

Developing New Zealand's second Action Plan for Open Government

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international forum where countries work together to ensure that member governments are more open, accountable and responsive to citizens; including through the use of technology & innovation. The New Zealand government accepted an invitation to join the OGP in 2013.

What is "open government"?

Open government means different things to different people. Many countries around the world are working on open government initiatives that are defined according to the needs of that country's citizens and government.

The Open Government Partnership is designed for governments to be more transparent, accountable and responsive to their citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services provided to the community. Ongoing innovation and the development of technology increases the opportunities to achieve these aims.

At the heart of open government are the ideas of transparency, participation and accountability. As a working definition;

- Transparency means the public understands the workings of their government
- Participation means the public can influence the workings of government by engaging with public policy processes and public service providers
- Accountability means the public can hold the government to account for its policy and service delivery performance.

Citizen engagement is what open government is all about. The OGP recognises this in its eligibility criteria, stating that: 'Open Government requires openness to citizen participation and engagement in policymaking and governance, including basic protections for civil liberties' (Open Government Partnership).

What about the action plan?

Each country that commits to the OGP is required to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) to outline how they will deliver an Open Government. The Action Plan will reflect the principles of Open Government and detail specific, measureable ways the Government will achieve them; progress will be evaluated every two years by the OGP.

The New Zealand Government is due to submit its second National Action Plan to the Open Government Partnership on 28 October 2016, which means the draft needs to be ready for the State Services Minister Paula Bennett and Cabinet to consider in early September 2016.

The process for developing an Action Plan is open. The government will work in collaboration with civil society - that is anyone who is interested in being involved - to develop the Action Plan.

The State Services Commission has commissioned engage2 to raise awareness about the OGP and invite New Zealanders to participate in the development of the NAP.

How can you get involved?

We encourage as many people as possible to get involved in the development of the second Open Government Partnership National Action Plan in the following ways:

1. Stay informed:

- Get up to speed on the website
- Register for email updates at ogp@engage2.co.nz or sign up for an RSS feed of the blog <LINK>
- Follow [@OGPNZ](https://twitter.com/OGPNZ) and #OGPNZ on twitter

2. Have your say:

- Share your thoughts about the draft OGP background section <LINK>
- Tell us what you think about on the proposed themes for the second NZ OGP <LINK>

3. Get involved:

- Help co-design a vision statement to guide NAP development
- Suggest an action for the NAP
- Tell your friends! Host an event.

4. Collaborate:

- Participate in a teleconference about the theme that interests you most
- Help prioritise actions suggested and co-create potential commitment templates for the OGP with Ministry staff - SCC will use these to brief Ministers and Cabinet.

When is this happening?

There are six stages of the development of the second National Action Plan; the first four involve community engagement:

- Stage 1 – Consultation on draft strategy* (15 July – 25 July)
- Stage 2 – Awareness raising, reflections, theme selection (25 July – 5 August)
- Stage 3 – Co-design the OGP vision with stakeholders (5 August – 20 August 2016)
- Stage 4 – Co-creating recommendations on the NAP with stakeholders (21 August – 30 August 2016)
- Stage 5 – Consideration by the New Zealand Government (September – October 2016)
- Stage 6 – Launch of the National Action Plan (October 2016)

*Informal engagement with stakeholders who have shown an active interest in OGP to date.