**Consultation and engagement**

A partnership approach between civil society and government is a [cornerstone](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/civil-society-engagement/engaging-civil-society-why-and-how) of the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has already undertaken a range of engagement with stakeholders on the development of commitments for inclusion in the National Action Plan, which the Interim Working Group can build on. A formal consultation process with a wide variety of civil society stakeholders was run from December 2015 to April 2016, including:

* four information sessions in selected capital cities;
* updates and posts on the [OGP Australia blog](http://ogpau.govspace.gov.au/);
* public submissions through a wiki that the public could edit and comment;
* a “co-creation” workshop with civil society stakeholders to narrow down stakeholder suggestions; and
* communication through a number of channels, including social media, mailing lists, input to stakeholder newsletters, and teleconferences.

As stated in the draft Terms of Reference, it will be important for the Interim Working Group to facilitate further engagement with a broad range of stakeholders and encourage further public participation as the National Action Plan is co-drafted and finalised.

1. **Timeframes**

The timeframes for this last phase of consultation will be tight in order to meet the OGP’s deadline to submit the National Action Plan by 1 November 2016.

The [*Open Government Partnership Point of Contact Manual*](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/ogp_2016_poc_manual.pdf) requires countries to make details of their public consultation process and timelines available prior to the consultation. As such, timelines for the Interim Working Group’s ongoing engagement with civil society and public stakeholders will be published on the [OGP Australia blog](http://ogpau.govspace.gov.au/) following agreement from members:[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| **Date** | **Key actions and objectives** |
| 5 September 2016 | First IWG meeting |
| Week of 5 September 2016 | Publish grand challenges, and a list of high-priority commitments agreed to by the Interim Working Group for public comment |
| 13 September 2016 | Second IWG meeting:   * Commence discussion on content and scope of commitments * Update from consultation and public comments received |
| 16 September 2016 | Meeting of the OGP Inter-Departmental Committee |
| 19 September 2016 | Third IWG meeting:   * Continue discussion on content and scope of commitments * Discuss text of the draft National Action Plan * Update from consultation and public comments received |
| 29 September 2016 | Publish draft National Action Plan for public comment  Circulate draft National Action Plan to Government agencies for comment |
| 6/7 October 2016  (TBC) | IWG Workshop event:   * Confirm text of the draft National Action Plan * Confirm the scope and content of commitments * Report on areas of contention |
| October 2016 | Australian Government will consider the National Action Plan |
| By 1 November 2016 | Australian Government will submit the National Action Plan to the OGP Secretariat |

1. **Broader consultation and public participation**

Civil society members will play an important role in facilitating consultation and comment on the commitments and the draft National Action Plan through their networks. The secretariat will assist in publishing material and updates on the [OGP Australia blog](http://ogpau.govspace.gov.au/), through social media channels, and mailing lists.

One option for broader consultation is for the Interim Working Group to:

* publish the grand challenges and the list of high priority commitments the Interim Working Group agreed to explore (as discussed at item 4); and
* invite public comments until the third meeting (19 September 2016).

Future meeting agendas could also include a standing agenda item to update members on consultation and public comments received.

Ahead of the Workshop, the draft National Action Plan could also be released for public comment and circulated to government agencies (note, agencies will also be engaged through the drafting process).

In addition, every meeting’s agenda, papers and minutes will be published on the [OGP Australia blog](http://ogpau.govspace.gov.au/), to encourage public participation with the co-drafting process, and to ensure that civil society plays an active and informed role in Australia’s process to join the Open Government Partnership.

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| **For discussion and decision:**  How should the Interim Working Group facilitate further consultation and encourage public participation in Australia’s OGP process? What role can civil society members play? |

1. Please note, a new workshop date has been proposed to suit members’ availability. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)