

Submission

Applicant Name: Bulgaria Team
Normalized Scores 75.6

JUDGING CRITERION # 1: CREDIBILITY OF PARTNERSHIPS (0-5)

Did the applicant provide sufficient evidence of partnering with other non-government organizations in either nominating, validating and/or jointly implementing the initiative?

0 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4 - 5
<i>Shows no consultation in nominating an initiative; may have been jointly implemented but shows very weak validation of claims</i>	<i>Some effort in consulting with other partners in nominating an initiative; initiative was not jointly implemented but provided minimal validation of claims</i>	<i>Provided sufficient evidence of consulting with other partners to nominate an initiative, was jointly implemented and presented somewhat convincing validation of claims.</i>	<i>Demonstrated compelling mechanisms for consulting others in nominating an initiative; was not jointly implemented but shows convincing validation of claims</i>	<i>Shows strong evidence of consulting others in nominating an initiative; jointly implemented with a partner agency and strong validation of claims</i>

2.4 / 5

Judge Name: Siapha Kamara
Score: 2.4
Comment: There is no convicting evidence of the claim; document submitted provided very little information about interactions and engagement of the partners and actual benefits to each stakeholder

5 / 5

Judge Name: Bernadette Leon
Score: 5.0
Comment: This initiative was chosen through an online nomination process in which many CSOs and government agencies participated - hence strong consultation in the nomination process. The claims are supported by 2 letters from an NGO called NGO Links and from a Policy think tank

5 / 5

Judge Name: Gertrude Muguzi
Score: 5.0
Comment: This was a joint voluntary initiative initiated by civil society and clearly supported by government. The validation letters contained clear endorsements of the initiative and an open process of 25 organisations with near unanimous agreement is evidence of widespread endorsement.

4.8 / 5

Judge Name: Bibhu Prasad Sahu
Score: 4.8
Comment: Clear demonstration of CSO participation. But independent review/monitoring by CSOs has not mentioned.

4.1 / 5

Judge Name: Ritva Reinikka
Score: 4.1
Comment: This initiative has been implemented in the city of Stara Zagora in Bulgaria since late-2013. Hence, it is still quite new. This city is a nationally important economic center. Despite being a new initiative, the online consultation process of 25 leading CSOs and government units selected it almost unanimously to represent Bulgaria (out of 8 nominations). It is joint application with a CSO, although it is not clear which CSO it is. Validation letters -- two were included -- come across as convincing. Implemented by ombudsman, various municipal agencies and ZaraLab which must be a CSO -- although the latter is not clear from the application.

JUDGING CRITERION # 2: STRENGTH AND INNOVATION IN OPEN GOVERNMENT APPROACHES (0-5)

Does the initiative make a compelling case of using open government approaches [e.g. increasing access to information, civic participation, public accountability and/or technology for transparency] to improve public service delivery?

0 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4 - 5
<i>Exhibits a centralized, top-down approach to improving public services rather than public-facing approach; Target population largely have a passive role</i>	<i>Somewhat articulates the importance of using open government approaches but these are sporadic, not well-thought out; Needs of the target population is unclear</i>	<i>Makes a convincing case of the need to use open government approaches and addresses a need of the target population for improved public services</i>	<i>Establishes strong rationale for using open government approaches which are somewhat innovative; targets a large number of the population and clearly identifies a need</i>	<i>Employs innovative open government approaches given the country context; targets an ambitious number of the population and is responding to a real need or demand</i>

2.7 / 5

Judge Name: Siapha Kamara
Score: 2.7
Comment: Uses open government approaches but does not provide sufficient evidence of benefits to the different stakeholders

2.8 / 5

Judge Name: Bernadette Leon
Score: 2.8
Comment: The open source civic engagement platform is innovative and provides a more modern approach for citizen-government interactions, allowing for public tracking of complaints and queries. It potentially targets a large number of the population, although the user numbers provides in this submission is quite small (2 postings per day).

3.8 / 5

Judge Name: Gertrude Muguzi
Score: 3.8
Comment: While the initiative targets a municipality, which is a small proportion of the national population, it targets the entire municipality, which is quite ambitious to manage in terms of responding to the number and diversity of interactions from the population. In fact the application indicates that there are already signs of strain in this area. It will be interesting to monitor how the management of this open interaction plays out over time.

4.3 / 5

Judge Name: Bibhu Prasad Sahu
Score: 4.3
Comment: Only a web-based platform e-Municipality. But can use mobile technology and Apps to reach out more citizens.

4 / 5

Judge Name: Ritva Reinikka
Score: 4.0
Comment: The initiative, estarazagora.info, makes use of open government approaches. Technology is harnessed to create a platform for two-way engagement between citizens/customers and service providers in the city, and to enhance transparency and public accountability. In other words, there is better access to information for city dwellers and citizen feedback for the municipal agencies. The local ombudsman has a key role in directing the incoming information.

JUDGING CRITERION # 3: EVIDENCE OF RESULTS (0-5)

Is there any evidence of the initiative achieving the four initiative outcomes listed in the application and/or concrete improvements in public services or access to services?

0 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4 - 5
<i>Shows little evidence of achieving any of the outcomes or of an improvement in public services; target population has barely been reached</i>	<i>Shows some signs of achieving outcomes but the evidence is unconvincing; change in public service is incremental and has reached some of the target population</i>	<i>Demonstrates achieving one or more of the outcomes, but it is unclear whether the quality of the public service or access to the service has improved</i>	<i>Uses clear indicators to prove that one or more of the outcomes were achieved; initiative has widened access or improved the quality of a public service for more than half of the target population</i>	<i>Achieved two or more of the outcomes to ultimately expand access or improve service quality for a majority of the target population; set new standards for the relationship between government and citizens</i>

4.1 / 5

Judge Name: Siapha Kamara
Score: 4.1
Comment: The initiative is driven by citizens and good feedback mechanism, however it will be useful if government was made to use the platform to post data and information.

3.5 / 5

Judge Name: Bernadette Leon
Score: 3.5
Comment: This service does allow for wider citizen access to information and services and also allows citizens to monitor government more actively using the public portal. Information is provided on the ration of issues resolved against complaints received BUT how citizens or users view the quality of the services is not clear...hence data on quality of service improvements not provided.

4.4 / 5

Judge Name: Gertrude Muguzi
Score: 4.4
Comment: There is clear evidence of improvement on all 4 outcomes listed on the application and the number of issues responded to as well as response times have clearly improved. The number of hits per day also demonstrates the value that residents of the municipality place on the platform.

4.4 / 5

Judge Name: Bibhu Prasad Sahu
Score: 4.4
Comment: Access to information, citizens feedback and active participation of citizens are clear but no evidence of independent monitoring or CSO audit. No mechanism demonstrates for independent monitoring.

2.8 / 5

Judge Name: Ritva Reinikka
Score: 2.8
Comment: It appears that this new state of the art platform is perceived credible by the citizens and hence it must be achieving its objectives. Specifically, more than 2,000 hits are registered per day reflecting much interest from the citizens of Stara Zagora. The number of cases brought by citizens has doubled (now 2 per day) from the past. According to the application, response times have been considerably shortened, to just a few days. There is no information about actual service delivery improvements. Regarding the Bulgarian context, this initiative is impressive. People tend to be doubtful when it comes to working or cooperating with anything governmental, reflecting the socialist past. Civil society is still relatively new. This type of internet-based initiative is likely to have a bright future as Bulgarians are very much into technology, and internet penetration is high. This kind of civic initiative represents a good approach to mobilize public opinion and demand transparency. The case of Stara Zagora demonstrates this as in an year's time only they have accomplished a lot.

JUDGING CRITERION # 4: SUSTAINABILITY (0-5)

Does the applicant make a compelling case that the initiative will be institutionalized or scaled-up over time?

0 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4 - 5
<i>Demonstrates few plans in moving the initiative beyond the pilot stage; does not address any potential threats or challenges to the initiative</i>	<i>Shows some commitment to institutionalizing the initiative; but presents unrealistic ways of managing challenges faced by the initiative</i>	<i>Lists activities to institutionalize the initiative; but only somewhat addresses how challenges will be addressed</i>	<i>Outlines a clear path to either institutionalize or scale-up the initiative; makes a good case on how potential challenges will be addressed</i>	<i>Presents a durable model that can be institutionalized and/or scaled-up; makes a compelling case for how challenges will be managed</i>

3 / 5

Judge Name: Siapha Kamara
Score: 3.0
Comment: Yes, the stakeholders are planning to have the platform managed by an independent body supported by government and civil society . This will ensure credibility among all stakeholders

3.6 / 5

Judge Name: Bernadette Leon
Score: 3.6
Comment: The scale up approach and plan is to keep the platform as a public and independent initiative supported by the government agencies and having credibility among the citizens and this is a good approach. The risks are identified as being government responsiveness but how this will be managed is not very clearly described.

3.4 / 5

Judge Name: Gertrude Muguzi
Score: 3.4
Comment: There is a clear analysis of the opportunities and challenges as well as justifications for the potential solutions highlighted. However, how active citizen participation and joint resolution of problems will be applied to address the risk of poor responsiveness on the part of government is not clearly explained.

4.4 / 5

Judge Name: Bibhu Prasad Sahu
Score: 4.4
Comment: Unclear risk management in scaling up the initiative. Ambitious target looks unrealistic due to lack of institutional reform.

3.1 / 5

Judge Name: Ritva Reinikka
Score: 3.1
Comment: Given the Bulgarian context, the application discusses risks to sustainability in a collaborating with Zara.Lab. Loss of credibility and skepticism are real dangers. Among other things, the initiative is said to mitigate the risks by collaborating with Zara.Lab. Based on my investigation on the internet, Zara.Lab has nothing to do with hackers (I don't know why they use that term in the application). Rather, it seems to be a "lab" or a community center or a space where people can get together and share ideas, organize workshops, seminars and other such sessions, bringing together people from the community as well as business people. From their Facebook page I noted that they organize electronic courses, work with soft- and hardware, open source related activities, etc. My sense is that technology can work well in the Bulgarian context.

JUDGING CRITERION # 5: SPECIAL RECOGNITION (0-5)

Does this open government initiative demonstrate that it successfully improved service delivery access and/or outcomes for a vulnerable population (e.g. poor, elderly, minorities, women), thereby promoting more inclusive development? *Please note that this criterion will not be used in the overall score.

0 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4 - 5
<i>Select this range for No</i>	<i>Do Not Select</i>	<i>Do Not Select</i>	<i>Do Not Select</i>	<i>Select this range for Yes</i>

5 / 5

Judge Name: Siapha Kamara
Score: 5.0
Comment: This application refers to persons with disability using the facility

0 / 5

Judge Name: Bernadette Leon
Score: 0.0
Comment: One can assume that vulnerable groups may benefit, but they are not specifically targeted.

0 / 5

Judge Name: Gertrude Muguzi
Score: 0.0
Comment: While it does mention that it has improved access to services for people with disabilities, it does not provide any evidence to support this claim.

5 / 5

Judge Name: Bibhu Prasad Sahu
Score: 5.0
Comment: Recommended to select provided best cases available.

5 / 5

Judge Name: Ritva Reinikka
Score: 5.0
Comment: This initiative is meant for general public in the city.