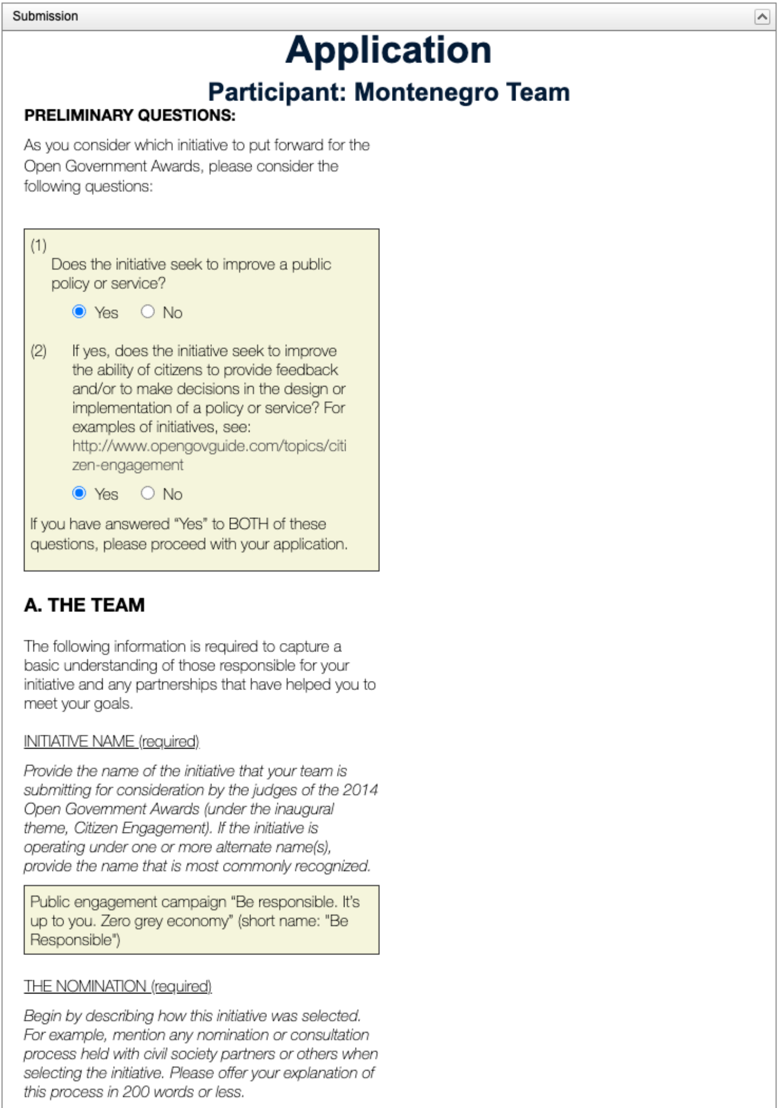
Click Here For Printable Version



Application

Participant: Montenegro Team

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

As you consider which initiative to put forward for the Open Government Awards, please consider the following questions:

(1) Does the initiative seek to improve a public policy or service?

● Yes ○ No

(2) If yes, does the initiative seek to improve the ability of citizens to provide feedback and/or to make decisions in the design or implementation of a policy or service? For examples of initiatives, see: http://www.opengovguide.com/topics/citizen-engagement

● Yes ○ No

If you have answered "Yes" to BOTH of these questions, please proceed with your application.

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 by the judges of the 2014 Open Government Awards (under the inaugural theme, Citizen Engagement). If the initiative is operating under one or more alternate name(s), provide the name that is most commonly recognized.

Public engagement campaign "Be responsible. It's up to you. Zero grey economy" (short name: "Be Responsible")

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. Please offer your explanation of this process in 200 words or less.

The initiative has been selected in consultation with all the civil society organisations involved in the drafting of Montenegro's Action Plan on Open Government Partnership and several other NGOs that are particularly active in the areas of citizen engagement, government transparency and accountability.

In the period between 20 May and 25 June 2014, the following non-governmental organisations were consulted regarding Montenegro's entry for OGP Awards: Centre for Democratic Transition (CDT), CRNVO, Institute Alternative, MANS, Environmental Movement "Ozon", NGO Green Home and Civic Alliance (including its sister organisations 35mm and Youth Initiative for Human Rights).

The Government of Montenegro and the Podgorica Faculty of Electrical Engineering jointly put forward the public engagement campaign "Be Responsible" and there were no alternative proposals from other civil society organisations.

None of the organisations consulted opposed the nomination of the "Be Responsible" project for the OGP Award, while the following organisations provided formal endorsements for this entry (attached to this application):

Centre for Democratic Transition, Institute Alternative, Environmental Movement "Ozon" and Civic Alliance, including its sister organisations 35mm and Youth Initiative for Human Rights.

GOVERNMENT POINT OF CONTACT (required)

Provide the name and title of a single point of contact for the purposes of communicating with your team. The person should be the most senior individual responsible for overseeing the application submission. Provide the phone number(s), email address(es), and physical address of your designated point of contact. You may provide alternate contact information, if it is a direct means for reaching the designated point of contact.

Mr Vuk Vujnovic
Coordinator of the "Be Responsible" public engagement campaign

Head of International Public Relations
Government of Montenegro
Public Relations Bureau
Karadjordjeva bb
81 000 Podgorica
Montenegro

Email: vuk.vujnovic@gsv.gov.me
Tel/fax: +382 20 482 895

Mob: +382 67 634 217

CIVIL SOCIETY POINT OF CONTACT (strongly recommended)

We strongly encourage applicants to submit a joint application from a government agency and a civil society partner. If submitting a joint application, please provide the name and title of a single point of contact at the partner organization. If not, please be sure to focus on the "validation of claims" in Section B (see pg. A-3).

Slobodan Djukanovic, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Electrical Engineering
University of Montenegro

Džordža Vašingtona bb.
81000 Podgorica
Montenegro

Email: slobdj@ac.me
Phone: +382 20 245 839
Fax: +382 20 245 873
Mobtel: +382 67 266 109

OTHER PARTNERSHIPS (optional)

If you are partnering with one or more other government agencies, private sector entities, media, or other organizations, please list each partner. In 250 words or less, provide a brief narrative of the partnership, including the roles that each partner assumes in the initiative.

Partners:
Podgorica Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Montenegro
United Nations Development Programme in Montenegro
British Embassy Podgorica

In spring 2013, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Montenegro launched the Open Ideas for Montenegro competition, calling on the community of developers to produce innovative technology-based solutions to pressing social problems.

The first prize went to a group of teachers and students of the Podgorica Faculty of Electrical Engineering, who developed a mobile app and website called "Be Responsible". The app enabled smartphone users to take photos of various problems in their communities, such as traffic issues or illegal waste dumps, and have them posted on the "Be Responsible" website.

The Government of Montenegro soon realised that the "Be Responsible" mobile app and website could enable citizens to report instances of grey economy and help the authorities tackle this major economic problem more effectively.

Eventually, the Government officially partnered with the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and UNDP Montenegro and, in mid-December 2013, the three parties jointly launched the public engagement campaign "Be Responsible. It's up to you. Zero grey economy."

In order to motivate citizens to report grey economy, the Government instructed inspection services to give priority consideration to citizens' reports and committed to invest half of revenues from fines resulting from citizens' reports to community projects proposed and voted on by citizens themselves.

In May 2014, the British Embassy Podgorica joined the project and provided additional funding for a more active public campaign until the end of 2014.

B. THE INITIATIVE

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is prepared to celebrate a range of successful applicants to the Open Government Awards. This year's theme is "citizen engagement." To qualify for recognition, we need to understand the various elements of success for your initiative and its sustainability over time.

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 for the particular context in which you are working?

The informal (grey) economy is one of the biggest economic problems in Montenegro. In 2013, it was estimated to account for up to 20% of the country's GDP.

Much of the problem with grey economy in Montenegro lies in the broad public tolerance of this phenomenon and people's traditional reluctance to report it to the authorities.

The most common manifestations of grey economy include:
-fake cash register receipts issued in bars or restaurants
-black market (goods sold on the streets, unregistered businesses, etc.), and
-violation of consumer rights (expired or un-declared products, etc.)

These manifestations are particularly common in the coastal region during the summer tourist season.

For years, the authorities had tried to raise public awareness of this issue and engage people in the national campaign against grey economy through traditional forms of communication, such as awareness campaigns, promotional videos for inspection services, educational programs, etc, but the effects remained limited.

People were either disinterested or were reluctant to report instances of grey economy to the authorities, either because they did not believe that their concerns would really be addressed or out of concern that their reports might not be treated as anonymous by the authorities.

TARGET POPULATION (required)

In 100 words or less, please identify the target population who may benefit from this initiative. Highlight your understanding of the needs or demands of the target population that were addressed by your initiative.

There are three key target audiences.

First, predominantly young, technologically savvy people who use smartphones.

Second, the Internet literate people, who can report grey economy by logging on to the "Be Responsible" website (www.budiodgovoran.me).

And third is the group of people with no Internet access or who prefer to use traditional channels of communication. They are able to engage by reporting grey economy through two toll-free hotlines operated by inspection authorities.

INITIATIVE DESIGN (required)

In 350 words or less, describe your initiative's goals and objectives. Focus specifically on how the initiative was designed to meet those objectives. For example, identify stage(s) of the policy/service design or implementation when you solicited citizen participation. What kind of participation did you seek from citizens (e.g., feedback, consultation, joint decision-making, monitoring of activities, etc.)? Explain why this particular approach was best suited to achieve the initiative's goals. How did you encourage citizens to participate? Describe any innovations in the design of the initiative.

The purpose of the campaign was to get public institutions, academic community and citizens of Montenegro to work together and tackle one of the nation's biggest economic problems – the informal (grey) economy.

In order to achieve this, the Government decided to use the skills and resources that already existed in the Montenegrin society and motivate people to engage. The Government partnered with the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and UNDP Montenegro and, in mid-December 2013, the three parties launched the public engagement campaign "Be Responsible. It's up to you. Zero grey economy."

The goal of the campaign was to encourage citizens to report grey economy, primarily through the use of a mobile app called "Be Responsible", but also through more 'traditional' channels, such as website and toll-free hotline.

The app, developed by a team of students and professors from the Podgorica Faculty of Electrical Engineering, with the support of UNDP Montenegro, allowed smartphone users to take photos of different forms of informal economy, such as fake cash register receipts issued in bars and restaurants, black marketeering or violation of consumer rights in shops and supermarkets, and report them anonymously to the authorities.

In order to encourage public engagement, the Government decided to invest half of revenues from fines resulting from citizens' reports in community projects, such as kindergartens, homes for the elderly, medical equipment or other community projects proposed by citizens themselves. The money would support the project proposals that won the most votes from citizens who report grey economy. Furthermore, the Government instructed inspection authorities to give priority consideration to citizens' reports and send prompt official feedback to be published on the Be Responsible website operated independently by the Faculty of Electrical Engineering.

The objectives included:
1) Reducing citizens' tolerance of grey economy (indicator: number of citizens' reports)
2) Recruiting more 'citizen inspectors' to help the authorities (indicator: number of citizens with "Be Responsible" app on their smartphones)
3) Collecting funds for community projects (indicator: revenues from fines resulting from citizens' reports)

INITIATIVE OUTCOMES (required)

In 250 words or less, describe the intended outcomes and the actual outcomes that the initiative *achieved. Who were the ultimate beneficiaries, and what benefits did they experience? For example, list any concrete improvements in policy, services, behaviors, or power relations between the government and citizens. Try to present your case from the perspective of the various stakeholders involved (e.g., your agency, citizens, Civil Society Organizations, media, et al.). If there are any baseline indicators or standards to measure the outcomes of the initiative, such as the breadth of depth of engagement, please describe them in detail.*

Objective No. 1: Ten times more citizens' reports filed. In less than six months from the campaign launch, citizens filed more than 1,500 reports of grey economy, nearly ten times more than in the same period last year.

Objective No. 2: 2500+ potential new 'inspectors' recruited. The "Be Responsible" mobile app got more than 2,500 users, meaning as many potential new "inspectors" to help the authorities.

Objective No. 3: More than €500,000 in revenues. As a result of citizen reports, the inspection authorities imposed more than €500,000 million in fines. Half of this amount, over €250,000, was invested in the following five community projects proposed and voted on by citizens themselves: procurement of medical equipment for a children's hospital, renovation of an old people's home, landscaping of a local park, renovation of three day care centers for disabled children and equipping of public kindergartens

Note: Montenegro is one of the smallest countries in Europe, with the population of only 620,000 and GDP of around €3.5 billion.

INITIATIVE SUSTAINABILITY (required)

In 200 words or less, please describe any plans for scaling up and/or sustaining the initiative in the future. Base your description of the strategy on 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 intend to manage those risks on a regular basis.

The Government has decided to hire two persons full-time to continue to process citizens' reports of grey economy as of January 2015, in order to ensure long-term sustainability of the Be Responsible initiative after the expiry of the current project period at end of 2014. This ensures adequate institutional capacities to sustain the Be Responsible initiative after the expiry of the current project period.

Furthermore, at the launch of the second phase of the project on 20 June 2014, the Minister of Finance publicly pledged the Montenegrin Government's long-term support for the "Be Responsible" initiative 'for as long as it continues to produce good results' in terms of active citizen engagement.

In this second phase, the scope of the initiative has been extended, enabling citizens to report different forms of tax evasion at beaches, which are quite common during the summer tourist season.

The Be Responsible platform, being an open-source product, is free to be used by any other civil society organisation.

A number of civil society organisations have expressed their interest in using the Be Responsible mobile app and website to partner with the authorities and engage citizens in tackling the most pressing environmental issues in the country.

VALIDATION OF CLAIMS (required)

While it is strongly encouraged that each initiative includes partners, such as Civil Society Organizations, private sector agencies, media entities, etc., it is not a requirement. However, you are required to secure and upload documents from one or more credible nongovernmental actors who can attest to the veracity of any 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.

Montenegro_Validation_of_Claims.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.*

The Be Responsible initiative has managed to bring together the skills and resources of public authorities, academic community, international partners and citizens to tackle one of the biggest economic problems in Montenegro.

The initiative has provided the inspection authorities with more than a few extra hands – over 2,500 'citizen inspectors'. Also, it encouraged and enabled citizens to file ten times more reports than in the same period the year before.

On the other hand, the "Be Responsible" project has provided citizens with an opportunity for meaningful engagement in a major policy issue. By taking a certain amount of money away from grey economy and investing it in a kindergarten, an old people's home or a piece of medical equipment, citizens have demonstrated that their engagement can bring very tangible benefits to their communities, as more than 250,000 euros has been diverted from grey economy to social good as a result of citizen engagement.

And finally, it has become evident that by partnering with the civil society and engaging citizens public authorities can get the resources and skills they need and win the much needed popular support for public policies.

What could not be achieved through years of traditional government-led policy approach, was achieved in months of citizen engagement.

VIDEO SUBMISSION (recommended*)

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:

- Include the following:
  - 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?
- Hone your content:
  - Keep your description and language simple.
  - Demonstrate passion through your words and enthusiasm.

*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. We hope that this option offers a new and inventive way in which you can best express the results of your work.