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Submission

Application

Participant: United Kingdom 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.

Sciencewise

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.

After discussions held with government departments and public bodies, we approached a number of civil society organisations to seek their views on potential nominees. As we wanted a wide variety of submissions for this challenge, we made good use of social media to connect with members of the public and stakeholders, encouraging online submissions from citizens. Following consultations with a number of citizen engagement teams within government, we drew up a shortlist of five projects. This shortlist was distributed amongst civil society organisations for additional comments. Our final decision was made after assessing each nominated project against the Award criteria, and detailed consideration of feedback we had received. It was decided that the winning project met the challenge set by the Award panel and so was chosen as the UK's entry.

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.

1. **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** – UK's Government department that sponsors Sciencewise. It is where Sciencewise was originally established.
2. **Involve** – A civil society organisation specialising in public participation, working to inspire, innovate and embed effective citizen engagement for a deeper democracy. Its role in the project is to provide capacity building, oversight of dialogue experts and thought leadership.
3. **The British Science Association** – An open membership organisation, which provides opportunities for people of all ages to learn about, discuss and challenge sciences and their implications. As a Sciencewise partner, it produces research on existing evidence of public views.
4. **Ricardo-AEA** – A private sector company, which provides analysis, advice and data on economically sustainable solutions to global energy and environmental challenges. It is responsible for programme management, oversight of projects and knowledge sharing.

Sciencewise is a highly collaborative project that has supported over 100 teams from central government departments and non-departmental public bodies, aiming to engage the public in controversial policy issues relating to science and technology. Partners have included the Cabinet Office; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Department of Health; Department for Energy and Climate Change;

the Environment Agency; Medical Research Council; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Councils; Research Councils UK; National Measurement Office; Human Genetics Commission; and more.

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?

Science and technology innovations can have fundamental societal, ethical, economic and environmental implications for citizens. Policy making on science innovation therefore requires weighing up of a wide range of competing risks and benefits to individual, public and private interests.

Following public controversies around science-related issues, it became evident that the interface between scientific policy-making and wider society is not in a healthy state in the UK. There was a lack of substantial citizen engagement in the policy process, and the public did not trust the development of science and technology to be open and responsive.

As a result, several high profile government committees and reviews identified a crisis of public trust in science and technology development, and recommended that this should be addressed through public dialogue. The Council for Science and Technology, part of the Downing Street Advisory Group, concluded that the time was ripe for Government to engage earlier and more deeply with the public in the development of policies, so that they are shaped by public aspirations and concerns from the outset.

This challenge led to the establishment of Sciencewise by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

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.

Sciencewise aims to engage all members of the public who wish to influence government policy in an authentic and direct way. It is also targeted at policy professionals who want to gain better understanding of public attitudes in order to shape more responsive policies.

So far, it has engaged over 10,000 citizens and 17,000 policy professionals working in government. An evaluation of one dialogue suggested that each participant discussed the issues with an average of 30 friends and family. This would suggest that the total reach of Sciencewise dialogues could be as many as 300,000 members of the public.

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.

Sciencewise is guided by a vision that all decision-making involving science and technology takes public voices into account, at the right time and in the right way, and is better, more effective and fairer as a result. For this reason, it supports an innovative approach to engaging the public in complex areas of policy termed public dialogue. Sciencewise maximises incentives for participation for both citizens and policy-makers, and ensures that opportunity for policy influence is genuine.

The programme works with a government agency to develop, fund and commission a public dialogue, which brings together members of the public, policymakers, scientists, and other experts, to discuss a public policy issue. Through all-day deliberative events, debates, in-depth interviews and learning activities, citizens are presented with multiple opportunities to feed their thoughts into the policymaking process. Crucially, dialogue is always solicited at a stage of policy-making where it can be directly influenced by public perspectives.

Sciencewise is an innovative project with the citizen at its heart. First, participants are provided with adequate information and access to experts. The process is carefully structured to ensure that: members of the public receive the right amount of information, with the right amount of detail; a diverse range of views are heard and taken into account; and that discussion is not dominated by particular individuals or issues.

Unlike standard consultation, Sciencewise is a two-way process: dialogue is neither solely about informing the public nor extracting information from them. It is deliberative, giving citizens a chance to develop their views through conversation with policy makers and experts. Participants are recruited to ensure that they represent a wide range of backgrounds and views (they are not self-selecting). Finally, it is impartial, as public dialogues are convened, designed and facilitated independently to ensure that the process is not biased in favour of a particular outcome.

These features of public dialogue – information, structure, deliberation, diversity and impartiality – together make a unique contribution to citizen engagement in policy making. They build citizens' trust in the process, while making it credible and useful from the point of view of government.

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.

When first established, Sciencewise aimed to embed public dialogue in scientific and technological policy-making. Since then, it has supported 35 public dialogue processes that triggered a culture change in government departments and re-imagined public consultation. It has also brought significant benefits to the taxpayer and the research community.

Highlights include:

1. Blockages unlocked: Mitochondrial Replacement

dialogue showed that an informed public would give backing to a life-saving technique that had been presumed too controversial, thus freeing the path to appropriate regulation.

2. Money saved: the Ways to Wellbeing dialogue influenced government's decision not to proceed with a social marketing campaign. A similar campaign had cost £10m.

3. Additional funds for new research: public priorities revealed in the Drugsfutures dialogue influenced the Medical Research Council's investment into 'addiction as a disease'.

4. Better regulation: the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority used public caveats developed through dialogue to allow research on hybrid embryos in certain conditions.

Sciencewise has helped foster culture of engagement in government:

A. Over 150 policymakers trained on public dialogue in the last 12 months.

B. Making public engagement a core competency: successful work to ensure public engagement is included in the 2014 policy curriculum.

C. Senior government minister level support: Minister for Universities and Science has stressed the importance of Sciencewise for government work on science and technology.

D. An embedded culture: several public bodies have moved from commissioning individual dialogues with Sciencewise support to paying for their own public dialogues on core strategic issues independently.

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.

Since Sciencewise was originally launched in 2004 it has successfully secured support via a number of funding rounds, and is currently seeking extension to 2015/16. Its long term challenge is to permanently embed public dialogue in government.

Sciencewise relies entirely on government funding. In addition to helping Sciencewise expand the programme, the strategy outlined below allows it to navigate a challenging economic and political landscape, making sure that public dialogue remains high on the government's list of priorities.

First, recognising the importance of evidence, Sciencewise commissions an independent evaluation of public dialogues, shares knowledge and lessons from public dialogue processes and develop good practice guidance.

Second, Sciencewise are actively working towards embedding recognition of public dialogue in official government guidance as well as simplifying procurement mechanisms. They are also working with public dialogue contractors to ensure quality and innovation.

Finally, high-level advocacy allows Sciencewise to demonstrate the value of public dialogue to senior decision makers. Sciencewise promotes knowledge and understanding of public dialogue and identifies and works with champions of dialogue within government. In order to better communicate its aims, it develops events and materials that showcase the achievements of the public dialogue model.

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.

Sciencewise_OpenGovAwards_endorsements.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.

As a programme designed to directly support policy makers to engage in effective dialogue with the public, Sciencewise has few international competitors.

Public dialogue projects - which prioritise deep, high-quality citizen engagement - are transforming the way governments connect with citizens. Unlike one-way closed processes, Sciencewise allows members of the public to understand, deliberate and reflect on issues that are often seen as too complex for them. Critically, it offers citizens a unique environment in which to engage with policy makers on an equal footing, an opportunity that starkly contrasts with most people's experience of government.

Focus on science and technology is another distinguishing feature of Sciencewise. Whilst most citizen engagement projects concentrate on public services and communities, Sciencewise breaks a policy taboo by bringing citizens into scientific policy-making. In so doing, Sciencewise partners take significant risks and face more formidable challenges than other providers.

Finally, it is the fact that Sciencewise is fully embedded in government that makes it an effective and transformative project. Government participation is strictly required: officials must provide at least 50% of the costs of dialogue and pass a rigorous business case process testing their commitment. This ensures ownership of dialogues within government, and provides disincentives for 'just for show' engagement.

These and other features mentioned above make Sciencewise a striking example of how a concerted effort on the part of government and civil society can deliver an innovative solution to a crisis in public confidence and participation.

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.