



Trinity Civic Engagement for Societal Impact



Are we there yet?

Key Performance Indicators for a National Roadmap Project

ENGAGED was a project to develop a national roadmap for public involvement in open research. The final in-person workshop brought together participants from academia, the public sector, NGOs, libraries and professional research roles to consider how the roadmap could be evaluated and measured. Building on four previous workshop series, the session focused on imagining the changes that full implementation might bring across research and wider society, and on defining what success would look like.

The workshop combined structured discussion with more creative methods. An improvised activity, a simulated podcast set in 2030, encouraged participants speak about the roadmap's potential achievements and challenges. Individual zine-making provided a quieter space for reflection and more personal, unfiltered views.

Feedback was positive although it is acknowledged that improvisation can be a intimidating for participants

ORGANISER

ENGAGED Roadmap for Public Involvement in Open Research Project

VENUE

TRISS Boardroom, 6th Floor, Arts Block, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2.

DATE

Wednesday, 1st October 2025

FUNDERS:

National Open Research Forum (NORF)

This work showcases how Trinity is engaging with multiple stakeholders in order to building mutually beneficial relationships that can move public policy forward.

Prepared by Trinity Civic Engagement for Societal Impact, September 2026



Purpose of the Event

ENGAGED was funded by the National Open Research Forum (NORF) to develop a national roadmap for public involvement in open research. A joint project between Trinity College Dublin and Dublin City University, it had two distinct phases.

The first phase was to create an international review of what is happening in the field. The second phase was a series of workshops, both in person and online, to devise and develop the roadmap itself, providing an opportunity for academics, professional university staff, civil and public servants, NGOs and community groups, advocates and others with an interest in open research or public involvement in research to convene, discuss and debate what would be needed to develop public involvement in open research processes and practices.

There were five sets of workshops:

1. Identifying goals for public involvement in open research
2. Infrastructure, investments and supports
3. Training and skills development
4. Co-creating 'how-to' guidance for under-represented communities
5. Mechanisms for collecting evidence for monitoring and measurement

This final in-person workshop around monitoring and measurement aimed to:

- Express a full sense of how Ireland would be different if the roadmap was implemented under each of the five 'destinations' in the roadmap
- Articulate what success would look like in various fields such as the NGO sector, the civil service, academia
- Reflect more generally how evaluation should happen in the light of the subject matter.

Challenges of the Event

As this was the fifth set of workshops, most participants had some familiarity with the process and may have participated in previous workshops. This meant that the challenges of the event were:

- Participants needed to be able to project into an uncertain future and imagine how the world would be different if this roadmap was implemented in full.
- While many participants were academics, there were also professional staff, public sector and civil servants and activists.
- A considerable amount had already been developed from the previous workshops but there was now a mix of people who had been at a number of workshops and those for whom this was their first workshop.
- There needed to be some consistency within the data gathered.

Design of the Event

Processing Prior Information

As a project like this reaches maturity, it can be difficult for those coming to it to process the amount of data already gathered. In design, it is important to create structured text, i.e. with headings, subheadings, topic sentences, important terms highlighted in bold, to allow someone to quickly process what is in front of them. The text would also have both bullet points and a narrative.

Importantly, participants would also be given time to read the details before the discussion began. For those unfamiliar with it, this would be an opportunity to catch up. For those who were familiar, it was a chance to revise what was contained within it.

How is the World Different?

The tables would get an opportunity to discuss, in small groups, what would be different if the roadmap was implemented, collectively noting down any points for discussion. The facilitator would ask one participant from each table to speak to these points.

Once each table agreed on their talking points, one participant from each table would come forward to join a panel for a 'podcast' discussion. This discussion would be taking place at the end of 2030, talking about what the Roadmap had achieved and how it had impacted both academia and wider society, both positively and negatively. The facilitator would be the 'interviewer' in order to sustain the conceit of this being set in the future.

A reflective space for consideration

There had been a space during each in-person workshop to create a zine. While, as a methodology and as a cultural artefact, zining is currently enjoying a surge in popularity, it also proves a useful, calm space within a workshop for people to reflect on what has been discussed. At the beginning of the zine session, prompts would be given in order to keep the focus on evaluation of public involvement in open research.

Pages would be cut and folded into an A7 'pocket zine' format along with material. Glue and scissors, as well as pens and markers would be available for creating the zines.

Creating parity of esteem

Due to the diversity of involvement, it is important to create activities where anyone can contribute, drawing on their own perspectives and experiences, without any participant dominating.

One mechanism to do this can be the chance for each participant to create their own zine. These zines are created independently of other participants, are anonymous and are not shared in the room, so everyone can be free to express their own unfiltered opinions.

The composition of the panel discussion can be deliberately diverse, drawing in different perspectives to build a bigger picture of what would be affected and impacted by the implementation of the Roadmap.

Implementation

This workshop was titled: *Are We There Yet? Evaluating Our Progress in Open Research Assessing milestones, metrics, challenges and next steps in Ireland's public involvement in Open Research journey*. There was a total of 32 co-creators who joined the workshop, from the public sector, peer research, an NGO and an IGO, libraries, as well as academic staff and professional staff from different universities.

As this was the final set of workshops, there was already quite a lot which had emerged from the project so far. It proved important to organise that information well, to edit it down while not losing the sense of what was being proposed for the plan, and not to overwhelm the participants with too much detail. While this worked well enough, it might have been better to have five tables and that participants could choose which area they wished to discuss (i.e. open space technology).

The podcast panel worked well once participants warmed up to the conceit. It can be difficult to get people to improvise an imagined situation so humour and encouragement from the facilitator was important to ensure a fruitful process.

The zine workshop allowed for people to reflect individually on the topic which, in the final wrap up, was seen to be a very useful process that contrasted with the high-energy of the earlier activity.

Feedback from participants, responding to a questionnaire on the workshop, was positive with high levels of both interest and engagement from those who responded.

One piece of verbal feedback, however, that is worth remembering is that creative or improvised elements in workshops are often outside of the experience of many. While it was helpful to this workshop to 'level' participants so that a community peer researcher could contribute on a par with a senior civil servant or academic, it was still perceived to be a risky prospect by high-status participants.

For More Information

ENGAGED is a national roadmap to shape public involvement in open research in Ireland between now and 2030. By making research more 'open', wider communities of support for researchers can be built, while making research more useful and usable. Research should, where possible, be more accessible, more transparent, and a shared resource for the benefit of all who need it.

[Read ENGAGED: Ireland's Public Involvement in Open Research Roadmap](#)

[Read about the New Faces workshop on ENGAGED at NORFest 2025](#)



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