

Application

Participant: Netherlands 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.open.govguide.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.

MijnWOZ

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 nominated initiative from the Netherlands is: MijnWOZ. Within the Dutch local tax system, the Law on Appreciating Local Property is used for a variety of tax bases, for example, the water board taxes and the local property tax. The appreciation of local property is done yearly.

The nomination has been selected by a jury after an open call. Between 19 May and 16 June 2014 there was a public procedure for projects to apply for the Dutch nomination for the OGP Awards 2014. Several ways of communication were used to make the public aware: a press release by the ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations (MoIA), news on the government's website www.rijksoverheid.nl/openoverheid, Facebook-messages and Tweets. After one month, the ministry had received nine applications. A jury then selected the Dutch winner. This jury consisted of: Mr. Richard van Zwol (secretary-general of the MoIA, president of the jury), Jit Peters (professor public law, University of Amsterdam, promoted on Freedom of Expression), Arjan El Fassed (Open State Foundation) and Valerie Fissen (professor of ICT&Social Change at Erasmus University Rotterdam, principal scientist at TNO).* The jury selected the Dutch nomination considering the OGP criteria.

***A representative for journalism/media unfortunately withdrew.**

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.

Rodney Frederiks, Projectmanager municipality of Tilburg
 Stadhuisplein 130
 5000 AS Tilburg
 The Netherlands
 rodney.frederiks@tilburg.nl
 tel +31-6-51929978

Hanneke Snippen-Dullemond, policy adviser
 ministry of Interior Affairs & contact person OGP
 Postbus 20011
 2500 EA Den Haag
 hanneke.snippen@minbzk.nl
 +31-6-38825280

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).

Nico Stolkwijk, Manager at Vereniging Eigen Huis (Association Own House)
 Displayweg 1
 3821 BT Amersfoort
 n.stolkwijk@eigenhuis.nl
 tel +31-6-53115755

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.

MOYO (developed the solution together with municipalities, citizens and other users), Waarderingskamer (inspectorate for tasks municipalities have based on Law on Appreciating Local Property), municipalities (Enschede, Den Haag, Rotterdam, Amersfoort, Alphen a/d Rijn and Schijndel were thinking along in the process)

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?

Every year, after the property is appreciated, a lot of discussion on individual level starts among the home owners. Problem is, it is unclear how the appreciation has been realized. This raises two problems. Firstly, municipalities have to answer the numerous questions following out of the appreciation. Secondly, many citizens present objections to the appreciation. Up until the MijnWOZ-project, municipalities handled these issues through establishing special desks, and revising the objection procedure. Nevertheless, the concerns of the citizens mostly focus on the grounds on which the appreciation is based. It's a pity that especially these concerns are treated at the end of the process, when they could be tackled at the beginning of the process. With the project called MijnWOZ (My Law on Appreciating Local Property), the citizen has the opportunity to be part at the beginning of the procedure by thinking along and influencing the parameters that determine the appreciation. The idea that lies behind this method, is that the parameters are recognizable and proper. And if that is not the case, the parameters are to be influenced and corrected by the citizen – so that the parameters are proper and the citizen gets the correct appreciation for his WOZ.

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.

Firstly, the project is targeted on the citizens who annually receive the appreciation of their property. They have been invited to help redesigning the process, starting from the beginning. Trust is key: the citizen has a right to look into their own data and adjust them if necessary. Now all they have to do is check the data, and correct and adjust them if necessary.

Secondly the project partners: they have helped to keep the results save for other municipalities., how are also a target group.

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 municipality of Tilburg has, setting goals and pilot "by the book". Small scale, chosen target and conducting many measurements were the key issues of the project. The main question of the project was:

In which way can we engage citizens at their best in determining the WOZ-value, and how do these citizens cope with that?

Getting the public support of the target group, homeowners, was a central point when finding the solution. Because of that, the homeowners had a vote in the solution to be chosen. For example, homeowners have chosen the design of the website and the parameters of influencing. This process was organized in collaboration with Vereniging Eigen Huis (VEH). VEH invited their members to think along with the municipality on the design and the parameters.

In a second stage, the service MijnWOZ had to be established so that citizens could use it. Many aspects have been taken into account; e.g. the tone of voice and channel for invitations, the monitoring points and the feedback to the citizens. Preliminary, four key criteria have been selected:

1. Improvement of service provision.
2. Decrease of objections
3. Improvement of data quality
4. Optimization of work processes

During the pilot phase, the citizens were at the core of our attention. Via a letter, citizens were invited personally to come and visit the website. A reminder was sent to the citizens several days before the deadline of participation.

If citizens want to correct their appreciation, a motivation has to be given on the website. These corrections are carefully examined, and the applicants are informed via a letter whether the municipality agreed on these correction. In this letter (and in the third year of the pilot, via an email) the municipality has thanked the applicants for their participation. Finally, the citizens were given a questionnaire on the ease of use and the intelligibility of the website. Note: both citizens who participated in the projects as well as citizens who did not participate. The questionnaire was available both digitally as well as on paper.

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.

Based on the four criteria, the following results have been achieved:

1. Improvement of service provision
 In the first year, an extended questionnaire has been spread around. Both participating citizens as well as not-participating citizens were involved in the questionnaire. By choosing such a broad population, the municipality was able to find out what reason lie behind the choice of participating in the project. After three years are:
 - Over 90% of the participants appreciates the service
 - Over 80% of the participants has a better insight and understanding
 - Over 60% says they would recommend the service to their friends
 - Over 60% says that the service should be available for the entire city.
 - Over 60% of the participants has participated in the questionnaire.
2. Decrease of objections
 From the second year, a serious decrease of 40% in objections has been signaled.
3. Improvement of data quality
 Over 40% of the suggested correction by citizens was assigned by the municipality. These changes have contributed to the quality and enrichment of the database.
4. Optimization of work processes
 In the third year of the project, the processing time decreased with 66%. In real numbers, that means that the average time to process changes in an appreciation dropped from 30 minutes in the first year to 10 minutes per change in the final year!

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.

One of the criteria of the project, was that other municipalities should be able to use the service. Therefore, the project uses the national standardized exchange mechanism within the WOZ, called STUJTAX. This choice makes that the project is secured, and that the service is generic. Besides that, the project is accessible for everyone so that the distribution of the method is market based; through competition, the service is subject of price differentiation and improvement.

A strong threat for the project, is that other municipalities do not want to join the project. Nevertheless, as explained in the initiatives outcomes, the goals that have been set up are achieved via MijnWOZ. A condition for a broader success is that within the internal organization of other municipalities a different approach towards WOZ has to be adopted. To stimulate that, a video has been made (see, youtube video within this application).

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.

Letter of Recommendation MijnWOZ.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.

It is clear that this service contributes to a problem. The published reports are a result of three years of experimenting, measuring and processing. The service has been provided, originated and developed out of the perspective and with engagement of the user – the citizen. The service is developed with a market party, so that other municipalities do not have to cope with the costs of development. The solution that has been developed is generic. Therefore, other municipalities can apply this method. Besides that, the market mechanism makes it possible for other parties to develop a similar service.

Existing and proven possibilities have been used to work out the service to an optimum. For example, within the website citizens can interact with the municipality. Besides, if a citizen changes the parameters of his WOZ, he directly can see how this influences his final appreciation. The changes made by citizens are collected via a case system, through which the municipality can efficiently work through the applications. Via this case system, the municipality can also communicate through email with the citizen.

Further, this project in which the emphasis lies on contacting citizen at the front of the process, is a clear success. Currently, municipalities focus on contacted citizens at the end of a process, namely, via the objection process. The profit of MijnWOZ is this early contacting of the citizen: after which contacting leads to a better set of parameters, after which less questions are filed and citizens present less objections.

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 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.