

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.

Open Education Slovakia

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]

We have received positive feedback about the uniqueness and innovation of this initiative from both civil society in Slovakia and several countries around the world, so the nomination was a clear choice. This is evidenced by our joint application with a civil society organization (Creative Commons Slovakia) and also the international perspectives shared in our video. Our goal in applying is to elevate the visibility of our work internationally, in the hopes of working with more countries to advance open education.

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.

Jan Gondol, PhD., gondol@gondol.sk, +421 903 580 000 -- Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Development of the Civil Society, Ministry of Interior, Pribinova 2, 81272 Bratislava

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.

Zuzana Adamová, PhD., Country Lead, Creative Commons Slovakia, Trnava University
 zuzana.adamova@gmail.com

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.

This initiative has been carried out in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Slovakia. Embedding open education in day-to-day lives of teachers and students relies on ongoing support by the Ministry of Education in form of policy and activities, such as awareness-raising (currently carried out through conferences, direct contacts with the affected stakeholders, etc.). Moreover, an open education coalition has started to form as of mid-2015. This activity is driven by civil society (Creative Commons Slovakia) in close cooperation with government stakeholders.

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?

Education is one of the most critical services that our government provides to our citizens. Our Constitution guarantees a free primary and secondary education for everyone, in addition to free post-secondary education according to the person's and society's abilities. In education, research and development, a great amount of content is created with the support of government funding: educational materials, studies, publications, etc. Yet, these resources are not always available to students, teachers, scientists and the wider public who could benefit from them. Currently the default for publishing and sharing educational and research materials is "closed" -- in terms of copyright, technical formats, and public sharing -- and when these materials are financed through public funds, the default should be "open" and they should be available for public re-use. The way we learn and do research keeps changing in the 21st century when we have new digital technology. This technology is all around us, and we need to adjust the way we access and share information accordingly. It is in the public's best interest to unlock scientific and educational content like so many countries already do with data.

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 government invests in research and education as a public service, to support innovation, build capacity, fuel the economy, and create a more educated society. The proliferation of ICT creates an opportunity to more efficiently develop, share and reuse the knowledge generated through these investments. The goal of this initiative is to jumpstart the process of changing the default from "closed" to "open" so that educational content is widely accessible and fully re-usable. This would enable students to have free, digital access to educational materials, teachers to tailor and adapt content to fit their curriculum, researchers to build upon the latest advances in their field, and businesses to build new products of value.

The initiative encompasses a set of steps toward openness in education and research results funded by the public. For education, specific goals include exploring how to open up existing resources controlled by the government, a pilot program for opening up new resources procured by the government, and efforts to raise awareness at educational institutions. For publicly funded research, specific goals include developing a policy for making research publications open access, identifying repositories through which these resources could be shared, and consulting with civil society on barriers within the academic and research communities. Finally, the initiative aims to promote international collaboration around open education and open access to research between Slovakia and other countries.

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 most significant outcomes of the Open Education Slovakia initiative have been in the international arena. Slovakia gained distinction among the open education community by being among the first two countries (along with the United States) to explicitly recognize the significance of open education in and OGP plan, and the first to incorporate both open educational resources and open access to scholarly publications. In fact, Slovakia was in the process of developing its commitments simultaneously with the U.S. during the fall of 2014, and information about Slovakia's plans was discussed during the U.S. consultation process according to civil society organizations involved.

The initiative has also had an impact in the central European region, where it attracted the interest of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) which funds open education activities. Over the past year, OSF has supported meetings between civil society members, educators and policymakers in several countries including Slovakia and helping to form forming national open education coalitions. Slovakia's Open Education initiative has also been showcased at multiple events in Europe and beyond, including the Open Education Global conference in Banff, Canada, ICT week in Tallinn, Estonia, and the OER15 Conference in Cardiff, Wales.

The commitments in our OGP National Action Plan are specifically designed to identify pathways for public access coupled with the legal and technical permissions to freely and fully use the material. We are currently in the process of implementing commitments to analyze existing educational materials owned by the Ministry of Education and relevant repositories. Currently, our eAktovka portal houses a set of digital resources, but they are typically solely in PDF format, which enables reading but not innovative adaptation or reuse. Once these materials are identified, this will lay groundwork for expanding access, and also for potentially in the future securing more permissive licenses that allow reuse.

In the research arena, the establishment of our Open Access working group with partners from both the government and civil society has been an important outcome. High-level officials have been present in meetings of this group, and the policy discussions have been taking place in a collaborative setting. Furthermore, with momentum for Open Access building in the European Union, United States, and large funding agencies around the world, Slovakia's work to raise awareness of Open Access and promote stakeholder conversations is key to advancing this concept in a positive, collaborative way.

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.

Our plans to sustain Open Education Slovakia lie in the collaboration between the government and civil society. We have established a new working group on Open Access, which includes a presence from the Ministry of Education, staff responsible for OGP implementation, and key stakeholders from the community including universities, libraries, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and more. This will help sustain continued dialogue among the groups affected by the initiative, while also working to build cultural acceptance of future policy reforms. Furthermore, staff responsible for OGP implementation have built relationships with an international network of experts in open education policy, who have offered outside expertise and support. Also, there is a movement within civil society to organize an Open Education Coalition within Slovakia, and a kick-off meeting was recently organized by Creative Commons Slovakia.

Our existing initiative is designed to lay the groundwork for more ambitious steps that are being discussed. One area with the potential to scale is our pilot program, which we have the opportunity to expand based on lessons learned. Furthermore, the current commitments are focused on the Ministry of Education, but government-controlled educational materials that could be potentially opened up exist at other ministries as well.

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.

Slovakia Validation.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.

Taken in the context of Slovakia's broader open agenda, this initiative illustrates a new, more comprehensive way of thinking about openness. If the government is funding the development of content that can be freely shared, the public should have the right to use, build upon, and create new things with it. This began with Slovakia's strong Open Data commitments in our last OGP National Action Plan, which helped expand understanding of what openness is and what it means for government and the public good. We believe that once public employees become acquainted with the benefits to openness in what they do, and when the public understands the value of the materials we share, better quality of government can follow. With the Open Education Slovakia initiative, we have shown the world that open content is more than just data, it includes educational and research resources as well. Our initiative represents not only the most comprehensive set of commitments on open education in OGP National Action Plans, but also the only initiative that directly addresses both educational materials and research publications. This trend could be expanded upon in the future, into areas such as open source software developed from public funds. Our work has already been internationally recognized for its innovative approach, and our hope in applying for this award is to highlight this pathway for more countries who could leverage open education to provide better public services.

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