

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.

Mes-aides.gouv.fr, powered by OpenFisca

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]

On October 30th 2014, while launching a large program to simply public services, French President, François Hollande, presented the beta version of Mes-aides (<https://mes-aides.gouv.fr/>), a digital public service powered by the open source simulator OpenFisca, to allow citizens to know the social benefits that they are eligible to.

This project, produced by the General Secretariat for Modernization of Public Action (SGMAP) and supported by a community of public officials and citizens, aims to provide a better public service to citizens.

The Etalab team selected this initiative after reaching out to the civil society in the National Action Plan's consultation process.

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.

Claire-Marie Foulquier-Gazagnes, Policy Officer, +33647620336, claire-marie.foulquier-gazagnes@modernisation.gouv.fr

Pierre Pezziardi, Innovation Fellow for Mes-aides.gouv.fr, Pierre.pezziardi@data.gouv.fr

Emmanuel Raviart, CTO of Etalab in charge of OpenFisca, Emmanuel.raviart@data.gouv.fr

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.

Mahdi Ben Jelloul, Senior Researcher at the Institut des Politiques Publiques, mahdi.benjelloul@ipp.eu

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.

In May 2011, OpenFisca was developed by France Stratégie, a think tank under the authority of the Prime Minister, with the support of the Public Economic Institute (IDEP) that offers assessment to the French and European public policies by promoting economic research. Over time, OpenFisca gained traction and new contributors.

In 2013, Etalab – the French Prime Minister's taskforce for Open Data and Open Government – joined the project and committed two full developers in order to enhance it.

Then, Etalab joined forces with the Public Policy Institute's (IPP) with the aim of enrich the micro-simulator by coding new legislation, simulating reforms, and organizing hackathons in order to raise awareness of its impact (i.e. Paris municipality) and extend the community of developers.

After that, the SGMAP came onboard to develop Mes-aides.gouv.fr front office, simulate tests, and manage the relationship with administrations (i.e. Family Allowance Fund – CNAF, Health insurance – CNAM, Public Service, Employment center – Pôle Emploi...). The SGMAP committed two additional developers to the project.

All the teams involved in this project seek to have more and more allies that defend open source, believe in the positive impact of an agile methodology, and are committed to deliver qualitative public services.

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?

After sixty years of laws, reforms and exceptions, French socio-fiscal system became difficult to apprehend. Its complexity induced administrations to work in silos. With 46 social contributions, 7 wages taxes, 2 income taxes, 3 income tax bases and more than 400 necessary parameters to move from super gross income to net income after tax, it became very intricate for citizens to know exactly the whole welfare benefits that they are entitled of.

It created a paradox: the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups, which the social benefits primarily targets, were less informed and unable to claim the benefits they were in need of. For instance, in 2012, 36% of potential beneficiaries did not take up the 'RSA', a social benefit insuring a minimum income for unemployed workers.

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.

OpenFisca was originally developed as a desktop application with a Python API for researchers' use. Then, the decision was made to build a micro simulator that can offer an intelligible and ergonomic interface for any citizen who would like to visualize disposable income or to understand its different sources.

The objective of Mes-aides.gouv.fr is twofold.

On one side, we aim to reduce the non-take-up rate of social benefits because of the lack of information that citizens have towards their fiscal and social system. As we assessed the impact and how French society was being empowered, we decided to go forward and simplify the approach by creating Mes-aides. Powered by the back office's OpenFisca, this citizen-facing web portal was developed with an agile methodology in 6 months. Since the user experience of Mes-aides.gouv.fr was the primary focus, open meetings with potential users were organized every two weeks. The source code is available on GitHub (for the user interface - <https://github.com/sgmap/mes-aides-ui> and API - <https://github.com/sgmap/mes-aides-api>) under an AGPL license.

On the other side, we target public authorities to persuade them about the importance of being transparent about their methodology calculation. We try to convince them to open up their codes in order to stimulate the reuses.

Designing Mes-aides to improve access for vulnerable groups was at the heart of the project. A report submitted by the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs to the Prime Minister last January, acclaimed Mes-aides.gouv.fr as a tool enabling social inclusion and fighting poverty.

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.

The project Mes-aides.gouv.fr, powered by OpenFisca, showcases a new way of conceiving public service by a co-construction between citizens and public authorities. As an Open Government Partnership's (OGP) commitment of the French National Action Plan, it is a project that reinforces transparency, citizen empowerment, public effectiveness, and public action modernization.

On one hand, Mes-aides.gouv.fr allows citizens to be part of its conception, design, and delivery. At its own citizens, as producers and users, they have better access to information on the public services to which they are entitled. By filling in some personal items, the user specifies its personal/ familiar situation leading the simulator to review these criteria before issuing its verdict. If eligible to the main benefits as the Active Solidarity Income (RSA), the Universal Medical Coverage (CMU), the Help Complementary Health (ACS), the Family allowance (APL, ASF), the Scholarships Aids or the Housing Benefits, the simulator redirects users to the necessary formalities to prescribe. Indeed, every citizen can view the rules and parameters of the law, the distribution of what he perceives and the distribution of its contribution to the system.

On the other hand, this tool enables Public Authorities to cooperate with each other. Social experts at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs have helped improving the service and the accuracy of its results. Other Public Authorities have been making tests -313 functional tests in total- that allowed them to realize how difficult it is for a citizen to understand the Socio fiscal system and how, with their own closed simulator, they contribute to its complexity. By letting them to make tests in our tool, there's a win-win situation. Their tests improve the simulator and, increasingly, we approach our objective: to provide a simulator that takes into account all the social benefits in a singlepoint access.

We will continue to work with different administrations to assist them in opening their models, calculation systems and simulators.

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.

One of the current objectives of the SGMAP is to ensure that OpenFisca micro-simulator is well adapted to code reforms by testing them and being able to visualize their impacts in the French socio-fiscal system. We aim to enrich the micro-simulator to expand it to other areas of the legislation and propose useful declinations of simulators for citizens, economic and public actors (i.e. model simulation of energy costs, local taxation, pensions...). Concerning Mes-aides, some complex situations are not yet included in the tool, which is why we explain that the simulation results may differ according to which entity performs the simulation. One of our challenges is to harmonize all the different situations to take into consideration for more accurate results (i.e. conditions of regularity and length applicable to foreigners).

Our next steps are to launch a field experimentation to see how the simulator is used by professionals, social workers and local public organization workers, to embed new public aids in the simulator, and to connect users directly with the online services where they can apply for the aid that they eligible to.

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.

France_OGA2015_ValidationOfClaims.zip

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.

By emphasizing the open source use and launching beta platforms, we created a project with a front-office implemented by an agile State startup and a back office that translates the law into code. Under the idea that French social tax system belongs to all, Mes-aides.gouv.fr is conceived as a tool that advocates for a change in governmental philosophy.

This innovation demonstrates the priority to allow citizens and administrations to simulate social benefits rather than waiting several months –or even years– before proposing an advanced simulator. We noticed that by leaving the possibility to point errors and make tests, users improve the simulator. If a citizen believes one of the simulations is not consistent with its social rights, a button is there to let us know.

After 6 months in a beta version, we carry out 15.000 simulations per month and look forward for more. We realize how powerful this strategy is! Paying great attention to citizens' feedback truly improves Public Services. We are committed to develop new initiatives through Open Government's principles in recognition of the fact that today's society demands more empowerment, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. We will keep promoting open source, reinforcing alliances between civil society and government, and building an eco-system.

Let's change French citizens' life by making public service seamless!

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.

France_OGA2015_Press.zip

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

* NOTE

If the burden of developing a video presentation is either prohibitive or might not be 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.

France_OGA2015_Press.zip