[Ireland to host Open Government Partnership (OGP) Europe Regional Meeting in 2014](http://www.per.gov.ie/ireland-to-host-open-government-partnership-ogp-europe-regional-meeting-in-2014/)

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform today announced that Ireland will host a European-level Open Government Partnership (OGP) conference in 2014. The Minister said:

“Following on from the recent OGP London Summit, at which I announced a range of proposed Open Data initiatives for inclusion in Ireland’s OGP action plan, I am very pleased to announce that a European level OGP conference will be hosted by Ireland in May 2014.”

Ireland’s intention to host this conference demonstrates a strong commitment to the OGP and will provide an opportunity for governments and civil society from across Europe to come together to share knowledge, lessons learned and best practice. Approximately 25 European countries will have the opportunity to launch either their first or second OGP action plans at this conference.

Linda Frey, Executive Director of the OGP Support Unit said:

“We are delighted Ireland will host this meeting. As OGP enters its third year it is vital that countries show ambition in their open government reforms, and innovation in the ways they work with civil society. OGP members need to keep learning from each other, and with so many European countries about to do their first or second OGP action plan the meeting in Ireland is a perfect opportunity to do that.”

Ireland, as a “new joiner” to the OGP, is moving towards full membership of the Partnership. Work is currently underway, involving close consultation with Government Departments and civil society, which will result in the development of Ireland’s first OGP national action plan which is expected to enable Ireland to become a full member by April 2014. The conference will encourage further momentum for Ireland’s involvement in the OGP.

The Minister stated that:

“OGP membership reaffirms Ireland’s commitment to governmental transparency and reform and provides an important platform to further Ireland’s current national reform efforts”

**Ends**

**Note for editors**

The [Open Government Partnership](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about) is aimed at securing commitments from governments to share more information about their activities, increase civic participation in decision-making, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

The Minister attended the OGP London Summit on 31 October and 1 November 2013. Each participating government was asked to announce an ambitious new open government commitment to be integrated into their OGP action plan. Minister Howlin announced a suite of measures designed to provide major impetus to Open Data in Ireland. Subject to Government approval, the Minister announced that Ireland commits to:

- signing up to the G8 Open Data Charter

- establishing an Open Data Board

- setting up an Open Data Implementation Group

- building an online Open Data Platform – to act as the primary source for public sector datasets.

The Minister also participated in a number of working groups and gave the opening address at a session on whistleblowing at the London Summit.

Ireland is part of Cohort 4 of countries that may also be referred to as “new joiners”. Ireland expects to officially join the OGP by April 2014, along with Mongolia, Australia, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago, Sierra Leone, Serbia and New Zealand. All are currently in the process of developing their national action plans.

It is expected that the Dublin conference will provide an opportunity to focus on:

* the importance of open data, which has the potential to drive innovation and economic growth, and strengthen democracy by creating a culture in which government information is widely accessible promoting re-use, commercialisation and other benefits;
* improve public services through E-Government;
* legislative openness and policy transparency;
* the role of citizens and civil society in working with government on open government reform; and
* the role of OGP objectives in securing improved public governance.

Ireland’s OGP participation is expected to provide further impetus to current legislative reform priorities which include the provision of a detailed legislative framework for Parliamentary Inquiries, the introduction of whistle-blower protection legislation, the restoration and extension of Freedom of Information, the regulation of lobbying, and the development of a strengthened public sector ethics framework.

Further information on the OGP is available at [www.opengovpartnership.org](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/) or contact Support Unit Deputy Director Joe Powell on +12024892146.