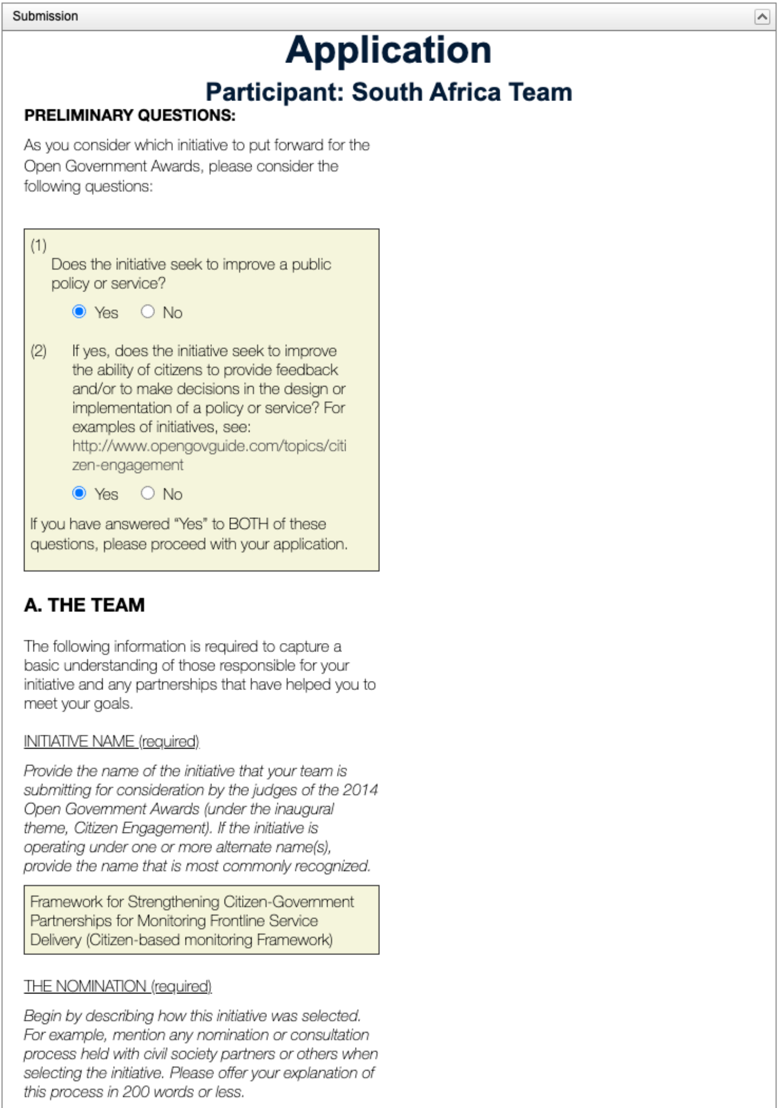
Click Here For Printable Version



Application

Participant: South Africa 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.

Framework for Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery (Citizen-based monitoring Framework)

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 *Framework for Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery* (popularly known as the citizen-based monitoring framework) was approved by the South African Cabinet in August 2013. The development of the Framework, led by the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in The Presidency (DPME), involved extensive consultation and input from both civil society and government actors.

The nomination of the Framework for the Open Government Awards was proposed at a meeting between DPME and the Department of Public Service and Administration, which is responsible for South Africa's commitments under the Open Government Partnership. This proposal was then referred to the Good Governance Learning Network (GGLN) - a network of more than 20 major South African civil society initiatives - for consideration and endorsement (See letter of support from GGLN in Validation of Claims section).

Note:

*The Cabinet of South Africa is the most senior level of the executive branch of the Government of South Africa. It is made up of the President, the Deputy President, and the Ministers.)

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.

Ms Bernadette Leon
Head: Presidential Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring and Support
Department of Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation - The Presidency
Tel: +27 12 312 0323
Mobile: +27 83 564 9695
email: Bernadette@po-dpme.gov.za
www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za

Physical Address:
East Wing, Union Buildings
Government Avenue
Pretoria

Alternate contact:
Mr Jonathan Timm
Director: Citizen-Based Monitoring

Department of Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation - The Presidency
Tel: +27 12 312 0327
Mobile: +27 84 372 3177
email: jonathan@po-dpme.gov.za
Physical Address:
East Wing, Union Buildings
Government Avenue
Pretoria

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).

Mr Elroy Paulus
National Advocacy Manager
Black Sash Trust
Tel: +27 21 686 6952
Mobile: +27 82 748 5621
Email: elroy@blacksash.org.za
Physical Address:
Elta House, 3 Caledonian Street
Mowbray, 7700
Cape Town

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.

The Framework encourages both knowledge sharing and piloting to strengthen citizen-based monitoring. The piloting at this point involves a partnership with four key government departments that deliver services directly to citizens. These are the South African Police Service, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency. These departments have entered into partnership agreements with the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), the custodian of the Framework, to pilot the citizen-based monitoring model set out in the Framework. DPME has also signed an MOU with the Black Sash Trust - a civil society organisation - to enable a civil society-led component of the piloting process.

At the local community level - where the piloting is taking place - partnerships between community-based organisations, citizen structures and the management of the participating police stations, clinics etc. are encouraged to support dialogue and local solutions for improved service delivery.

National steering committees have been set up in each of the participating sectors (i.e. policing, health, social grants and social development). These steering committees provide a learning space for the pilot and are intended to provide a platform for interaction between civil society and government on policy issues.

An informal partnership focused on learning and knowledge sharing has emerged between the Good Governance Learning Network and DPME. This contributed to a successful citizen-based monitoring symposium held to mark the Cabinet approval of the Framework. This gathering brought together a wide range of civil society and government officials.

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 experiences of citizens – the intended beneficiaries of government services – are a critical component of measuring the performance of government and for the delivery of appropriate and quality services. Currently the emphasis of government's monitoring is on internal processes and the voice of the citizen is largely absent. This is a risk as the picture is not complete.

Monitoring systems and practices of departments are largely dependent on government monitoring itself. Government has a number of targets that relate to service delivery, however the absence of processes to systematically collect and analyse the views of citizens is a risk to the credibility of reporting on these targets.

Weak or absent citizen-based monitoring mechanisms at facility level: Monitoring of facilities revealed a "compliance approach" by officials to the use of tools such as complaint systems. Accountability and responsiveness to citizens was weak. This means that some citizens turn to violent protest to attract the attention of government.

Low levels of trust currently exist between organised civil society and government around service delivery monitoring. This results in a confrontational climate and lost opportunities to harness the capacity of civil society to partner constructively with government to improve service delivery.

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.

As a Presidency-led programme, the intention is for the Framework to have a national impact and influence the monitoring practices of 40 national departments, 9 Provinces and more than 40 000 frontline facilities. During the pilot period (2013 - 2015) citizen-based monitoring will be implemented in approximately 26 government facilities. Communities served by these facilities, as well as the staff and management of these facilities will benefit through improved dialogue and shared strategies for improving services. Organised civil society and national government departments are also intended to benefit through increased opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge, expertise and resources.

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 overall goal of the Framework is to institutionalize citizen-based monitoring in the monitoring and performance management of government, in order to support on-going improvements to what, how and why services are delivered to our people. At a policy level the Framework has the following stated objectives:

1. Highlight that the views of citizens are critical to getting a full picture of government performance
2. Lay the foundation for a programme, championed by The Presidency, to strengthen the voice of citizens in monitoring that will promote structured approaches for building citizen-government monitoring partnerships focused on services that directly affect quality of life.
3. Clarify the role of government in promoting citizen-based monitoring (CBM): Government will create enabling conditions for this and take this feedback into account in the planning and implementation of service delivery programmes.

The programme being established in The Presidency has two main focus areas. The first is a three-year piloting process that seeks to provide an action learning space for developing the approaches, tools and knowledge to implement citizen-based monitoring at scale. This pilot is being implemented in partnership with key government departments and also includes a national civil society organisation. The pilot will be implemented in nine communities, focusing on the services provided by an estimated 26 police stations, health facilities, grant payment offices and social development service sites.

The second focus area is on knowledge sharing and building partnerships to strengthen knowledge and practices around citizen engagement and using citizen-based monitoring to drive improvements to service delivery. This includes annual civil society-government gatherings.

The development of the Framework involved a series of consultations with both civil society organisations and government officials. A detailed list of organisations and people consulted in the drafting of the Framework is included in the "validation of claims section". The piloting process has involved in excess of 5000 citizen interviews to date, as well as focus group consultations with over 100 citizens in the first two sites on the development of monitoring instruments and approaches. As the pilot continues (it runs up until 2015) the engagement with citizens will increase significantly.

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.*

The approval of the Framework by Cabinet - the highest decision making-body in government - is an important policy outcome. The GGLN states: "The Framework is to be commended for denoting a significant shift in government's approach to service delivery.The recognition that citizen's experiences and expectations of public services needs to be taken into account ... is not deeply embedded in government thinking and practice". In approving the framework, Cabinet requires "that government departments involved in service delivery to the public adjust their M&E frameworks to include mechanisms for incorporating the views and experiences of citizens on service delivery." This has led to the establishment of a Directorate for Citizen-Based Monitoring in the Presidency to support this.

The first six months of implementation of the Framework has made the views of over 5000 citizens visible in the management of local government services. By end 2015 the process is expected to have involved more than 20000 citizens in the development of a method to be scaled up from 2016. The dialogues taking place at the community level, using citizen feedback on perceptions of corruption, responsiveness, dignified treatment, capacity etc, have already resulted in improvements. In one instance an unpopular police commander was removed, in others non-functioning government vehicles have been repaired, plans for routine meetings with community leaders have been agreed ; community members have volunteered to manage queues. It seems that the intended outcome of unlocking improvements the local level is being realized.

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 first phase of implementing the framework (to 2015) emphasizes an iterative, learning approach aimed to maximise participation and ownership by government officials at all levels. This strategy addresses one of the key challenges - ensuring buy-in and support from officials in government departments. A second challenge is to ensure that communities and civil society participate as equals in the process. Engaging the Black Sash in the pilot will allow for field learning on how to create independent yet collaborative partnerships with civil society (both nationally and locally) for monitoring frontline service delivery.

The limited number of sites in the early stages of implementation allows for learning and refinement of approaches, as well as embedding the process in the local space. This will support sustainability in these sites.

The pilot is exploring using existing government cash transfer programs to pay community volunteers to undertake surveying. This is one example of how the programme may go to scale, and be sustained. A guiding principle of the pilot is to use existing organisations, capacity and processes, rather than to create new structures.

The programme will be subjected to an independent evaluation in 2015. This evaluation will inform the strategy for scaling up.

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.

Validation of Claims.zip

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 *Framework For Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery* is a policy instrument for promoting the take-up of citizen-based monitoring by the South African government. Its approval by the Cabinet of South Africa represents the highest level commitment to citizen voice in monitoring. It is the product of consultation, input and refinement from many, both inside and outside government. It speaks to practical actions for deepening South Africa's democratic and people-centered vision and is based on a commitment to building a culture of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement in the public service.

The implementation of the Framework is following an iterative, learning approach that emphasizes learning with citizens and officials at the frontline of service delivery. It avoids a prescriptive approach, instead embedding its participatory values in its strategy for implementation.

In the communities where citizen-based monitoring is being piloted under the Framework, community volunteers are working with citizens to rate the performance and attitudes of their local police, health services, social workers and social grants offices. This evidence drives local dialogues on how to achieve improvements and is building trust and shaping shared solutions to service delivery challenges.

While citizen-based monitoring is key to getting an accurate picture of government performance, perhaps more importantly it is a way to promote local level partnerships to build active citizenry and a capable and developmental State.

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.