

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2020

Progress report for: Jan – June 2020

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 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: Civic participation

Current Milestones		Progress
1	<p>Extend existing Policy Methods Toolbox public participation guidance to include a decision tool that will assist agencies and Ministers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the appropriate engagement approach on the public participation spectrum when they tackle a specific policy or service design issue Understand the characteristics and enablers of effective public participation at whichever point on the spectrum they choose Ensure that the engagement approaches selected appropriately include and reflect the diversity of those interested and affected by the policies. <p><i>Start/End dates: October 2018/March 2020</i></p>	
2	<p>Develop and share recent case studies documenting New Zealand innovation success stories in public participation in the policy development process</p> <p><i>Start/End dates: October 2018/March 2020</i></p>	
3	<p>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</p> <p><i>Start/End dates: October 2018/March 2020</i></p>	
4	<p>Widely disseminate the results of the above actions</p> <p><i>Start/End dates: March 2020/June 2020</i></p>	

Progress key:  some delays  underway  Completed

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COMMITMENT 5 AND REVISION OF MILESTONES

When the Covid-19 pandemic reached New Zealand in March 2020, staff within the Policy Project (the team within DPMC responsible for Commitment 5) were redeployed to assist with the response. Many of the agencies the Policy Project engages with on the commitment also seconded staff to the All-of-Government effort. When New Zealand entered lockdown many of our stakeholders and a key contractor were also unavailable to engage. Consequently, the pandemic event has affected the ability to deliver on our Commitment 5 milestones within the expected timeframes.

The Open Government Partnership Steering Committee has recognised the impact of Covid-19 on countries and communities and decided to provide governments with greater flexibility in the development and implementation of their OGP National Action Plans. Agencies are assessing the impact of the pandemic and the Government intends to extend the term of the current NAP into 2021.

The Policy Project has taken the opportunity to reflect on what it has already learned during workshops and its engagement. As a result it has taken the opportunity to reconsider how, with the extension of timeframe, it can extend the scope of its current milestones. A revised set of milestones with timelines for delivery is attached as Appendix A.

New components have been added to original milestone 1 to extend the existing Policy Methods Toolbox public participation guidance to include:

- Principles and concepts of community engagement in policy development
- Guidance on building organisational capability and readiness for community engagement
- Guidance on different types of community engagement methods.

WHAT WE WERE DOING IN THE LEAD UP TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the period since the last report and in the lead up to the Covid-19 pandemic in March, the Policy Project:

- Continued to work with Anne Pattillo to prepare the decision tool and guidance material for the Policy Methods Toolbox for testing with our reference group and other key stakeholders
- Despatched three surveys to a wide range of individuals and community representatives, engagement specialists and policy practitioners. These surveys seek information about participants' experience of and views about community engagement with government during policy development, including the people on the OGP email list held by SSC (who have previously been involved with developing the OGP 2018-2020 National Action Plan)
- Started investigating the process for trialling a new thematic analysis engagement tool using a sample of survey results mentioned above

- Held further discussions with agencies undertaking policy projects that will form case studies to support the guidance.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the quarter ending 30 September 2020, we will focus on:

- Continuing the work to conduct engagement with diverse communities and their representatives by:
 - Collecting and analysing the last of the information from the surveys (which include diverse groups and their wider networks)
 - Where appropriate further input may be obtained as we follow up on survey results with particular organisations that are involved with diverse groups and represent them
 - Collating survey results and feeding them into the engagement guidance
- Working with the engagement consultant Anne Pattillo to finalise the decision tool for policy practitioners to assist agencies to choose the appropriate engagement approach on the IPP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, and additional components for the Policy Methods Toolbox in line with revised milestones in Appendix A
- Testing the decision tool, draft guidance and results of the surveys with a reference group of advisers to assist with finalising the guidance and tool.
- Finalising the write up of projects identified under the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy as part of our work observing the engagement process and outcomes, continuing to document that work to contribute to the 'live' demonstration project milestone
- Finalising the write up of case studies that can be referenced in the guidance ready for publication
- Preparing the draft online content for milestones 1 and 2 ready for approval for inclusion in the Policy Methods Toolbox.

APPENDIX A – REVISION OF COMMITMENT 5 MILESTONES AND TIMELINES

Timeline: October 2018 – June 2021

Commitment 5: Develop a deeper and more consistent understanding within the New Zealand public sector of what good engagement with the public means (right across the IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation)			
OGP Values	Public participation		
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfil the commitment	Start date	Original end date	Revised end date
<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 the 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 	October 2018	March 2020	October 2020
Develop and share recent case studies documenting New Zealand innovation success stories in community engagement during the policy development process	October 2018	March 2020	October 2020
Identify a 'live' policy issue in which to trial public engagement in policy development that is higher on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation than inform or consult, as a demonstration project	October 2018	March 2020	December 2020
Widely disseminate the results of the above actions	March 2020	June 2020	Start December 2020 and end June 2021