



Open Government Partnership (OGP) – 13th Round Table Meeting Minutes – 20th July 2023

1. Welcome and updates since last meeting

- The Co- Chairs welcomed members to the meeting. Thanks was given to the Brave Lab for their robust efforts to support the Round Table and the Secretariat in the facilitation phase of the process.
- Co-chair Philip Mc Grath announced that this was his last meeting with the OGP Round Table. A new Principal Officer, Sarah Glavey will be replacing him on the civil service side. Philip thanked the Round Table for their commitment to the process and wished them well with the completion of NAP4.
- Co-chair Antóin Ó Lachtnain thanked the Secretariat for all the hard work done and the Round Table members for engaging with the ranking process on foot of the publication of the consultation report.
- The Round Table thanked Philip McGrath for his hard work and commitment to the work of the Round Table.

2. Updates on commitments under the Third Open Government’s Partnership National Action Plan 2021-2023 (NAP3):

Ciara Morgan (DPENDR) sent her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting and provided a written update as follows:

Review of Ireland’s Statutory Framework for Ethics in Public Life

Responsibility for this work has been transferred from the Minister for Finance to the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform with effect from 5th July 2023.

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. 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 on 10th July 2023. It is intended that the General Scheme will be brought to Government for approval to publish during 2023.



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.

The review report is nearing completion and it is intended to seek Government approval to the final review report in Q3 2023. The Minister intends to then bring legislative proposals, informed by the review, to Government.

Review of the Operation of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

Responsibility for this work has been transferred from the Minister for Finance to the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform with effect from 5th July 2023.

The review recommendations informed the drafting of an amendment Bill to strengthen the existing legislative framework. This Bill was published in September 2022 and completed its passage through the Houses of the Oireachtas in May 2023. The Bill was signed into law by the President on 22nd June 2023. The Regulation of Lobbying and Oireachtas Allowances (Amendment) Act 2023 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.

SIPO will need time to make the necessary changes to the Lobbying register, its published guidance, and its procedures so it is intended to commence the provisions of the legislation in the Autumn.

Kieran Moylan (DRCD) provided an update as follows;

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 will be undertaking a monitoring exercise later this year as part of the 2023 work programme.



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.
- 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, having regard to the sectoral for a hosted by several other Departments and Agencies.
- The Department is now engaging with the sub-committee of the Cross Sectoral Group on the Government's Strategy for the community and Voluntary Sector to agree on the theme and format of the second Civic Forum, which is scheduled to take place on November 15th.

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. 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.
- A draft Roadmap has been agreed by the Working Group. 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.
- A finalised Roadmap is expected to be submitted for approval later this year. The Working Group will remain in place to oversee the implementation of the Roadmap and ensure it enhances the effectiveness of the PPNs.

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 11 July and will remain open until 8 September 2023. When the tender period has passed, an evaluation group will be put together to evaluate any resulting tenders. The contract will be awarded to the successful candidate and the research will commence in the Autumn. 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.

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

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

As indicated previously, an independent review of local authority Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) is progressing. A Stakeholder Working Group (SWG), comprising of representatives of all stakeholders involved in SPCs, has been established to oversee, advise on and steer the review of SPCs, including the work of the independent consultant who will carry out the review. The independent review is currently engaging with the representatives of all participants/stakeholders involved in SPCs at local level and has begun a series of visits to 6 local authorities to examine the operation of SPCs in those areas. Information about the review and meetings of the SWG are posted to the Department’s website here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f96ec-a-stakeholder-working-group-swg-for-the-review-of-local-authority-strategic-policy-committees/>

The review is expected to be completed towards the end of the year.

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

Update of 2016 Consultation Principles and Guidance for the Public Sector

There has been a delay in the drafting of the Consultation Principles and Guidance for the Public Sector. IPA have expressed their regret and hope to have a final version of the guidance by the end of July.



3. Discussion and decisions on Consultation Report (The Brave Lab) in the development of NAP4.

Following a ranking exercise on the outputs of the Consultation Report using the “De Borda” method the results were as follows;

1. Data Access & Citizen Science: Improving Data Access by supporting dialogue between data holders and data advocates to quickly fix access issues and prioritise targeted releases.
2. Data Access & Citizen Science: Enabling citizen science by creating a National Citizen Science Policy with funding to pilot test initiatives.
3. Governance Processes: Capacity building for shared governance by creating high quality training opportunities for public officials and citizens to attend together.
4. Governance Processes: Committing to designing what to do if things go wrong from the beginning of participation processes and services provision.
5. Agenda Setting & Formats: Provide more structured participation options that are truly representative and support collaborative deliberation using technology.
6. Accountability/Ethics/Standards and Transparency/Freedom of Information: Specific steps to enhance the Freedom of Information regime building on outcome of the Review.
7. Removing barriers: Committing to a programme to embed best practice public participation and cultural change across public institutions based on the various guides developed by and for the community and voluntary sector.
8. Agenda Setting & Formats: Trialling participative methodologies for deliberative dialogue (citizen juries) agenda setting and decision making (preferential).
9. Removing barriers: Visualise pathways for participation and commit to capacity building for under-represented groups.
10. Communications Standards & Supports: Open Government communications standards for inclusion by providing training on literacy challenges and plain language for all public officials.
11. Accountability/Ethics/Standards and Transparency/Freedom of Information: The development of a consolidated legislative framework for Ethics/Standards in Public Office. This should include the strengthening of disclosure requirements and the Standards in Public Office Commission and underpinning the legislative framework with overarching integrity principles.
12. Communications Standards & Supports: Reviewing how to communicate with different demographics and involving specific groups in the creation of materials for them.

The co-chairs explained the ranking results and asked the members to identify potential commitments to be pursued with policy holders on foot of the results. After an extensive discussion it was agreed that the Secretariat would contact the policyholders in respect of numbers 1 to 6 above to test out the feasibility of these areas being put forward as potential commitments in NAP4. The Secretariat would also explore if any aspects of 7 to 12 could be pursued with policy holders who they contacted with respect of 1 to 6. There was also agreement to identify potential commitments from 1 to 12 that were already included in NAP3 that may result in “quick wins”.



4. Actions arising /AOB/Next meeting/ close

- The Secretariat to contact the policyholders in respect of numbers 1 to 6 above to test out the feasibility of these areas being put forward as potential commitments in NAP4.
- The Secretariat to explore if any aspects of 7 to 12 could be pursued with policy holders who they contacted with respect of 1 to 6.
- The Secretariat to identify potential commitments from 1 to 12 that were already included in NAP3 that may result in “quick wins”.
- The Secretariat to distribute outstanding minutes (20th April and 31st May) to Round Table members for observation.

Next meeting: 24th August 11:00 – 12:30am WebEx.