

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2021

End of Term Report

Commitment 5: Public participation in policy development

Lead agency: The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)

Objective: DPMC will assist the New Zealand public sector to develop a deeper and more consistent understanding of what good engagement with the public means (right across the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2's) spectrum of public participation).

Ambition: New Zealanders increasingly experience a timelier and collaborative approach to public participation when policies are developed, and consider their concerns, diversity of views, life experience, and time are valued in the policy process. Improvements in public participation can result in better design of policy and services and increase their legitimacy. Improving public participation requires an informed approach to applying public participation methods throughout the policy development process. Developing a deeper understanding of what good engagement looks like and providing guidance about best practice methods across government, will achieve a more consistent and coherent approach to public participation.

OGP values: Public Participation

Summary

	Current Milestones	Progress
1	<p>Extend existing Policy Methods Toolbox guidance on public participation (https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project/policy-methods-toolbox-0) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) A design tool that will assist policy advisers to choose the appropriate level of engagement on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation for a specific policy issue(ii) Guidance, for each level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, on the characteristics and enablers of effective public participation and good engagement practice(iii) Guidance on inclusive engagement approaches that include and reflect the diversity of those interested and affected by policies(iv) Principles and concepts of community engagement in policy development(v) Guidance on building government agencies' organisational capability and readiness for community engagement	

	(vi) Guidance on different types of community engagement methods, and their appropriateness for each level on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation <i>Start/End dates: October 2018/October 2020</i>	
2	Develop and share recent case studies documenting New Zealand innovation success stories in public participation in the policy development process <i>Start/End dates: October 2018/October 2020</i>	
3	Identify a 'live' policy issue in which to trial public engagement in policy development that is higher on the public participation spectrum than inform or consult, as a demonstration project <i>Start/End dates: October 2018/December 2020</i>	
4	Widely disseminate the results of the above actions <i>Start/End dates: December 2020/June 2021</i>	

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

What we achieved:

Overview

The Policy Project has successfully completed all four of the Commitment 5 milestones above, and updated our Policy Methods Toolbox to provide guidance, resources and tools to support good practice community engagement.

The resources were informed by the views of policy practitioners, community groups and engagement specialists – about what constitutes good engagement practice in government policy making and how it could be improved from their perspectives.

Reflecting on what we learned from this work has helped us to identify key themes at a strategic level about the pathways to good engagement practice across the public service.

Resources and case studies of community engagement were shared widely with the policy community to create a deeper and more consistent understanding of what good engagement means. Resources were shared at a conference in May 2021, in newsletters and emails, at a policy forum and network meetings, and presentations and in meetings with agencies.

What we learned will continue be drawn into the work of the Policy Project in its role to improve engagement in policy making.

Milestone 1 - Extend existing Policy Methods Toolbox guidance on public participation

The Policy Project:

- Finalised and published resources and tools to fulfil the original objectives of milestone 1, namely:
 - the *Community Engagement Decision Tool* to assist policy advisors and their agencies to choose and design the appropriate engagement approach on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation - refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/community-engagement-design-tool>

- the *Guide to Inclusive Community Engagement* to ensure agencies better understand how to involve diverse communities in the development of public policy – refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/guide-inclusive-community-engagement>
- a *Good Practice Guide for Community Engagement* which sets out good engagement practice at each level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation - refer: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/good-practice-guide-community-engagement>.
- Finalised and published three further community engagement resources in the Policy Methods Toolbox, namely:
 - *Principles and Values for Community Engagement* – A guide for government agencies and policy advisors on principles and values for good community engagement in policy making – refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/principles-and-values-community-engagement>
 - *Getting Ready for Community Engagement* – Guidance for government agencies on building capability and readiness - refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/getting-ready-community-engagement>
 - *Selecting Methods for Community Engagement* – Resources to help policy advisors choose the right engagement methods to support good engagement – refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/selecting-methods-community-engagement>.

Milestone 2 - Develop and share recent case studies documenting New Zealand innovation success stories in public participation in the policy development process

The Policy Project:

- Developed and shared recent case studies documenting New Zealand innovation success stories in public participation in the policy development process to fulfil milestone 2. In particular we:
 - published and linked to the following case studies of innovative community engagement in the Policy Methods Toolbox:
 - Farming Systems Change Project – Ministry for Primary Industries - refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/case-study-farming-systems-change-project>
 - Criminal Justice Reform Programme - Ministry of Justice – refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/case-study-criminal-justice-reform-programme>
 - Digital Identity Project – Department of Internal Affairs - refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/case-study-digital-identity-transition-programme>)

- Healthy Homes Initiative case study – a collaboration between the Southern Initiative, the Ministry of Health and the community – refer <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55ac5ee5e4b08d4c25220f4b/t/5d27ae9bbc620300010d2974/1562881694069/Learning+In+Complex+Settings+InnovationBrief+May2019.pdf>)
- Seven case studies profiled by the Auckland Co-Design Lab providing examples of the application of design-led policy practice - refer <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55ac5ee5e4b08d4c25220f4b/t/5c58b602ec212da21e45a72a/1549317656958/Policy+by+Design+-+7+cases+studies+from+Aotearoa+NZ.pdf>)
- worked with the Ministry of Education to prepare a case study of community engagement on the Pacific Education Strategy Action Plan, and used this as an example for graduate policy training
- arranged for policy practitioners who led work on the following initiatives to present case studies at the policy forum on community engagement in May 2021:
 - Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy
 - Youth Voices Project and the Hive initiative
 - Pacific Education Strategy Action Plan
- continued to present a case study of engagement carried out with the tourism industry and local government during development of Responsible Camping policy initiatives as part of a “What is policy?” course delivered for graduates and intern programmes.

Milestone 3 - Identify a ‘live’ policy issue in which to trial public engagement in policy development that is higher on the public participation spectrum than inform or consult, as a demonstration project

The Policy Project finalised and published the write up of the ‘live’ Demonstration Project Report on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan to fulfil milestone 3, which demonstrates good community engagement at ‘involve’ on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. Refer <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/demonstration-project-report-child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy>.

Milestone 4 – Widely disseminate the results of the above milestones

To share the resources and key learnings from our work on commitment 5 as widely as possible the Policy Project carried out the following:

- Ensured the publications were loaded onto the Policy Project webpages on the DPMC website, where they can be accessed from both:
 - the [Policy Methods Toolbox Community Engagement](#) webpages and

- the new [Open Government Partnership](#) webpage.
- Arranged for the Cabinet Office to include a link to the community engagement resources from the CabGuide.
- The Deputy Chief Executive (Policy) emailed all her counterparts across the public service, drawing the engagement resources to their attention and asked that the resources be forwarded to policy managers and distributed to staff and where possible, placed on their intranet sites.
- The Programme Director of the Policy Project reminded Tier 2 Policy Leaders' Network members about the availability and scope of the resources at her annual 1:1 meetings with them.
- The Policy Project introduced the community engagement resources at two Policy Training Network meetings on 7 December 2020 and 4 May 2021.
- We included an article about the community engagement resources and how to access them in two Policy Project quarterly newsletters sent to all policy managers and all principal policy advisors in the public service.
- We held a Policy Forum on community engagement on 11 May for policy managers and principal advisors to raise awareness of the resources and share case studies of good community engagement practice. The programme included:
 - an address by Minister Sepuloni on the importance of community engagement in policy making, especially in relation to engaging with the disability community to build disability issues into policy
 - case studies profiling the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and related 'Hive' initiative, which were profiled in the Demonstration Project report (Milestone 3).
 - group sessions to provide the opportunity to review four of the six engagement resources in greater depth.
- Following the Policy Manager Community Engagement Forum, the case study presentations and Minister's address were circulated to all policy managers and principal advisors across the public service.
- Diane Owenga and Jayne Foster presented the keynote address at the IAP2 New Zealand Community and Stakeholder Engagement Symposium on the 24th May in Auckland to showcase pathways to good engagement practice and the resources. The Policy Project also attended the conference on both the 24th and 25th May to network with engagement and policy practitioners, and to take further opportunities to learn about any impediments to engagement practice.
- We presented to the Public Service Commission about the community engagement resources and findings from our work on commitment 5.
- We developed a draft checklist for good practice community engagement for use by officials involved in the response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on

Christchurch masjidain - based on the Commitment 5 resources and various International Association of Public Participation resources.

- The Child Poverty Reduction Group sent links to the new engagement resources to its networks and subscribers via its newsletter, which was shared on the Policy Project twitter account and on the Public Service Commission social media accounts.

How we included diverse voices and engaged diverse communities:

The development of the Commitment 5 community engagement resources was informed by diverse voices in a number of ways, including

- a set of discovery workshops and a development workshop with policy practitioners
- meetings and phone calls with a range of community groups
- surveying community organisations, community engagement specialists and policy practitioners
- polling conference attendees.

We invited community groups to participate in the survey on the basis of suggestions from the OGP Commitment 5 Reference Group members, suggestions from government agencies, and in consultation with the Open Government Partnerships Team at Te Kawa Mataaho, the Public Service Commission. Through online research and talking with other engagement specialists and community representatives we identified further community networks, iteratively broadening the set of community groups. We tried to ensure community organisations were represented from different sector groups, a variety of organisational sizes, and there was regional representation. We also invited umbrella networks and organisations to circulate the survey through their own networks.

A wide range of community groups were sent the online survey, including those who were involved in development of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. That engagement provided us with a summary of respondents' views about the top three ways government could improve its engagement with the community on policy-making. The survey results, and the perspectives of diverse voices on participating in engagement with government about policy making, informed the community engagement resources we produced.

The three key themes, and how the resources addressed their views are set out below.

1) Recognise the value of engagement for quality policy advice

The **Good Practice Guide for Community Engagement** outlines how to carry out good engagement practice at all levels of the International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation - whether informing, consulting, involving, collaborating with, or empowering communities - as policies are made. Information from the survey about what worked and didn't work for community groups during their own engagement experiences was drawn into the advice on good practice at each level of engagement on the spectrum. The Guide emphasises the importance of policy advisors putting people at the heart of the work they do.

The **Principles and Values for Community Engagement** resource sets out the principles and values underpinning best practice community engagement, including describing how the principles should be applied by policy practitioners in their work. This resource supports the desire reflected

in the survey that government better *recognise the value of community engagement* to policy making.

2) *Improve capability and processes across government*

The **Community Engagement Design Tool** promotes *the improvement of policy advisor capability* and, ultimately, advisors' community engagement practice – by providing guidance on how to design the engagement elements, preferably at an early stage of a policy project when practicable. It helps policy practitioners assess where the engagement could sit on the Spectrum of Public Participation. It also recommends seeking input from community organisations into the design of engagement, where possible. The guide for **Selecting Methods for Community Engagement** provides advice to policy advisors about the range of methods available to best suit the engagement design and other contextual factors. A **Getting Ready for Community Engagement** guide also provides government agencies with advice on what to put in place to enable policy teams in their organisations to be ready for carrying out good practice and improving their community engagement capability.

3) *Prioritise inclusive engagement*

A dedicated **Guide to Inclusive Community Engagement** *emphasises the importance of prioritising inclusive engagement* and how to best reach out to diverse voices when designing, planning and delivering engagement. The Māori Crown relationship and the engagement resources developed by Te Arawhiti (the Office of Māori Crown Relations), were referenced and aligned within the guidance.

Commitment links:

Links are provided where relevant in various sections of our report.

Impacts:

It is difficult to measure the impact of this work on the practice and standards of community engagement by the public service. Much of the evidence is anecdotal. However, we have been collecting data and information on:

- the number of policy and engagement practitioners we have presented the resources to at face-to-face events – approximately 400 people
- how many will have received emails containing the resources – approximately 2000
- appearance of the resources in original tweets by the Policy Project and the Te Kawa Mataaho, the Public Service Commission
- the increase in web traffic and downloads of our community engagement web pages.
 - There were 2121 page views during the April – June 2021 quarter for the revised Community Engagement webpages from which the Commitment 5 resources can be accessed. This compares with 1276 views during the previous quarter bringing the total number of views between 1 January and 30 June 2021 to 3397.
 - The new Open Government Partnership webpage has been visited on 175 occasions between January and June 2021.

- There were 1045 downloads of the six community engagement guidance resources and the demonstration project report by visitors to the community engagement and OGP webpages in this last reporting quarter up from 946 in the last quarter, bringing the total number of downloads from 1 January to 30 June 2021 to 1991.
- There were slightly more Community Engagement Design Tool downloads than of each of the other Commitment 5 related resources.

What we learned:

i) About the community engagement guidance needed to improve practice

At the beginning of the National Action Plan period in 2018, we were focussed on Commitment 5 as it was originally as worded – namely to publish a community engagement decision tool. The aim of the decision tool was to provide guidance to policy practitioners to select an appropriate participatory engagement approach on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation for their policy projects.

As we workshopped with policy practitioners and discussed the proposal for guidance with community representatives and engagement specialists, they provided feedback that there were many factors to address to lift public service community engagement performance. We realised that we needed to set the decision tool within a broader context. That is, to recognise that selecting the level of influence on the IAP2 Spectrum of Participation in the early stages of a policy project was one of many things that was needed to underpin improved community engagement practice. Selecting engagement methods that match that design and implementing those effectively by applying a principled approach were also important component parts.

When the National Action Plan period was extended in 2020, in light of the impact of COVID-19, and following our engagement with our reference group, we decided to expand the scope of the community engagement guidance resources set out in Milestone 1. The decision tool was reframed as a Community Engagement Design Tool. We also decided to include a set of principles of good community engagement practice, a guide to selecting methods of engagement based on good engagement design, and guidance on inclusive community engagement was identified as a separate resource as well.

Some of the feedback from policy practitioners was that it was not always possible to operate to the right of the spectrum and that at times they were required to inform or consult for different reasons. We recognised this concern by advising on what good looks like whatever the degree of the public participation. As a result, we produced a good practice guide to show what good engagement looks like at each level of the Spectrum of Public Participation.

Following feedback about the key barrier to good engagement practice being lack of organisational supports for this work, we made the decision to develop guidance on organisational readiness for community engagement.

ii) About the pathways to good engagement practice across the public service

Towards the end of the National Action Plan 4 period, we were asked to provide the opening keynote address to the International Association of Public Policy’s 2021 annual symposium on community engagement. The diagram below summarises what we reported to the symposium that we had

learned about the key pathways to good engagement community engagement practice across the public service.



Where to from here:

The Policy Project team will:

- continue to share the resources and encourage agencies to apply them and may find and promote case studies of good engagement practice – as an ongoing part of Policy Project business as usual.
- In regard to the survey of community organisations, engagement specialists and policy practitioners on community engagement in government policy making (that was used to help inform the guidance on the Policy Project web pages), we will:
 - publish the final write up of themes that emerged from the survey in the late July – early August period (we shared a selection of those results at the IAP2 Engagement Symposium)
 - email the publication of survey results to all those who participated in the online surveys.
- explore the potential to carry out an event or events on community engagement with community organisations, the International Association of Public Participation Australasia and/or a New Zealand public sector organisation, such as the Institute of Public Administration New Zealand.
- encourage policy agencies to pilot the use of the Community Engagement Design Tool to determine which level on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation to adopt for engagement on policy development for a specific issue – we may develop one or more case-studies to showcase its application to the policy community.

- finalise a checklist for good practice community engagement based on the engagement resources, including completing the test of the draft checklist with agencies working on the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Christchurch terrorist attacks.
- consider making contributions on a case-by-case basis to the Public Service Commission's development of the broader public service approach to community engagement, as part of their work programme on active citizenry.