

Independent Reporting Mechanism

Action Plan Review:
Ireland 2023–2025

Open
Government
Partnership



Independent
Reporting
Mechanism

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Section I: Overview of the 2023–2025 Action Plan

Ireland's fourth action plan includes one promising commitment to pass legislation on ethics in public office. The other commitments could go further to make ambitious changes to government practices. They would benefit from developing more actionable steps to achieve objectives for reform and measures to track progress.

Ireland's fourth action plan consists of seven commitments. It includes a new focus on the needs of underrepresented groups and continues commitments on civic participation, ethics in public life, and open data from previous action plans.¹ The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) coordinated the action plan development in collaboration with civil society. The Open Government Round Table multistakeholder forum (MSF) was formed during the previous cycle and included twelve members with equal government and civil society representation.

One of the plan's commitments undertakes a promising effort to modernize ethics and standards in public life. Based on a review conducted under the previous action plan, Commitment 5 intends to introduce new legislation. This would improve the accountability and transparency of elected and appointed public officials, particularly with regards to conflicts of interest. This reform is expected to strengthen public trust in government officials.

The remaining commitments address important policy areas, but four have unclear potential for results. In some cases, commitments that carry forward existing initiatives could go further to provide added value. For instance, Commitment 1 plans for modest improvements to the Open Data Portal and Commitment 4 continues the existing Civic Forum. While other commitments address ambitious policy objectives, they do not include concrete milestones towards achieving those objectives. Commitment 3 lacks milestones to ensure the uptake of best practices for the envisioned public consultation. Commitment 6 aims to increase the representation of women and minority groups in local elections, but its milestones are focused on information campaigns about the role of councilors and investment in hybrid meetings.

The upcoming election—expected to be held by no later than March 2025—may pose challenges to the timely completion of commitments.² The IRM recommends that government and civil society stakeholders consider revising these commitments to develop more actionable steps to

AT A GLANCE

Participating since 2013
Action plan under review: 2023–2025
IRM product: Action Plan Review
Number of commitments: 7

Overview of commitments:
Commitments with an open government lens: 6 (86%)
Commitments with substantial potential for results: 1 (14%)
Promising commitments: 1

Policy areas:
Carried over from previous action plans:

- Open data
- Ethics in public office
- Civic participation

Emerging in this action plan:

- Access to justice
- Combatting domestic violence

Compliance with OGP minimum requirements for co-creation:
Acted according to OGP process: Yes

achieve reform objectives, strengthen progress tracking measures, and undertake more ambitious efforts to make binding and institutionalized changes to current government practices.

The commitments were developed through a co-creation process that demonstrated certain positive practices. The process began in March 2023 with a one-month public consultation.³ Facilitated by BraveLab, the DPENDR then hosted six thematic workshops to discuss the 71 submissions received⁴ with all stakeholders who made those submissions.⁵ The MSF met every two months during the initial stages of co-creation and every six weeks during the final stages. Information on the process was publicly available through the Ireland OGP webpage. The DPENDR could improve the searchability of information by developing a dedicated online repository linked to the OGP webpage.

Engagement between government and civil society in the action plan development varied across commitments. For instance, Commitment 1 was developed through productive collaboration,⁶ while the milestones of Commitment 5 were mainly drafted by government departments.⁷ A civil society representative highlighted that, unlike in the past, their input had not been actively solicited.⁸ Other civil society representatives also noted that workshop discussions were not always reflected in the final action plan, resulting in discrepancies between the objectives and milestones of some commitments.⁹ According to DPENDR, commitments needed to align with available staff resources, existing legislation, and government and departmental priorities.¹⁰ The IRM underscores the importance of ensuring robust civil society involvement throughout the design process to enhance transparency, alignment with community needs, and the effectiveness of government initiatives.

Overall, while there were instances of good practice in the co-creation process, frequent staff turnover within the secretariat meant that some of these practices weren't sustained over time.¹¹ It could be beneficial to explore strategies to institutionalize good co-creation practices, such as through standardized procedures and documentation guidelines, that could remain consistent despite staff turnover. Training and support for new staff would also help maintain continuity.

¹ In the action plan, the commitments are listed alphabetically (A to G). For this review, we've assigned corresponding numbers (1 to 7) to each commitment instead (A = 1, B = 2, and so on).

² Antoin O Lachtnain (Open Government Association Ireland), interview by IRM researcher, 6 June 2024.

³ The public consultation submissions are available at:

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/253551/07d75216-7d40-482b-bbad-071836ad145d.pdf>.

⁴ See the multistakeholder forum readout from 31 May 2023 at:

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/266998/de47adab-5cdc-4e26-9e92-d1e680e18409.pdf#page=1>.

⁵ Victoria Ronke Gbafah (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform), interview by IRM researcher, 13 June 2024.

⁶ O Lachtnain, interview.

⁷ Transparency International Ireland, interview by IRM researcher, 30 July 2024.

⁸ Transparency International Ireland, interview.

⁹ O Lachtnain, interview.

¹⁰ Comments from Sarah Glavey (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform) during pre-publication review period, 15 October 2024.

¹¹ O Lachtnain, interview.

Section II: Promising Commitment

The following review looks at the commitment that the IRM identified as having the potential to realize the most promising results. Promising commitments address a policy area that is important to stakeholders or the national context. They must be verifiable, have a relevant open government lens, and have modest or substantial potential for results. This review also provides an analysis of challenges, opportunities, and recommendations to contribute to the learning and implementation process of this action plan.

Table 1. Promising commitment

Promising Commitment
5. Modernized ethics statutory framework: This commitment intends to bring forward legislation to modernize and simplify the statutory framework for ethics in public life. The bill seeks to implement stricter regulations, clearer guidelines, and more effective penalties to prevent corruption and ensure public trust in political institutions.

Commitment 5: Modernized ethics statutory framework
Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR)

For a complete description of the commitment, see Commitment E in:
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ireland-action-plan-2023-2025-december>.

Context and objectives

Ireland's statutory regime for ethics in public life (i.e., the Ethics Acts) has existed since the mid-1990s. However, issues with the framework have sparked public debate on the efficacy of penalties for breaches of ethical requirements and a lack of understanding among public officials regarding ethics rules.¹ The findings of the Mahon Tribunal on political corruption² underscored the need for comprehensive reforms and influenced efforts to introduce updated and more fit-for-purpose legislation.³ In 2015, a new bill was introduced but did not pass through the legislature.⁴ Under the previous action plan, a review of the statutory framework for ethics in public life was published in February 2023. It reiterated the need for this legislation and provided substantive inputs based on international best practices and public consultation.⁵

Under this commitment, the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) seeks to introduce legislation to strengthen, modernize, simplify, and streamline the statutory framework for ethics in public life. The aim is to create a user-friendly regime that enhances public trust in government officials by improving transparency and accountability.⁶ In response to the Mahon Tribunal and other inquiries,⁷ the legislative proposal seeks to implement stricter regulations, clearer guidelines, and more effective penalties to prevent corruption and ensure public trust in political institutions. This legislative effort is part of a broader movement to modernize governance and reinforce ethical standards across public office.

Potential for results: Substantial

This new legislation has been anticipated for nearly a decade, reflecting the urgent need for reform. Since the 2015 Ethics in Public Life Bill failed to pass, significant gaps have remained in the framework for transparency and accountability in government. The current legislative effort aims to address these longstanding issues and implement necessary changes to strengthen ethical standards across all levels of government. As of July 2024, the DPENDR was developing a general scheme for the legislation, informed by the recommendations of the 2023 review.⁸ If

approved, it will be followed by a Standards in Public Office Bill prepared alongside the Office of the Attorney General.

One key change suggested for this reform would involve establishing a unified legislative framework for ethics in public life.⁹ Currently, the national framework is a complex and somewhat outdated patchwork legislation, which includes the 1995 Ethics Act, the 2001 Standards in Public Office Act, and the Local Government Act. It is envisaged that new legislation would consolidate these fragmented regimes into a single, coherent framework that will apply uniformly at both the national and local levels. By streamlining and simplifying the existing system, this unified approach would improve the understanding of both government officials and the public as well as lay a crucial foundation for further substantive reforms.¹⁰

Based on the model of the previous Public Sector Standards Bill and the Review recommendations, the regime would be strengthened by expanding the requirements for declarations of interest. Public officials would be required to disclose their own income sources and those of their spouses and families. The new provisions would differentiate disclosure obligations based on the seniority and decision-making autonomy of the officials. High-ranking officials, including ministers, department heads, ministers of state, and parliamentary party chairs, would need to declare assets and liabilities exceeding €50 thousand.¹¹ These enhanced disclosure requirements aim to increase transparency and accountability within the public sector.

It is foreseen that the reform will contain mandate to favour provisions for electronic disclosure arrangements on secure online platforms that would replace traditional paper-based processes. This mandate requires all related processes to be conducted digitally, which support the government's broader digital agenda across all areas of public life.¹² This transition is expected to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of compliance while streamlining procedures, reducing bureaucratic burdens, and simplifying the responsibilities of public officials. A civil society stakeholder highlighted that the electronic system would also facilitate public oversight through data mining and analysis.¹³

To address ethical breaches effectively, the new legislation is expected to introduce a range of clear and appropriate sanctions, including fixed fines for various infractions. It would define specific offenses, such as retaining gifts above a designated threshold and seeking inappropriate remuneration, with sanctions scaled to the severity of each breach. Additionally, it would require public officials to declare conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from related duties. Failure to comply would be subject to prosecution, which could ensure comprehensive enforcement of ethical standards.¹⁴

It can also be foreseen that investigative powers would be significantly increased under the new legislation. The Standards in Public Office (SIPO) Commission would gain enhanced authority to hold hearings, make findings, and impose sanctions directly. In the current regime, SIPO can only conduct investigations, make findings, and issue recommendations. If they identify potential criminal activities, they would refer the matter to the Office of Public Prosecutions. Under the new regime, SIPO would have the concrete power to refer cases for prosecution and prosecute directly, thereby streamlining the enforcement process and increasing accountability.¹⁵

Additional reforms include extending the tax clearance requirement from a pre-election check to an annual process. Further, a cooling-off period would be introduced to address post-term employment obligations not covered by existing legislation.

Civil society stakeholders view this commitment as promising, although they have expressed concerns about tracking progress and ensuring accountability in developing and approving the legislation. As noted by Transparency International Ireland, there is a strong need for more rigorous and detailed requirements concerning the declaration of interests. Enhanced provisions are necessary to improve transparency and effectiveness in public officials' disclosure of their financial interests and potential conflicts.¹⁶ Overall, this commitment's comprehensive reforms could substantially enhance the ethics framework, ultimately strengthening public trust in government.

Opportunities, challenges, and recommendations during implementation

The new regime offers an important opportunity to enhance transparency and accountability through a more robust ethical framework for public officials. Passage of new legislation could face political challenges¹⁷ and the 2025 election could also introduce delays. To fully realise this commitment's potential for results, the IRM offers the following recommendations:

- **Garner strong legislative support to expedite the passage of the legislation.** Since this initiative has been in development since 2015, timely action is essential to ensure that the long-awaited reforms are implemented without further delay. **Engage with civil society and the public throughout the legislative process** in order to collect valuable input and bolster support for the reforms. By fostering transparency and collaboration with stakeholders, the government can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the framework, ensuring that it meets the needs and expectations of those it aims to serve.
- **Provide clear and detailed definitions of reportable assets** within the framework, including precise categories such as bank deposits and assets held in foreign accounts. Address potential risks by disclosing liabilities, including favorable credit arrangements and other significant obligations, as well as reducing the **threshold for declaring gifts to €100** to capture a broader range of potential influences and enhance transparency.
- Ensure that **registrable interests are disclosed within one month** of taking office or a change in circumstances covering the most recent 12-month period. Officials should also submit statements of their interests covering the 12 months following their departure from office. Members of the Oireachtas should be required to make ad hoc disclosures as necessary to reflect any changes in their financial or personal circumstances.
- **Implement a standardized definition of connected persons** across national and local government based on categories outlined in the Mahon Tribunal, ensuring consistency in reporting relationships and potential conflicts of interest. **Incorporate the disclosure of connected persons' interests into the standard annual reporting process.** Elected officials should also disclose the registrable interests of their immediate family members as part of their returns, providing a fuller picture of potential conflicts of interest.
- **Ensure that SIPO has a specific mandate and adequate resources** to verify the accuracy of returns, such as through conducting spot checks, random audits, or scheduled reviews. Establish a graduated system of sanctions and penalties for breaches of these obligations, including fixed penalties for minor infractions and more severe sanctions for serious breaches. Sanctions should extend beyond the tenure of individuals in office where applicable.
- **Ensure that the data on the online platform for disclosures is mineable and accessible for public analysis.** This will facilitate effective scrutiny by the public and enhance overall transparency and accountability.

Other commitments

Other commitments the IRM did not identify as promising are discussed below. This Review provides recommendations to contribute to the learning and implementation of these commitments.

Commitment 1 could modestly improve the quality and quantity of data published on the open data portal and increase engagement between data publishers and users. Although the commitment text does not provide details on planned development of the open data portal, the Head of Open Data clarified that it aims to enhance the portal's compliance with EU legislation, developing new DCAT high-value dataset profiles to prioritize and freely distribute datasets of particular interest through bulk download and API access.¹⁸ Compliance with DCAT standards would be a positive step as it encourages the government to expand public access to diverse datasets. Additionally, the initiative aims to enrich portal content, increase data publishers, and introduce FAQ resources to streamline the data publishing process.¹⁹

The commitment also includes milestones to support the Green and Social Hours programme—without details on scope—and the Engagement Fund, which has been ongoing since 2016, but without any concrete changes beyond encouraging Citizen Science projects.²⁰ Meanwhile, the aim of publishing the 2023–2027 Open Data Strategy was completed in November 2023 before the action plan was published.²¹ The IRM recommends that the DPENDR outlines the support it aims to provide through the Green and Social Hours programme, specifying intended outcomes and identifying any specific Open Data events that will be hosted during the action plan period to enable better tracking. Adequate funding for the Engagement Fund in 2024 would help to stimulate public engagement with data, promote governance transparency, and empower communities through data-driven initiatives. This funding is crucial for supporting small-scale projects that use open data to enhance public participation in governance processes.

Commitment 3 focuses on developing a best practice model for public consultation, which could modestly improve civic engagement opportunities. However, it does not detail how the framework's use will be encouraged or monitored and lacks milestones to ensure it becomes binding or institutionalized. Implementers could improve the commitment's potential for results by adding milestones to ensure that the recommendations of the best practice model effectively translate into tangible improvements in practice.

The other commitments—broadly aimed at promoting civic engagement by the public and marginalized groups—have unclear potential for results, as they fall short of actively empowering participation. According to the OGP Articles of Governance, for commitments to align with the OGP value of civic participation, governments must strive to mobilize citizens to partake in public discussions, offer feedback, and contribute to governance in ways that enhance responsiveness, innovation, and effectiveness.

Commitment 2 plans to support open research on the criminal justice system. However, it lacks milestones that ensure the research is used by government in practice. The commitment's potential for results could be strengthened by adding milestones to support government uptake of research recommendations to improve access to justice. Based on the research process, the government could also take steps to improve public access to criminal justice data.

Commitment 4 continues the existing practices of the Civic Forum introduced during the previous action plan. To foster iterative dialogue, the IRM recommends conducting the forum more frequently than the current annual schedule. Developing mechanisms to systematically implement feedback from the forum and evaluate its outcomes is also essential for fostering

continuous improvement of civic participation. Future milestones could include clear actions and mechanisms for assessing progress and identifying areas for improvement.

Commitment 6 falls short of its ambitious objective to increase the representation of women and minority groups in local elections, which took place in June 2024. Instead of directly addressing this objective, its milestones primarily focus on conducting information campaigns about the role of councilors and investing in facilities for hybrid meetings. The IRM recommends incorporating a post-election evaluation and lessons learned, as well as undertaking efforts that focus on the representation of women and minority groups more directly. The National Women’s Council suggests reforms like election quotas, funding for women’s caucuses, or support for councilors who are parents.²²

Commitment 7 plans to develop messaging on domestic violence in collaboration with organizations representing marginalized and traditionally hard-to-reach communities. This follows a collaborative process to co-develop the third national strategy on domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence, which runs from 2022-2026. To strengthen this commitment’s open government lens, implementers could shift its focus to widen participation in policymaking or improve public access to government information on combatting domestic violence. Implementers could also strengthen feedback channels for communities affected by domestic violence to hold government bodies to account in delivering on relevant policies, support services, and justice mechanisms.

¹ “Ireland Action Plan 2023–2025,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, December 2023, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ireland-action-plan-2023-2025-december>.

² The Mahon Tribunal, officially known as the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments, investigated political corruption primarily in the areas of planning permissions and land rezoning in Ireland. It focused on allegations of corrupt payments made to politicians and public officials in exchange for favorable decisions regarding land development and rezoning during the 1990s and early 2000s.

³ The Mahon Tribunal Final Report is available at: https://pt-cdn-prod.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/02115105/sitecontent_1257.pdf.

⁴ “IRM Results Report: Ireland 2021–2023,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, June 2024, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ireland-results-report-2021-2023>.

⁵ “IRM Results Report: Ireland 2021–2023,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

⁶ “Ireland Action Plan 2023–2025,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform; Michael Perkins (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform), interview by IRM researcher, 16 July 2024.

⁷ See, for example, the Moriarty Tribunal at: https://moriarty-tribunal.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SITECONTENT_26.pdf.

⁸ Perkins, interview.

⁹ Perkins, interview.

¹⁰ Transparency International Ireland, interview by IRM researcher, 30 July 2024.

¹¹ Perkins, interview.

¹² Perkins, interview.

¹³ Transparency International Ireland, interview.

¹⁴ Perkins, interview.

¹⁵ Perkins, interview.

¹⁶ Transparency International Ireland, interview.

¹⁷ Antoin O Lachtnain (Open Government Association Ireland), interview by IRM researcher, 6 June 2024.

¹⁸ Helena Campbell (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform), interview by IRM researcher, 25 June 2024.

¹⁹ Campbell, interview.

²⁰ Campbell, interview.

²¹ Press release of the Ireland’s new Open Data Strategy launch is available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/429e1-minister-donohoe-launches-new-open-data-strategy>.

²² “Women Beyond the Dáil: Access, Representation, and Retention in Irish Local Government,” National Women’s Council, 25 June 2024,
https://www.nwci.ie/learn/publication/women_beyond_the_dail_access_representation_and_retention_in_irish_local_go.

Section III. Methodology and IRM Indicators

This product is a concise, independent, technical review of the characteristics of the action plan and the strengths and challenges the IRM identifies to inform a stronger implementation process. The IRM highlights commitments that have the highest potential for results, represent a high priority for country stakeholders, acknowledged as a priority in the national open government context, or a combination of these factors.

The IRM products provided during a national action plan cycle include:

- **Co-Creation Brief:** A concise brief that highlights lessons from previous IRM reports to support a country's OGP process, action plan design, and overall learning.
- **Action Plan Review:** A technical review of the characteristics of the action plan and the strengths and challenges the IRM identifies to inform a stronger implementation process.
- **Midpoint Review:** A review for four-year action plans after a refresh at the midpoint. The review assesses new or significantly amended commitments in the refreshed action plan, compliance with OGP rules, and an informal update on implementation progress.
- **Results Report:** An overall implementation assessment that focuses on policy-level results and how changes happen. It also checks compliance with OGP rules and informs accountability and longer-term learning.

In the Action Plan Review, the IRM reviews commitments using three indicators:

1. Verifiability: The IRM determines whether a commitment is verifiable as written in the action plan. The indicator is assessed as:

- **Yes/No:** Are the stated objectives and proposed actions sufficiently clear and include objectively verifiable activities to assess implementation?
- Commitments that are not verifiable are considered not reviewable, and no further assessment is carried out.

2. Open Government Lens: The IRM determines if the commitment relates to the open government values of transparency, civic participation, and/or public accountability as defined by the Open Government Declaration and the OGP Articles of Governance. Based on a close reading of the commitment text, the indicator is assessed as:

- **Yes/No:** Does the commitment set out to make a policy area, institution, or decision-making process more transparent, participatory, or accountable to the public?

The following questions for each OGP value may be used as a reference to identify the specific open government lens in commitment analysis:

- **Transparency:** Will the government disclose more information, improve the legal or institutional frameworks to guarantee the right to information, improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public, or improve the transparency of government decision-making processes or institutions?
- **Civic Participation:** Will the government create or improve opportunities, processes, or mechanisms for the public to inform, influence or co-create policies, laws and/or decisions? Will the government create, enable, or improve participatory mechanisms for minorities, marginalized or underrepresented groups? Will the government improve the enabling environment for civil society (which may include NGO laws, funding mechanisms, taxation, reporting requirements, et cetera)? Will the government improve legal, policy, institutional or practical conditions related to civic space such as freedom of expression,

association and peaceful assembly that would facilitate participation in the public sphere? Will the government take measures which counter mis- and disinformation, especially online, to ensure people have access to reliable and factual information (which may include digital and media literacy campaigns, fact-checking or fostering an independent news media ecosystem)?

- **Public Accountability:** Will the government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions? Will the government enable legal, policy, or institutional frameworks to foster accountability of public officials?

3. Potential for Results: The IRM analyzes the expected results and potential that would be verified in the IRM Results Report after implementation. Potential for results is an early indication of the commitment’s possibility to yield meaningful results based on its articulation in the action plan in contrast with the state of play in the respective policy area. The indicator is assessed as:

- **Unclear:** The commitment is aimed at continuing ongoing practices in line with existing legislation, requirements, or policies without indication of the added value or enhanced open government approach in contrast with existing practice.
- **Modest:** A positive but standalone initiative or change to processes, practices, or policies. The commitment does not generate binding or institutionalized changes across government or institutions that govern a policy area. Examples are tools (e.g., websites) or data release, training, or pilot projects.
- **Substantial:** A possible game changer for practices, policies, or institutions that govern a policy area, public sector, or the relationship between citizens and state. The commitment generates binding and institutionalized changes across government.

This review focuses its analysis on promising commitments. Promising commitments are verifiable, have an open government lens, and at least a modest potential for results. Promising commitments may also be a priority for national stakeholders or for the particular context. The IRM may cluster commitments with a common policy objective or that contribute to the same reform or policy issue. The potential for results of clustered commitments is reviewed as a whole.

This review was prepared by the IRM in collaboration Brendan Halloran as external expert reviewer. During the internal review process of this product, the IRM verifies the accuracy of findings and collects further input through peer review, OGP Support Unit feedback as needed, interviews and validation with country stakeholders, an external expert review, and oversight by IRM’s International Experts Panel (IEP).¹ The IRM methodology, product quality, and review process are overseen by the IEP.²

¹ “International Experts Panel,” Open Government Partnership, accessed 15 July 2024, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/who-we-are/international-experts-panel>.

² For more information, see: “Overview – Independent Reporting Mechanism,” Open Government Partnership, accessed 15 July 2024, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm-guidance-overview>.

Annex 1. Commitment by Commitment Data¹

Commitment 1: Open Data
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Modest
Commitment 2: Open Research in Criminal Justice
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
Commitment 3: Best Practice Model of Public Consultation
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Modest
Commitment 4: Inclusive policymaking in the Community and Voluntary Sector
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
Commitment 5: Development of a modernized ethics statutory framework
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Substantial
Commitment 6: Engagement with communities on local electoral events
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
Commitment 7: Raise awareness of domestic sexual and gender-based violence and the supports available
• Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? No • Potential for results: Unclear

¹ **Editorial notes:** For the complete text of commitments, see: “Ireland Action Plan 2023–2025,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, December 2023, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ireland-action-plan-2023-2025-december>.

Annex 2: Action Plan Co-Creation

OGP member countries are encouraged to aim for the full ambition of the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards that came into force on 1 January 2022.¹ The IRM assesses all countries that submitted action plans from 2022 onward under the updated standards. Table 2 outlines the extent to which the countries' participation and co-creation practices meet the minimum requirements that apply during development of the action plan.

OGP instituted a 24-month grace period to ensure a fair and transparent transition to the updated standards. Action plans co-created and submitted by 31 December 2023 fall within the grace period. The IRM will assess countries' alignment with the standards and their minimum requirements.² However, countries will only be found to be acting contrary to process if they do not meet the minimum requirements for action plans co-created in 2024 and onwards.

Please note that, according to the OGP National Handbook, countries implementing four-year action plans must undertake a refresh process at the two-year mark. Countries are expected to meet minimum requirements 3.1 and 4.1 during the refresh process.³ IRM assessment of the refresh process will be included in the Results Report.

Table 2. Compliance with minimum requirements

Minimum requirement	Met during co-creation?	Met during implementation?
1.1 Space for dialogue: The Open Government Round Table is Ireland's multistakeholder (MSF) forum. ⁴ The forum met over six times during the co-creation period. ⁵ Its basic rules are publicly available on the Ireland OGP webpage. ⁶	Yes	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>
2.1. OGP website: The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) hosts a publicly accessible webpage on the gov.ie website that contains the latest action plan along with other information on the OGP process. ⁷	Yes	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>
2.2 Repository: The Ireland OGP webpage publishes information on the co-creation process, regularly updated through the Open Government Round Table meeting minutes. ⁸ However, the OGP webpage could benefit from a dedicated online repository to facilitate wider public access to all OGP materials. The government should ensure that all relevant materials, such as information on OGP processes, meeting minutes, and other related output are published promptly to ensure transparency and foster better public engagement. ⁹	Yes	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>
3.1 Advanced notice: The DPENDR published the co-creation timeline through a public notice on 21 February 2023 on the Ireland OGP webpage, two weeks before the call for ideas opened on 8 March 2023. ¹⁰	Yes	Not applicable
3.2 Outreach: The public consultation was announced in a video featuring the Minister of the department, Paschal Donohoe. ¹¹	Yes	Not applicable
3.3 Feedback mechanism: A public consultation was opened for a month between 8 March and 6 April 2023. An online consultation portal was made available to allow people to	Yes	Not applicable

submit their views. ¹² The DPENDR hosted a series of six thematic workshops (facilitated by Brave Lab), to discuss the submissions ¹³ involving all stakeholders who made the 71 submissions received. ¹⁴¹⁵		
4.1 Reasoned response: Public contributions were documented on the Ireland OGP webpage. ¹⁶ The DPENDR contacted some stakeholders to seek clarifications and further information on their submissions. It provided reasoned response in the six thematic workshops. ¹⁷	Yes	Not applicable
5.1 Open implementation: The IRM will assess whether meetings were held with civil society stakeholders to present implementation results and enable civil society to provide comments in the Results Report.	Not applicable	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>

¹ “OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards,” Open Government Partnership, 2021, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation-co-creation-standards>.

² “IRM Guidelines for the Assessment of Minimum Requirements,” Open Government Partnership, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-guidelines-for-the-assessment-of-minimum-requirements>.

³ See Section 2.3 in: “OGP National Handbook,” Open Government Partnership, 2022, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ogp-national-handbook-rules-and-guidance-for-participants-2022>.

⁴ See the multistakeholder meeting readouts at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5a21f-open-government-round-table-multi-stakeholder-forum-activity-ongoing>.

⁵ Antoin O Lachtnain (Open Government Association Ireland), interview by IRM researcher, 6 June 2024; Victoria Ronke Gbafah (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform), interview by IRM researcher, 13 June 2024.

⁶ See the Ireland Open Government Round Table establishment and terms of reference at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/202913/?page=null>.

⁷ “Ireland Action Plan 2023–2025,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, December 2023, <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/d79a2-open-government-in-ireland/#irelands-fourth-open-government-partnership-national-action-plan-2023-2025>.

⁸ See the Open Government Round Table multistakeholder forum activity at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5a21f-open-government-round-table-multi-stakeholder-forum-activity-ongoing>.

⁹ O Lachtnain, interview.

¹⁰ See the notice for Ireland’s fourth action plan public consultation process at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/247682/d6ab3774-cfd3-439e-8408-9b670539bd45.pdf>.

¹¹ Gbafah, interview; see the video call for ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byzlzRH35fl>.

¹² “Public consultation for Ireland’s fourth national action plan,” Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/c5c20-minister-donohoe-launches-public-consultation-for-irelands-open-government-national-action-plan-2023-2025/>.

¹³ See the multistakeholder forum readout from 31 May 2023 at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/266998/de47adab-5cdc-4e26-9e92-d1e680e18409.pdf#page=1>.

¹⁴ Gbafah, interview.

¹⁵ See the public consultation submissions at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/253551/07d75216-7d40-482b-bbad-071836ad145d.pdf>.

¹⁶ See contribution from stakeholders at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/253551/07d75216-7d40-482b-bbad-071836ad145d.pdf>.

¹⁷ Gbafah, interview.