**AGENDA ITEM 4**

Interim Working Group

5 September 2016

**Australia’s first National Action Plan**

Australia’s first National Action Plan is an opportunity for the Government and civil society to work together to enhance transparency, accountability, public participation and innovation in our country and region.

The Australian Government is committed to co-creating a plan that contains concrete and ambitious actions that build upon our long tradition of openness and transparency. Our first National Action plan will provide a foundation to further engage with civil society and identify new open government initiatives over time.

Australia’s first National Action Plan is due for submission to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) by 1 November 2016. Participating countries work in a two-year National Action Plan calendar cycle, with our next plan due in mid-2018.

* 1. **Grand challenges and themes**

National Action Plan commitments must relate to at least one of the OGP’s five Grand Challenges:

* **Improving Public Services**—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services (including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications and any other relevant service areas) by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation.
* **Increasing Public Integrity**—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom;
* **More Effectively Managing Public Resources**—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources and foreign assistance;
* **Creating Safer Communities**—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats;
* **Increasing Corporate Accountability**—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet originally suggested that Australia’s National Action Plan focus on the themes of Improving Public Services and More Effectively Managing Public Resources. A broader range of grand challenges could be considered, reflecting the breadth of potential commitments the National Action Plan may address. This could be further considered by the Interim Working Group at a future meeting, once the scope of commitments is clearer.

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| **For discussion and decision:**  What should be the approach to deciding the grand challenges? |

* 1. **Identification of high priority commitments**

The Terms of Reference ask the Interim Working Group to consider and prioritise commitments for potential inclusion in the National Action Plan, having regard to:

* consistency and level of priority against the OGP principles (transparency, accountability, public participation, and technology and innovation);
* the likelihood of implementation success;
* the costs and benefits of the proposed commitments (including alternatives to achieve a similar outcome); and
* the views of the relevant Australian Government agency.

The OGP’s [Government Point of Contact Manual](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/ogp_2016_poc_manual.pdf) contains guidance on drafting National Action Plan commitments, as well as guidance on consultation and information about OGP timeframes. It suggests that National Action Plans should include 5 – 15 high quality commitments spread over multiple themes. The OGP team have collated all stakeholder suggestions for commitments (collected between November 2015 and April 2016) in the attached summary.

The [full text of public submissions](https://ogpau.govspace.gov.au/category/submissions/) is available on the Australian OGP blog. The Australian Open Government Partnership Civil Society Network has also released the [Towards an Open Government Manifesto](https://opengovernment.org.au/2016/06/09/towards-an-open-government-manifesto/), which contains thirteen priority commitments for further consideration by Government and civil society.

Based on the commitments suggested though the consultation process (including the workshop in April 2016) and following initial discussions with responsible government agencies, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has identified the following areas for further discussion with the Interim Working Group:

* Finalise Australia’s membership to the **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative**.
* Explore options for a **beneficial ownership register for companies**.

Note: Australia [committed](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522699/Australia.pdfhttps:/www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522699/Australia.pdf) to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and to exploring options for a beneficial ownership register as part of the UK Anti-Corruption Summit in May 2016. No commitments have been made around timeframes and milestones for these initiatives.

* Assess Australia’s compliance with the **Open Contracting Data Standard**.
* Explore **options to improve public participation and engagement** in Commonwealth policy development and decision-making.
* **Improve whistle-blowers** **protections** in the corporate sector,noting the Government’s commitment to improve protections for whistle-blowers who report tax misconduct to the Australian Taxation Office.
* **Create, manage and preserve informational digitally** to support transparency, accountability and citizen engagement.
* Improve the **availability and use of public data**.
* Establish a **permanent mechanism for OGP consultation** during implementation of the National Action Plan.
* Establish metrics to **assess public utilisation of information access rights**.
* Improve **disclosure of grants information.**
* Support government agencies to **digitally transform high volume services**.

This list is intended to act as a starting point to facilitate discussion by the Interim Working Group when considering commitments to include in the National Action Plan. We welcome the Interim Working Group’s views on these and any other potential commitments. Once the broad scope of commitments is agreed, the detail of these commitments (including the text to be included in the National Action Plan) can be discussed at future meetings.

Additional commitments may also be proposed and considered throughout the National Action Plan development process.

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| **For discussion and decision:**  Which commitments should be considered for further exploration and consultation? |

* 1. **Structure of the National Action Plan**

It is proposed that Australia’s National Action Plan follow the [template](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP_actionplan_guide%20FINAL_0.pdf) provided by the OGP.

The template has four sections:

* introduction;
* open government efforts to date;
* National Action Plan development process; and
* commitments.

Interim Working Group members are encouraged to provide input to the Secretariat on any specific content they think should be included in the National Action Plan.

The Secretariat will look to circulate an early draft of the National Action Plan out of session.