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Submission

Application

Participant: Azerbaijan 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.

Idea Bank

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.

We acknowledge that as other people in the world citizens of Azerbaijan are demanding more openness in government, including in ASAN service centers (where public services rendered in one place). Their desire of participating in public affairs is dramatically increasing. Citizens always look for different ways of making public services more transparent, responsive, accountable and effective. Therefore they always tend to share their ideas and feedbacks with government agencies.

Therefore, governments ought to create a healthy environment and a strong platform for people enabling them to share their thoughts. The Idea Bank of ASAN service has been created to serve to this objective.

Since its establishment more than two thousand ideas have been received to Idea Bank from nine hundred different people and around thirty percent of them have been successfully implemented in ASAN service centers. Since idea winners are presented with certificates and valuable awards, Idea Bank is in the center of attention of various NGOs, societies and communities. One of those NGOs is "Constitution" Researches Foundation (CRF) who supported the initiative of nomination of Idea Bank for the Open Government Awards. With coordination of CRF Idea Bank has also been nominated as the best case by other NGOs.

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.

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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).

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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.

ASAN service is a public service hall where more than 10 different state entities and private companies are represented with their services in very close partnership with the State Agency. Therefore Idea Bank it does not only serve to the benefits of ASAN service, but also to those institutions. The partners of Idea Bank are followings:

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Taxes

Custom Committee

Central Bank of Azerbaijan

Gas operator

Water operator

Recycling company

Translation services

Banks

Insurance companies

Medical services

Mobile operators

Pay points

Non-profit Organisations

IDEA

Yarat Modern art

ASAN Volunteers Youth Public Union)

“Constitution” Researches Foundation

Avto FM

Azvision.az (news portal)

Ideas sent regarding to partners are forwarded to them to be applied. Idea Bank also assures the timely implementation of selected ideas by responsible organisations.

Azvison.az gives media support to Idea Bank by publishing successful ideas and authors' interviews. Implemented ideas, their real benefits and outcomes are also publicly shared.

News is published in three different languages by the portal where it reaches to numerous people in the world.

Azvision is a member of evaluating committee of Idea Bank. New project in cooperation with azvision starts very soon. Within the project selected most successful ideas will be shared with public to be assessed on-line.

"Constitution” Researches Foundation (CRF) is one the active civil society members in Azerbaijan which closely cooperates with ASAN service including Idea Bank. It always supports Idea Bank . CRF as an NGO is one of juries of Idea Bank.

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?

We recognize that as an end user citizens should be able to give feedbacks on public services and their sustainability. For receiving public feedbacks a solid platform and healthy environment should also be provided by government organisations. Application of modern and innovative technologies, following the trend is another requirement of contemporary century for positive civic engagement.

Creating various means of communication with public positively influences the effectiveness of public services. The more innovations applied, the better outcomes and benefits are generated.

The Idea Bank is designed for motivating and encouraging civic participation in the design process of public services and ASAN service centers.

For our commitment for maintaining high standards in public services we always track civic feedbacks and ideas. The existence of Idea Bank brings the following outcomes and benefits:

To increase the engagement level of citizens in the design process of the public services and their active role in the decision making process of government organisations.

To create hope, conditions and atmosphere for those people who really have an idea but not an opportunity to realize it.

To raise public awareness to public services through active civic engagement

To increase the quality of public services by maintaining efficiency

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.

The target population of the Idea Bank and benefits they get are as following:

Citizens get better and more qualitative services as a result of their innovative ideas.
Ministries redesign their services to make them easier and more transparent for people based on citizens' feedbacks.
Students, including **ASAN volunteers** realize their ideas, get awards and receive public recognition by being introduced to public
Citizens get a sense of satisfaction by their contribution to the process of transparency, accountability.
Students take an active part in realization process of their ideas.
Employees of ASAN service get promotion for their contribution with ideas.

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 ultimate goal of Idea Bank is to increase the public engagement in decision making processes of ASAN service centers in order to serve comfortable, easy, transparent, responsive and effective public services to them.

Most of the time citizens used to have some ideas about the services and the ways it is delivered in ASAN service centers. But they could only discuss them with their friends and other people. According to our experience it is proved that citizens always pay attention to all details of everything in ASAN service centers where our employees don't. There wasn't any effective tool for collecting those ideas from them to turn them into reality.

Therefore in 2012 the Idea Bank was created by ASAN service. At the beginning it was just an email address (ideya@asan.gov.az). Citizens were sending their ideas via this email. The ombudsman of Idea Bank received the idea, initially read them, and then made a monthly presentation in front of the evaluation committee (with 4 directors of departments and a chairman of ASAN service) where they afterwards selected applicable ideas. The winners were informed about the results by email and they were awarded with different prizes.

2013 a special innovative portal was created for Idea Bank It was partially automatized where citizens get automatic notifications about the status of the ideas. Now citizens can send their ideas from this link http://vxsida.gov.az/redirect/index/cat_id/107/MainOrNot/0.

Judges grade ideas individually on-line by signing in the portal. Judges can only see the text of ideas and grade them with maximum point of 10 for each 5 criteria. Idea authors are awarded based on the ranking system. Several methods used to attract more citizens. Therefore Idea Bank is advertised in the centers with specially designed roll-ups. Some media materials about Idea Bank are periodically spread on social networks, TV, radio and newspapers to raise awareness about this initiative.

Since Idea Bank is on-line, the number of evaluation committee members was increased by including NGO members, private sector employees and others to make it more transparent and more diverse.

We a have a goal to fully automatize Idea Bank.

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.

Idea Bank has changed and reshaped the culture of sharing of public ideas in the country.

Lack of the communication tools citizens were not able to share their ideas and feedbacks with ASAN service even they had the best ones. Therefore those ideas have been never heard and neither implemented. But now Idea Bank allows citizens to think loudly and share their valuable ideas and make them happen.

Through ideas the best practices in various fields in the world were applied in ASAN centers which turned ASAN service as a benchmark for many countries.

Besides of government organizations, private companies also started to deliver their services in ASAN centers.

The citizen satisfaction rate was increased by attracting more than 2000 volunteers to ASAN service centers to help citizens to get services faster and easier.

The citizen trust and confidence on government was gained as being one of the first government agencies of letting citizens share their ideas and participate in implementation process.

Various corporate social responsibility projects have been implemented by ASAN service together with other NGOs.

Idea Bank became the key player between ASAN service and its employees for communicating their ideas and got promoted.

The establishment of Idea Bank positively influenced citizens and ASAN service as ultimate beneficiaries. Around 2000 citizens come to each ASAN service every day. This number is rising as the service quality of services increases by receiving ideas.

Consequently all new ASAN service centers are built based on lessons learned by considering citizens' ideas.

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.

A brand new web-site of Idea Bank will be launched in august 2014. Citizens will sign-up on the web-site and provide all necessary required information. Then after they will only insert the text of idea. That will enable them to track the status of their ideas in real time.

Via new web-site the number of **members of evaluation committee** will be increased.

Citizens will be **notified** with all changes made to

their shared ideas. They will find current procedures, terms and conditions in three languages. This will make Idea Bank more transparent.
Idea Bank kiosks will be set-up everywhere in the country (specially out-reached areas) to create an opportunity for non-internet users to share their ideas as videos directly to Idea Bank.
Idea Bank forum will be held twice in a year where citizens will present their inventions to public.

iClubs as a co-brand of Idea Bank will be established in the universities to create an environment for students to generate social ideas. The club will be equipped with all modern technological infrastructures to encourage young brains.

Workshops and seminars will be held with people to help them to formalize ideas and design them.

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.

CRF Support Letter_Idea Bank_OGA_OGP_27.06.2014.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.

More than 600 ideas out of 2000 have been already applied and people enjoy the benefits of them. Since the selected ideas are implemented in ASAN centers and the ownership of ideas are recognized, outputs and outcomes are publicized people get more confident for the future of Idea Bank. Therefore the number of ideas dramatically increases.

Ideas sent by people to Idea Bank help to increase the quality of public services. In this manner the existence of Idea Bank stimulates the public to be more active and consequently it increases the civic engagement.

Idea bank opens new horizons for citizens to realize their ideas with their own execution.

Idea Bank plays a key point between public and state entities by creating very good opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

Idea bank supports all kind of ideas as long as they serve to public will.

It motivates public as an end user of public services to oversight the quality of the services and to suggest the better solutions for further developments and improvements in order to obtain efficient and effective public services.

Idea bank reshapes the culture of sharing experience and knowledge of citizens with government organizations.

Idea bank creates a strong tie between citizens and state organizations via sharing concerns, ideas, feedbacks and suggestions to redesign the public services.

Moreover Idea Bank well serves to the principles of transparency, accessibility, convenience in public services rendered in ASAN centers.

Last but not least, ideas turn to reality with support of Idea Bank.

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.