

Submission

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-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.

Neighbourhood Planning.

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 Cabinet Office Transparency Team initiated an open call for nominations, supported by a communications campaign that targeted civil society, central government departments and local government. This included blogposts on data.gov.uk, the Local Digital Campaign and Open Government Forum and a range of other social media, such as twitter. The Cabinet Office received 19 nominations in total and scored each initiative against the criteria. Meetings were held with leads from each of the shortlisted initiatives and a briefing was developed for the OGP Civil Society Network strategy meeting. The Minister for the Cabinet Office selected the final nomination.

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.

Government point of contact:
 Oliver Buckley
 Deputy Director, Government Transparency & Open Data
 Government Innovation Group
 Phone: 0044 (0)207 271 6209
 Email: oliver.buckley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk
 Address: 1, Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Name and professional title of the government official responsible for implementing the initiative:
 Aidan Wilkie
 Deputy Director, Decentralisation and Neighbourhoods
 Department for Communities and Local Government
 0044 (0)303 444 1968
 aidan.wilkie@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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.

Tony Armstrong
Chief Executive, Locality

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.

The Neighbourhood Planning division at DCLG are working with several other organisations on the delivery of this innovative programme. The three main organisations are described below:

Locality

Locality is a national network of enterprising community-led organisations, working to help neighbourhoods thrive. It helps people work together for the benefit of their communities.

Locality are delivering the Communities Support Programme for Neighbourhood Planning (NP) and the Community Right to Build (CRtB), worth £22m from 2015-2018. Locality provides advice, skills and capacity-building to communities on NP and CRtB. They deliver the grant and direct support packages to communities, as well as maintaining a web portal with case studies and downloadable resources that help groups create robust plans.

AECOM

AECOM is one of the country's leading multi-disciplinary planning and environmental consultancies. It delivers a wide range of planning and environmental services to help hundreds of communities across England develop their neighbourhood plans and shape development and growth in their local area. AECOM is responsible for helping groups to identify their needs, as well as the opportunities for growth and regeneration in their communities.

Royal Town Planning Institute

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTP) is the UK's leading planning body for spatial, sustainable and inclusive planning and is the largest planning institute in Europe with over 23,000 members. They are engaged to provide support to groups to help them prepare and progress their neighbourhood plans by creating free-to-use web-based resources, guidance and information notes.

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 UK is facing a housing shortage and the government has committed to significantly boost housing supply. To do this effectively, local communities need to be on side: the British Social Attitudes Survey 2013 found that 63% of citizens would be more supportive of house building if local people were given greater control and say over what gets built.

Planning is fundamental to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of a place but it is a complex process. The then Minister for Planning (and now Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government), Greg Clark said:

"Planning has tended to exclude, rather than to include, people and communities...introducing neighbourhood planning addresses this. People have been put off from getting involved because planning policy itself has become so elaborate and forbidding – the preserve of specialists, rather than people in communities".

Neighbourhood Planning is the tool that gives communities this control. They can shape the development and growth of their local area by setting local planning policies. They can invest in community services of their choice by utilising a levy raised from developers. This enables them to decide what type of development is needed and what infrastructure should be provided.

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.

Neighbourhood planning improves public service delivery by making the planning of our cities, towns and villages a creative, collaborative exercise, and no longer the sole preserve of specialists. The target population is all communities across the country at neighbourhood level, below the level of local authorities, where effects of new development are felt on a daily basis.

Neighbourhood planning also benefits the wider area as communities must develop plans that support strategic development needs for housing and economic development. Many neighbourhood plans include policies to address the need for affordable housing, and prioritise community services for additional investment.

It was important to use an open government approach as the planning system had come to exclude, rather than to include, people and communities, and needed to become more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens.

Giving local communities the right to develop neighbourhood plans which become part of the area's statutory planning policies is highly innovative. Before neighbourhood planning, power in planning matters was restricted to national government and local authorities covering much larger areas. The final part of the process before the neighbourhood plan is formally adopted is a public referendum at which the local electorate makes the final decision on whether or not a neighbourhood plan should come into force. This is a significant democratic innovation. It means that power ultimately rests with local people themselves as they each have a vote in a ballot that will shape the development of their neighbourhood for years to come.

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.

Citizens have better access to information as the Localism Act placed local planning authorities under a new legal duty to give advice and assistance to communities preparing neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood development orders. New government guidance makes clear that these authorities should be proactive in providing information to communities about neighbourhood planning. Additionally, local planning authorities are to fulfill their duties and take decisions as soon as possible, and within statutory time periods where these apply; to set out a clear and transparent decision making timetable and share this with the community; and constructively engage with the community throughout the process.

There are a number of statutory consultation and publicity stages which give the whole community an opportunity to make their views heard. Many neighbourhood plans have been developed through additional, innovative engagement with the local community, such as dance nights for young people where the price of entry was completing a questionnaire about the future of their neighbourhood. In Leeds, Oxford, London and elsewhere, students from local universities have volunteered to help communities prepare their neighbourhood plans, bringing fresh energy, ideas and knowledge to the process. An independent examination adds weight to the credibility of the neighbourhood plan and checks whether it complies with the wider policy.

Since the regulations came into force in April 2012, over 1500 communities across England have formally started neighbourhood planning. 64% of local planning authorities in England now contain designated neighbourhood plan areas. Around 270 communities have published full draft neighbourhood plans. Over 70 neighbourhood planning referendums have been held and this number is rising continuously as communities move through the process. All of the referendums held so far have been successful: over 198,430 people have cast their vote; average turnout is 35% and the average 'yes' vote is 88%.

The planning system in England is plan-led. Once neighbourhood plans have been passed at referendum and brought into force, they form part of the statutory development plan. The law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with that development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).

Neighbourhood planning is therefore a new departure in how planning policy and decisions are made as it extends the power to make policy beyond local and national government to citizens at neighbourhood level.

Moreover, communities with a neighbourhood plan in place receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy raised from developers which they can spend on their priorities. For example, in the Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan, they set out their most urgent priorities which would be in receipt of CIL funding as: pedestrian improvements in West Hampstead Growth Area and improvements to train stations in the area.

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.

Around 11% of the population of England lives in one of the 1500 neighbourhood plan areas.

A new 3 year £22.5million support contract was recently launched and delivered by Locality which will provide grant funding and direct support to hundreds of new neighbourhood planning groups. The groups will receive greater support – an additional £6000 grant on top of the £8000 that every group can apply for, plus additional expert advice.

A mobilisation strategy has also been developed which focuses on tackling the barriers to participation which are around lack of awareness of neighbourhood planning, and the additional support required in deprived areas.

Measures to enable us to scale up participation include:

- Promotional campaign tailoring messages to different area types, including a local press campaign.
- Using trusted voice stakeholders to disseminate messages through their networks.
- Using current neighbourhood planners to advocate to their neighbouring areas.
- Developing an intensive, hands-on support and capacity building programme in deprived areas working on Community Organising principles.
- Supporting existing neighbourhood planners by building a sense of community and common purpose, and growing a sustainable peer-to-peer support network.

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.

Letters of support.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, distinguish 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.

Neighbourhood planning has been called a "quiet revolution". For the first time, local people have direct power to make the policies that must be used in determining how their neighbourhood will grow. Through the Community Infrastructure Levy, they directly impact investment in community services. It can be used by any community anywhere in England, urban or rural.

It can stimulate stronger neighbourhood identity, togetherness, and build social capital. This was the case in St James in Exeter where the community found a common voice for the first time and, as a direct result of the plan, has set up a new community benefit society, using a community share issue to take over and run important assets and green spaces.

Neighbourhood planning can also transform attitudes. In Woodcote, a small Oxfordshire village, residents had opposed any new housing development for years. Yet the neighbourhood plan passed overwhelmingly at referendum on a 60% turnout and saw the community back the building of scores of more affordable new homes.

In Cringleford near Norwich, where approximately 1200 new homes will be built, the community is using the high level of Community Infrastructure Levy it will receive as a result of its neighbourhood plan to extend the community centre, create new playing fields and changing rooms, and develop allotments and a community orchard.

All of these examples illustrate the power of neighbourhood planning not just to shape what gets built where but also to stimulate new levels of community spirit and activism.

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-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