows;

Update of 2016 Consultation Principles and Guidance for the Public Sector

- Building on phase one of the Review of Consultation Principles and Guidance for the Public Sector phase two of this project will involve focused engagement with key stakeholders over two workshops to discuss a high-level framework for the revised guidelines and principles. The first workshops will include non-state community and voluntary members of the Cross Sectoral Group which oversees the implementation of the Government's Community Strategy with the second workshop with public service officials. Feedback from these workshops will be incorporated into the draft guidelines.
- The overall purpose of the May workshops will be to generate input from these stakeholders in designing the draft principles and guidelines. It is intended that the workshops will take place online to facilitate attendance from across the country.

3. Discussion on the facilitation phase in the development of NAP4.

The Secretariat presented the next phase of the project outlining the proposed roll-out of a series of workshops followed by a summary consultation report by the facilitator's The Brave Lab.

4. Actions arising /AOB/Next meeting/ close

The Secretariat will communicate proposed dates, themes and stakeholder engagement plans to the Round Table in collaboration with The Brave Lab.

Next meeting: 31st May 11:00am – 12:30pm - Hybrid