

Application

Preliminary Question

In which language are you submitting the application (check one)?

Please note that each country has the option of either submitting an application in English, or in their native language if they are unable to pay for translation into English. For applications submitted in the native language, OGP will pay for the translation into English before passing on to the judges.

English
 Native language (please mention)

If you are submitting in your native language and it is non-Latin based language, you will have the option of uploading a PDF file at the end of this application. Please follow the questions and word limits mentioned in the application template.

A. THE TEAM

The following information is required to capture a basic understanding of those responsible for your initiative and any partnerships that have helped you to meet your goals.

INITIATIVE NAME (required)

Provide the name of the initiative that your team is submitting for consideration of the 2015 Open Government Awards. If the initiative is operating under one or more alternate name(s), provide the name that is most commonly recognized.

Increasing Use of a Central Website for Freedom of Information

THE NOMINATION (required)

Begin by describing how this initiative was selected. For example, mention any nomination or consultation process held with civil society partners or others when selecting the initiative.

[100 words]

The Freedom of Information Central Website (FOICW) is a globally unique website, that allows people to contact many authorities (over 700) on one website. To our knowledge, Israel is among the first countries to establish and encourage central use of its Freedom of Information Act.

When examining Israel open government activities in the last two years, we have detected the FOICW as a unique project to propose as a candidate for the Open Government Awards.

Is this initiative included in your country's OGP National Action Plan?

(Applicants can choose initiatives from within OR outside their OGP National Action Plans)

Yes No

GOVERNMENT POINT OF CONTACT (required)

Provide the name, title, phone number(s), email address(es) and mailing address of a single point of contact for the purposes of communicating with your team. The person should be the senior most individual responsible for overseeing the application requirements.

Please also provide the name and professional title of the government official responsible for implementing the initiative, if different from above.

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TYPE OF APPLICATION (required)

We strongly encourage applicants to submit a joint application from a government agency and a civil society organization. Only submit a joint application if a civil society organization was involved in either designing, implementing or monitoring the initiative jointly with the government.

Is this a joint application?

Yes No

If yes, please fill out the "civil society point of contact" field below.

CIVIL SOCIETY POINT OF CONTACT

Please provide the name and title of a single point of contact at the organization. By providing these details you acknowledge that you are jointly applying with a civil society organization for the 2015 Open Government Awards.

OTHER PARTNERSHIPS (optional)

If you are partnering with one or more other government agencies, private sector entities, media etc., please list each partner. In 250 words or less, provide a brief narrative of the partnership and the role each partner plays in your initiative.

Our partnership in the government is mainly with the eGov Unit and the variety of Freedom of Information Officers across the government.

The eGov Unit role was to form a website which will turn the initiative and vision of the Freedom of Information Governmental Unit into the best FOI service website to the public.

The FOI officers role is to respond to FOI requests and to help the public be aware about information that has been disclosed due to the FOI act.

B. THE INITIATIVE

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is prepared to celebrate a range of successful applicants for the Open Government Awards. This year's theme is Improving Public Services through Open Government. Please visit here for more clarification on the theme. To qualify for recognition, we need to understand the various elements of success of your initiative and its sustainability over time. Please answer the following questions:

PROBLEM DEFINITION (required)

In 200 words or less, please identify the specific problem your initiative intended to solve. Why was this problem important to solve at a particular time and what were the challenges posed by your national (or local) economic or political context?

The Freedom of Information Act in Israel applies to approximately 1070 public authorities.

Before the Freedom of Information Central Website (FOICW) was established, all applicants were required to find out the contact info of the Freedom of Information Officer on the specific website of that authority. Moreover, in practice, there was a great variation in the requirements for submitting an application, almost impossible to have filed a Freedom of Information request.

The challenge in establishing the FOICW was creating a single standard for a wide range of authorities that were obliged to standards that were decided by the FOI Governmental Unit after consulting with FOI Officers and civil society representatives.

INITIATIVE DESIGN (required)

In 250 words or less, describe your initiative's goals and objectives. How did it aim to improve public service delivery, who was it intended to benefit (specify the target population), and why was it important to use open government approaches to achieve this goal? If your initiative was designed to improve access or services for disadvantaged or marginalized groups, provide details on this here. Describe any innovations in the design of the initiative.

The Freedom of Information Central Website went online in January 2014 (foi.gov.il), and allows people to contact many authorities on one website. In addition to contact information about FOI officers, the website serves as the main platform on which information already provided by the authorities, as well as information about agreements and contracts with private parties on matters as outlined in Government Resolution No. 1116 of December 29, 2013, is consolidated.

INITIATIVE OUTCOMES (required)

In 450 words or less, explain how your initiative was able to demonstrate one or more of the following results:

- Citizens have better access to information on the public services to which they are entitled, and/or information on the performance of public service providers
- Governments are better at asking for and responding to feedback or complaints by citizens on the quality of public services
- Citizens have ways to actively participate in the design and delivery of public services
- Citizens have mechanisms to monitor and oversee public works and services

Initiatives should also provide evidence if the initiative was able to expand access to public services to a larger population than before or if the quality and efficiency of public services has improved.

If there are any baseline indicators to measure the outcomes of the initiative, please describe them in detail. If the initiative was included in the OGP Action Plan, please describe how this did (or did not) contribute to the initiative's success.

Construction of the main website created standardization and led to simplify application process.

Before the Freedom of Information Central Website was established, all applicants were required to find out the contact info of the Freedom of Information Officer on the specific website of that authority. Moreover, in practice, there was a great variation in the requirements for submitting an application, almost impossible to have filed a Freedom of Information request.

INITIATIVE SUSTAINABILITY (required)

In 200 words or less, please describe any plans for scaling up or sustaining the initiative. Base your description of the strategy on the information provided in the previous sections, such as how you intend to leverage your current success and increase your reach or capacity. Address any threats or operational challenges to your initiative and describe how you manage those risks on a regular basis.

There are three major challenges ahead of us -

- completion of site development to include statistical data on FOI requests and later on construction of a system to manage applications that will be synchronized with the site;
- increasing the number of authorities which are included in the website;
- increasing the amount of information that will be accessible to the public through the website.

We are working to advance the tasks before us by raising awareness of the benefits of using the site both by the public and the state.

VALIDATION OF CLAIMS (required)

While it is strongly encouraged that each initiative includes an implementing partner, such as a Civil Society Organization, private sector agency, media entity, etc., it is not a requirement. However, you are required to secure and upload documents from at least two credible nongovernmental actors, who can attest to the veracity of the claims made in your application.

You are only allowed to upload one file. If you have multiple documents, please zip them into a single file first. The file types that are allowed to be uploaded have an extension of .ZIP, .PDF, .DOC, .DOCX, .XLS or .XLSX.

recommendations.pdf

C. THE PITCH

The following information allows each applicant to make their strongest (and final) case for consideration.

BEST CASE (required)

In 250 words or less, please present the most compelling facts for why your initiative should be recognized. This is an opportunity to distinguish your initiative, based on any factors that you have not had the opportunity to describe in the previous sections. What is your best argument for why your initiative has achieved a meaningful outcome? What elements of the initiative make it different and better than others that have been tried and tested? Be creative and concise.

Until recently claims were being held that it is difficult to file a Freedom of Information request to public authorities. This has led to a decrease in motivation in filing FOI applications by the law.

The FOI Central Website, enables any person to apply easily and quickly within the website's wizard.

In addition, professional bodies are able to upload the Freedom of Information form and submit the application on its base.

It should be noted that during 2014 there was an increase of 40% Freedom of Information applications that were submitted to the central government. This increase was caused thanks to a number of factors, one of which is the reduction of bureaucracy entailed in applying by the FOI act (other reasons - reducing fees by 80%, as well as actions to increase public awareness to the existence of the law).

We believe that it is not enough to discuss about the importance of Open Government or the contribution of FOI act without finding a way to lower barriers and allow submission of applications quickly and easily. When a FOI applicant has to deal with bureaucratic blockages, it will be difficult to encourage others to demand the public sector to be more transparent.

That was the goal of the FOI Governmental Unit in constructing the FOI Central Website and it's seems that the website fulfilled its mission.

VIDEO SUBMISSION or ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS (optional)

OGP does not offer a venue for applicants to meet our judges during the application process. In order to provide the opportunity for making a personal connection, you are encouraged to upload a short video to complement your application. You may also depict an individual participant in your initiative and describe his or her experience. We do not need to know actual names or personal details. Take this opportunity to tell a story, to connect with our panel of experts, so that they might better understand your attention to specific needs.

Video submissions should follow these guidelines:

Maximum length of 3-4 minutes.

Please focus on personal presentations; it's not necessary to develop a sophisticated or polished video.

Here are some logistical and technical suggestions:

Video cameras, digital cameras, and phones are easy ways to record a video. Laptop and desktop computers can typically record video through Skype or other software. If possible, set to a low resolution to reduce file size. This will enable an easier video uploading process. If you are having difficulty uploading the video file, try logging out of the application and logging back in using another Internet browser.

Here are general suggestions for delivering a high-quality video pitch:

Introduce yourself and your initiative. Focus on describing your intended benefits and/or services and how they have been effective. What is unique about your initiative, partners, or technical approach? Keep your description and language simple.

* NOTE

If the burden of developing a video presentation is either prohibitive or might not reflect the best characterization of your initiative, then you are not required to submit one, and the judges are instructed not to discount your application because it may not include a video. You may upload additional documents instead, such as proof of implementation and results if you wish. This could take the form of evaluation or audit reports, citizen surveys, media reports etc. that would provide additional validation for judges. We hope that this option offers a new and inventive way in which you can best express the results of your work.

You are only allowed to upload one file with a maximum of 3 pages. This file must be in English or in your native language. If you have multiple documents, please zip them into a single file first. The file types that are allowed to be uploaded have an extension of .ZIP, .PDF, .DOC, .DOCX, .XLS or .XLSX.

Full Submission Of non-Latin Based Native Language

If your language is Latin based, DO NOT use this upload field. Please use the application above.

You are only allowed to upload one file with an extension of .PDF