

Application

Submission

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-Latinate 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.

Educational Development Councils

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]

This **Educational Development Councils** initiative was selected through a **rigorous** review process and **competition** within the Government of Jordan, in coordination with **civil society** and other relevant parties. The process included an **open invitation** to submit applications from government agencies and civil society, based on which 21 initiatives were reviewed by a multi-sectoral committee composed of government entities and **civil society representation**. The committee shortlisted three applications that were put for **public vote** on a government website (www.mop.gov.jo). The final nomination was based on weighted scores from the committee (60%) and the public voting (40%). This process is fully documented.

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.

Overseeing application requirements:

Mr. Marwan Al-Refai
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Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Responsible for initiative implementation:

Mr. Hafs Mallouh
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Ministry of Education

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.

NOT APPLICABLE

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.

Even though this initiative does not involve civil society organizations, in the traditional sense, it is built on ensuring the **involvement of local communities** in all of its phases, which is rather challenging. The Educational Development Councils initiative is designed to encompass a **grassroots participatory approach** in the creation and implementation of development plans at the schools and Field Directorates' levels of the Ministry of Education.

The Councils bring together schools principals, Ministry supervisors, Field Directorate directors, parents, students and local community members to ensure educational services are provided in response to **locally defined needs**, as well as institute **public accountability** for the quality of education provided by the Ministry of Education.

Working together with the school development team, the parents and members of the local communities participate in the process of assessing the school against quality indicators for effective schooling and in setting the annual improvement plans. At the Field Directorate level, Educational Council representatives discuss the local school issues with the Field Directorate for regional planning purposes. Simultaneously, they provide **community oversight** on the implementation of the **gender-sensitive, results-based** improvement plans, in addition to facilitating the provision of local community support, from **conflict resolution** to resource mobilization.

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 Ministry of Education is the largest public civil service employer in Jordan, with more than 85,000 teachers distributed over 3,650 public schools. The educational system is managed through a **centralized approach**, where budget allocations were decided based on Ministry's estimation of local needs. Due to lacking school-based data, allocations often did not match the actual needs of the schools. This, combined with severe budgetary constraints, meant that schools and Field Directorates had little ability to innovate to improve the quality of schooling.

As Jordan strives to build a **knowledge-based economy**, decision makers realized the need to improve the outcomes at the basic education system. Following a comprehensive analysis, led by the World Bank, the necessity of adopting a **bottom-up approach** for planning, with the involvement of the **local communities**, was identified. Under the direction of the Ministry, key donors and agencies collaborated to develop a **common strategy** as well as the **legal framework** and mandate for **community engagement** in the educational process. A comprehensive capacity development program that trains both school leaders and the local community on how to work together for school improvement was also designed and implemented by the Ministry with the support of the Canadian government.

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 overall goal of the Educational Councils is to **enhance grassroots participation** in improving the quality of education provided. Over the past several years, the Ministry of Education has been increasing **local community engagement** in school related decisions, and has been supporting various forms of **partnership** between schools and their local communities. The Ministry is also working on improving **decentralization** and **public accountability** of the school to improve the **quality** of education. The Ministry decided to adopt this **participatory approach** in line with Jordan's ongoing political and economic reforms, and government's conviction that public engagement and accountability are essential to ensuring **effective service delivery**.

Following a grassroots participatory approach of school performance self-assessment, the Education Councils would work with the Ministry officials on approving, implementing and gathering support for the school improvement plans. Educational Councils assist in resolving issues pertaining to educational access, especially in **remote marginalized areas**, and enhance **public ownership** and safekeeping of school properties. In addition to implementing tutoring programs and extracurricular activities, they mobilize human and financial resources in support of the school improvement plan.

The impact of this local community engagement in the educational process will foremost benefit the **students** enrolled in the public schooling system, as it ultimately seeks to improve educational outcomes in the basic education system. The initiative is working to ensure a better education for Jordan's youth, and equip them with the needed knowledge and skills to excel in their future and help build a better economy for the country.

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 Councils operate at two levels:

1) **School level (Educational Councils)**, which consist of school principals, Ministry supervisors, parents and local community representatives, and are chaired by an elected member of the latter group. Each Council oversees a cluster of 10–15 schools in a geographic proximity.

2) **Field Directorate level (Educational Development Councils)**, the chairpersons of the Educational Councils form the Educational Development Councils, which also include the Field Director, and relevant supervisory staff. The chairpersons of the School Councils elect one of them to chair the Council.

The active involvement of **citizens**, representing the local communities, in these councils directly contributes to all of OGA's 2015 desired results:

- Members of the Councils have access to all of the information available to Ministry of Education officials for the purposes of planning and resource allocation. They also have access to data collected and reports pertaining to previous performance of the relevant schools and directorates, which are essential for current planning to succeed. Moreover, the initiative includes a **public outreach** component that will ensure the **access to information** is achieved for the wider community.
- Under this initiative, local citizens and government officials sit to one table to discuss all matters of relevance to the service delivery at the schools and directorates levels. Thus **direct channels of communications** and **feedback** exist that ensure prompt delivery of advice in both directions.
- One of the main tasks of these Councils is to assist in developing and implementing the improvement plans with the schools and Field Directorates in their area. Moreover, as these Councils are **chaired by private citizens**, they are at the highest level of grassroots active participation.
- The workings of the Councils are designed to **institute citizens' review and oversight of the services delivered by the Ministry of Education**. As the Education Council is composed primarily of representatives from local communities, who are chairing the School Councils, these representatives have **access to performance information**, thus are able to **monitor and oversee this implementation**.

Examples of success stories in remote disadvantaged areas resulting from the implementation of this initiative:

- Muwaqar Council (**located in a poverty pocket**): provided USD \$100,000 for schools **maintenance** in the area.
- Southern Ghor Council (**locates in the poorest area in Jordan**): increased high school passing rates by 17% through **tutoring programs**.
- Jizah Council: secured over USD \$350,000 to support the **improvement plans** for the schools in the area.
- Bani Kinarh and Bnaiat Councils: secured support for the **construction** of schools in their areas, including gymnasiums and laboratories.
- Training** of more than 6,000 **school leaders** and **community members** on how to work positively together to improve the quality of education in Jordanian schools.
- Collaboratively** developed, and passed, national legislation for Educational Councils.

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.

Since launched in 2009, the initiative has expanded to cover 3235 schools with more than 350 Education Councils and 35 Education Development Councils. The Ministry plans to **extend the initiative** to cover all 3650 public schools by the end of 2016. This will be possible through the support of the **Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERIKE II) project**, a multi-donor project lead by the **World Bank**. Strongly noting that the implementation of the initiative will not cease with the conclusion of the ERIKE II project, as the Ministry has been working over the past years to **institutionalize the Educational Development Councils within its official structure**. Most evidently by issuing **Regulations** to regulate the work of the Educational Development Councils under the provisions of the **Education Law**, as well as formally requesting the Ministry of Finance to **appropriate allocations on annual basis** for the schools to implement their improvement plans, and establishing a special division to follow on the implementation as part of the Ministry's structure.

Moreover, the Ministry, in cooperation with relevant government entities and non-state actors conducts periodic reviews of the councils and their operations to improve their effectiveness and put in place mechanisms to help achieve their objectives.

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.

OGP 2015 Awards - JO - Validation Content.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.

Jordan has always adopted a **centralized approach** for its governance. Decisions impacting people's daily lives, through the allocations of resources and distribution of wealth, have for decades been made by the central government agencies in the capital, and more than often with disregard to feedback received from the peripheries. As the government acknowledges the development gap created by centralized governance, and works towards delegating authorities to its **decentralized divisions**, many people arise in opposition. Some government officials and private citizens alike are skeptical of the decentralization process, and are concerned of its outcomes, arguing lack of capacity and understanding at the grassroots level for proper government planning.

The Educational Development Councils initiative is a living example to respond to these critiques. It **showcases** the ability of local communities not only to work collaboratively with the schools for further improving the delivery of government services in one of the most critical sectors, but also presents a case where these communities would contribute to mobilize human and financial resources to cover gaps the government is unable to fill. It is a proof that if countries truly intend to rise as nations, governments and private citizens need to work hand in hand to ensure the optimum delivery of services, coupled with the **institution of transparency and accountability**.

The recognition of the Educational Councils by the OGA will set the path for further inclusion of the local community in the decision making process, and in holding the government accountable at all levels.

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. This will enable an easier video uploading process, 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-Latinate Based Native Language

If your language is Latinate 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