

# Inaugural Open Government Round Table meeting

Multi-stakeholder forum

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021



## 1. Fáilte / Welcome

Thank you for joining us today for our inaugural Open Government Round Table meeting. This is the start of our shared journey to develop Ireland's Open Government National Action Plan. It is also important to recognise the journey thus far and to celebrate achieving this milestone – the first of many.

Ár míle buíochas as ocht a bheith linn inniu don chéad chruinniú Rialtas Oscailte. Seo tús ár turas le chéile chun Plean Gníomhaíochta Náisinta Rialtas Oscailte a dhéanamh. Tá turas fada déanta agus tá sé ceart is cóir ceiliúradh a dhéanamh go bhfuilimid tar-éis an cloch mhíle seo a bhaint amach – tá níos mó le teacht.

Open Government Round Table Secretariat

## 2. Open Government in a nutshell

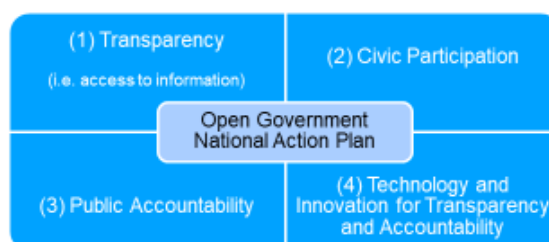
**What:** Open government is a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth (OECD, 2014).

**Why:** Civil Society's role in addressing the challenges of our time; OGP declaration (2014) and Programme for Government commitment.

**How:** Open Government Partnership process.



**Output:** National Action Plan (every 2 years), to progress the values, independently reviewed



**Outcomes:** Previous actions:

- (i) Referenda (Marriage Equality)
- (ii) Legislative Reform
- (iii) Open Data



An Roinn Cálteachais Phoiblí agus Atchóiríthe | Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

## 3. Table of Contents

1. Fáilte / Welcome
2. Open Government in a nutshell
3. Table of contents
4. Online meeting 'Who's Who'
5. Agenda
6. Advance reading

*Annex 1: Detailed Round Table member's bios*

*(The photos not for wider circulation and are for Round Table members use only not for wider circulation).*

#### 4. For Online Meetings: ‘Who’s Who’ Open Government Round Table Members

Civil Society Members	
<b>Catherine Lawlor</b> <i>Transparency International Ireland</i>	
<b>Antoin O Lachtain</b> <i>Open Government Association Ireland / Digital Rights Ireland</i>	
<b>Shana Cohen</b> <i>TASC</i>	
<b>Johnny Sheehan</b> <i>The Wheel</i>	
<b>Kathryn McCabe</b> <i>Individual and Change Agency</i>	
<b>Fiona Descoteaux</b> <i>Innovative Communities</i>	

Co-Chair (Public Sector)	
<b>Philip McGrath</b>  Co-Chair and Head of Public Sector Reform & delivery	

Public Sector Members	
<b>Ciara Morgan</b> <i>Department of Public Expenditure &amp; Reform Head of Government Reform &amp; Legislation.</i>	
<b>Kieran Moylan</b> <i>Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)</i>	
<b>Andrew Patterson</b> <i>Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)</i>	
<b>Diarmuid O’Leary</b>  Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage - Local Governance and Elected Members	
<b>Antoinette Doran</b> <i>Department of Justice - Criminal Justice, Penal Policy and Victims’ Rights Content and Events</i>	
<b>Awaiting nominee</b>  Department of the Taoiseach	

Secretariat	
<b>Críona Brassill</b>  Open Government lead (& other policy areas)	

## 5. Agenda

### Part I – Fáilte / Welcome to Open Government Round Table members

- 10:00 Philip McGrath (Co-Chair, Public Sector): To introduce the Minister of State Ossian Smyth.
- 10:05 Minister of State Ossian Smyth: Fáilte / welcome to Open Government Round Table members
- 10:15 Co-Chair Civil Society (to be nominated)<sup>1</sup> will call on **all Round Table members** in the order below to share: name, organisation (if applicable) and **key aspiration** for the Open Government Partnership process **(2 mins max)**

Civil Society		Public Sector	
1	Catherine Lawlor	2	Ciara Morgan
3	Antóin Ó Lachtnáin	4	Kieran Moylan
	(Apologies long standing commitment) Shana Cohen	6	Andrew Patterson
5	Kathryn Mc Cabe	7	Diarmuid O’Leary
8	Johnny Sheehan	9	Antoinette Doran
10	Fiona Descoteaux		Awaiting D/Taoiseach nominee.
			<b>Secretariat</b>
		11	Philip McGrath
		12	Críona Brassill

(The sharing of the order in advance is a conscious decision to support working in an inclusive way<sup>2</sup>).

- 10:45 Comfort break (you’re welcome to return with your break-time beverage of choice)

### Part II – Pathway to progress

- 11:00 Críona Brassill (Secretariat): Presentation on the milestones achieved to date and mapping out the pathway ahead to develop the Open Government National Action Plan
- 11:15 **All Round Table members**: ‘Ask me anything’ session to be fielded by Críona Brassill (Secretariat).
- 11:25 The Round Table members will be asked to agree and/or further enhance a series of next steps (vote via chat function) to progress work for December 2021 deliverable and to prepare for the next meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- 11:30 Philip McGrath (Co-Chair): To bring the 1<sup>st</sup> Open Government Round Table meeting to a close.

<sup>1</sup> The Civil Society Co-Chair of the Open Government Round Table will be agreed by the Civil Society Round Table members prior to be meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Please share with the Secretariat the practical ways that the Round Table can have inclusive ways of working.

## 6. Reading List

(Acknowledging and appreciated truncated timeline in circulating the meeting pack, the Secretariat flag \* for your consideration in advance of the meeting).

- \* The **Open Government in Ireland** [website](#)<sup>3</sup>
- \* The **Open Government Round Table terms of reference** are available [here](#)<sup>4</sup>
- \* **Public call for submissions for current and future Open Government National Action Plan** is available [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.

*While the Round Table can determine the structure of the report, the Open Government Partnership seeks the commitments in this format to support the monitoring (but these could be appendices).*

- **Ireland's previous National Action Plans** are available [here](#)<sup>6</sup>  
From the Secretariat's research, please note that *"Experience has shown that action plans comprising 5-15 high-quality commitments spread over multiple themes are more effective than those with a large number of less ambitious commitments. In 2017, the [Open Government Partnership] Steering Committee strongly recommended that participating governments cap the number of commitments per action plan to 20, with a suggested maximum of five milestones per commitment, with the aim of incentivising more ambitious commitments"*. The Secretariat has also sought international examples of best practice to inform the Round Table's drafting process.
- **Open Government Partnership** [website](#)<sup>7</sup> containing policy areas etc.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/d79a2-open-government-in-ireland/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/202913/b78c4c1d-9bf7-4dae-b088-de94a1e428e3.pdf#page=null>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/06f43-public-call-for-submissions-for-the-next-and-future-open-government-national-action-plans-oct-2021/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/d79a2-open-government-in-ireland/#open-government-national-action-plans>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

## Annex 1: Open Government Round Table Members Bios

### Civil Society Members:

Member: **Catherine Lawlor**

Affiliation: Transparency Ireland

Role: Advocacy and Research Coordinator

Responsibilities: *Catherine Lawlor is Advocacy and Research Coordinator at Transparency International Ireland, leading research into how well prepared Irish institutions and organisations are to face corruption-related risks. This includes TI Ireland's National Integrity Index, a series examining disclosure practices and public accountability across all sectors. Before joining TI Ireland, Catherine worked in the Irish diplomatic service and has also worked as a fraud investigator and risk analyst in the banking and technology sectors.*

Member: **Antóin Ó Lachtnáin**

Affiliation: Open Government Association Ireland / Digital Rights Ireland

Role: Chair

Responsibilities: *Antóin Ó Lachtnáin is a volunteer director of Digital Rights Ireland and has been engaged with the Open Government Partnership process in Ireland since 2014. In his day-to-day work he provides services for suppliers in the electricity sector. He holds a Diploma in Financial Management from ACCA and a degree in psychology and philosophy from Trinity College, Dublin.*

Member: **Shana Cohen**

Affiliation: TASC

Role: Director

Responsibilities: *I am the Director of TASC, an independent think tank based in Dublin focused on inequality and democracy in Ireland and the EU. Originally from the US, I have a PhD in Sociology and have lived in multiple countries. I have extensive experience working with NGOs and researching how they contribute to democratisation and sustaining democratic practices.*

Member: **Kathryn Mc Cabe**

Affiliation: Individual and Change Agency

Roles: Multiple.

Responsibilities: *For the last 16 years she has consulted internationally; guiding NGOs, business and community groups towards sustainability and well-being. She is a professional facilitator, emergent program designer and collaborative leadership development specialist.*

*A radical masters in Australia, Social Ecology, enabled her to engage with complex systems and design context-specific change strategies. Crucially, to feel inspired about what is possible when people feel respected and trusted to take their next step towards change. She is Ireland's only trained social ecologist.*

*She was a lecturer at the University of Western Sydney in Education for Sustainability. She was on the organising committee for the first International Democratic Education Conference in Australia. She has a special interest in youth Rites of Passage; Directing a 6 week residential summer program on Vancouver Island, Canada and Ireland's first ancestrally appropriate youth program, True Nature.*

*Kathryn sits on the National Board (Secretariat) for the Public Participation Network, and on her local Roscommon Secretariat. She is passionate about amplifying the needs of civic society to influence and direct local policy decisions. The PPN is the only constitutionally recognised avenue to facilitate that, and open to all registered groups.*

*She is the co-founder of Roscommon Transition Towns, a collaboration of local groups transitioning the region to a sustainable and just society with actions like Community Supported Agriculture and community owned energy. She brings an unusual array of experience and training to help cultivate regenerative change. [www.thechangeagency.ie](http://www.thechangeagency.ie)*

**Member: Johnny Sheehan**

**Affiliation: The Wheel**

**Role: National Rural Network & Member Engagement Manager**

*Responsibilities: Johnny Sheehan is National Rural Network (NRN) and Member Engagement Manager in The Wheel. Johnny has more than 25 years' experience in the nonprofit sector nationally and internationally. He leads The Wheel's work around outreach and engagement with The Wheel's member organisations and the wider community and voluntary sector. As NRN lead for The Wheel, he works with a broad range of rural stakeholders to support their engagement with Ireland's Rural Development Programme.*

*Part of The Wheel's Public Policy team, a key part of his role is to facilitate networking with community and voluntary organisations and ensuring that issues affecting local communities are reflected in The Wheel's work nationally. Johnny has also led The Wheel's work on engaging civil society in a number of national dialogue processes. He represents The Wheel members', and the wider sector's, shared interests in the Community and Voluntary Pillar and in Coalition 2030, a network of civil society organisations working to influence the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at local and national level.*

*Prior to working with The Wheel, Johnny worked with Dóchas, Fairtrade Ireland and the National Youth Council of Ireland. Johnny is currently Chairperson of the Irish Development Education Association and holds a Law Society Certificate in Charity Law, Trusteeship and Governance.*

**Member: Fiona Descoteaux**

**Affiliation: Innovate Communities**

**Role: CEO and Co-Founder**

*Responsibilities: Fiona Descoteaux is CEO and Co-Founder of Innovate Communities. Innovate Communities is a non-profit working with local authorities, government, multinationals and communities to collectively put citizens at the centre of improving intricate local community systems to build resilient, sustainable and equitable urban and rural communities. Over the next five years via our 2021-2025 strategic plan, we are focused on empowering communities and diverse stakeholders to evaluate their systems surrounding local community issues, and together we will work to improve systems and to create the communities of the future!*



## Public Sector Members:

Co-Chair / Secretariat: Philip McGrath

Department: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Division: Reform Division, Head of Public Service Reform & Delivery.

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities: Philip McGrath leads the Public Service Reform unit of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Public Service Reform team is responsible for driving reform, innovation and modernisation of public services in Ireland. This includes creating and sustaining new policy interventions and delivering practical initiatives that will enable the Department to accomplish its mission of well-targeted, sustainable public spending across Government.

**Member: Kieran Moylan**

Department: Department of Rural and Community Development

Division: Libraries Development and Community Policy

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities: Kieran Moylan has responsibility at Principal Officer level for developing and supporting the local governance structures arising from local government reform process, namely Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs); implementing the Framework Policy for Local and Community Development; Libraries Development and Policy; managing the Department's responsibilities under the PEACE IV Programme (2014-2020); and managing the Community Services Programme (CSP).

**Member: Ciara Morgan**

Department: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Division: Reform Division, Head of Government Reform & Legislation

Grade: Principal

Responsibilities: Responsibility at Principal level for Government Reform and legislation. This includes development of legislative and other Government reform commitments on ethics, lobbying policy and legislation, the Protected Disclosures Act and transposition of Directive (EU) 2019/1937, the Whistleblowing Directive. It also includes managing the FOI Central Policy Unit.

**Member: Andrew Patterson**

Department: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Division: Corporate Governance

Grade: Principal Officer

**Responsibilities:** Responsibility at Principal Officer level for the work of the Corporate Governance Unit - including oversight of the management of the Ministers' Offices, the Secretary General's office and the work of the Central Co-ordination Unit; main point of contact on a wide range of cross-departmental and international issues relevant to the Department; business planning and risk management; agency governance, including co-ordination of agency board appointments; and governance oversight of the Ombudsman for Children's Office.

**Member:** **Diarmuid O'Leary**

**Department:** Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage

**Division:** Local Governance and Elected Members

**Grade:** Principal Officer

**Responsibilities:** Diarmuid O'Leary has responsibility at Head of Business Unit level for certain policy development initiatives, including the governance of cities and directly elected mayors with executive functions, and increasing the participation of women in local government. He is responsible also for supporting effective governance arrangements in local authorities, including matters such as engagement with representative associations of elected members; the role and conditions of elected members, and associated training requirements; ethics provisions in the local government sector; customer service; the local authority code of governance and corporate plans. Submissions to the Minister under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 from the local government sector also fall within his remit.

**Member:** **Antoinette Doran**

**Department:** Department of Justice

**Division:** Criminal Justice, Penal Policy and Victims' Rights Content and Events

**Grade:** Principal Officer

**Responsibilities:** Antoinette is the Transparency Business Partner for the Criminal Justice, Penal Policy and Victims' Rights Pillar. The purpose of the Criminal Justice, Penal Policy and Victims' Rights Content and Events team is to develop factual, quality and timely content related to the work of the Criminal Justice Pillar and to provide support and input into delivery of events.

**Member:** **Awaited – pending a formal decision on nomination, colleagues were not in a position to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> Round Table meeting at the time of circulation.**

**Department:** Department of the Taoiseach

**Division:**

**Grade:**

**Responsibilities**

**Secretariat: Cróna Brassill**

Department: Department of Public Expenditure & Reform

Division: Reform Division, Open Government unit

Grade: Assistant Principal (Higher)

Responsibilities: Among my policy areas of responsibility, I am Ireland's Open Government point of contact (since April 2021). I am Secretariat to the Open Government Round Table to support their development of the next Open Government National Action Plan; Ireland's Open Government Partnership point of contact and I am Ireland's OECD delegate to the Working Party on Open Government.

I am a career civil servant, having amassed considerable varied experience across a wide variety of sectors, including international NGO, leveraging my various professional skillsets - Chartered Accountant, and Chartered Tax Advisor. For further details please see <https://ie.linkedin.com/in/crionabrassill>.

Round Table contact via Secretariat email [IrelandOpenGovernment@per.gov.ie](mailto:IrelandOpenGovernment@per.gov.ie)

Drafted by: Cróna Brassill

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.