



Cabinet Office

# News Release

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## **Bright Spots of open government to be recognised at global summit in London**

The shortlist for the Bright Spots prize for the most inspiring examples of how open and accountable government is changing people's lives was announced today by Cabinet Office Minister Francis Maude.

The seven shortlisted initiatives vying for the Bright Spots award show how governments in Open Government Partnership countries are working with citizens to sharpen governance, harness new technologies to increase public participation, and improve government responsiveness. At the Open Government Partnership summit in London on 31 October and 1 November, participants will be able to vote for one of the shortlisted projects. The winning project, the Bright Spot, will be announced in the summit's final plenary session.

The shortlisted projects come from Chile, Estonia, Georgia, Indonesia, Montenegro, Philippines and Romania. They include mobilising citizens to audit government projects; an online portal for complaints about public services; a mobile app for people to report problems in their communities; a tool to channel public input on the legislative agenda; and an open system for civil service appointments.

These and other examples of innovative initiatives that bring real social and economic benefits will be discussed at the London summit. The summit will provide

an opportunity for all member states to showcase their progress on open government and transparency and make ambitious new commitments. It will also give participants the opportunity to learn from one another – to see what works and doesn't work around the world.

Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office, who leads the UK Government's transparency agenda, said:

“Projects like these show how governments, working with civil society and citizens, can turn ambitious commitments for greater openness into practical initiatives that make a difference to the way people live. Open government isn't just about making promises - it requires ministers to take themselves out of the comfort zone.

“With the global transparency movement gaining ever greater momentum, transparency is truly an idea whose time has come. And there's nothing more powerful than that.

“Britain has led an ambitious agenda on transparency this year through our chairmanship of the G8 and the Open Government Partnership. At the partnership's summit, all participating countries have been invited to unveil an ambitious new commitment, helping to hardwire transparency even more firmly into international governance.”

Linda Frey, Executive Director, Open Government Partnership Support Unit, added:

“The goal of the Bright Spots competition is to keep us all focused on why we're in the business of opening up government – that is, to ensure that government is doing a better job of understanding and meeting the needs of ordinary people.

“We've all heard lectures about how open government should work, but it's much more compelling to hear about where it's actually working. Our seven finalists are reformers on the frontlines, and we hope their practical stories of results will inspire others to take up the challenge.”

## Notes to editors

1. The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.
2. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) was formally launched in September 2011 by the eight founding governments (United Kingdom, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, United States). The OGP now has 60 participating countries. The UK is currently lead co-chair of the OGP.
3. World leaders and ministers from OGP countries are coming to London for the organisation's annual summit to show their commitment to radically greater transparency and accountability to citizens. Attendees, including representatives of international civil society organisations, will discuss whether OGP countries are keeping their previous transparency promises and set ambitious new commitments for greater openness. Also attending will be private sector representatives and officials from international bodies including the World Bank, OECD, UNDP and IDB.
4. For more information about the OGP Annual Summit in London, 31 October – 1 November 2013, go to [www.ogpsummit.org](http://www.ogpsummit.org)
5. **The shortlisted entries for the Bright Spots prize – which will be awarded at the London summit - are:**

- **Chile - ChileAtiende**

The aim of ChileAtiende has been to simplify government to citizens by providing a one-stop shop for accessing public services. Today, ChileAtiende has over 190 offices across the whole country, a national call centre, and a digital platform, through which citizens can access multiple services and benefits without having to navigate multiple government offices.

- **Estonia - People's Assembly**

The People's Assembly is a deliberative democracy tool, designed to encourage input from citizens on the Government's legislative agenda. This web-based platform allows ordinary citizens to propose policy solutions to problems including fighting corruption. Within three weeks, 1,800 registered users posted nearly 6,000 ideas and comments. Parliament has since set a timetable for the most popular proposals to be introduced in the formal proceedings.

- **Georgia – improvements to the Freedom of Information Act**

Civil society organisations in Georgia have successfully used the Government's participation in OGP to advocate improvements to the country's Freedom of Information legislation. Government agencies are now obliged to proactively publish information in a way that is accessible to anyone, and to establish an electronic request system for information.

- **Indonesia – complaints portal**

LAPOR! (“to report”, in Indonesian) is a social media channel where Indonesian citizens can submit complaints and enquiries about development programmes and public services. Comments are transferred directly to relevant ministries or government agencies, which can respond via the website. LAPOR! now has more than 225,350 registered users and receives an average of 1,435 inputs per day.

- **Montenegro - Be Responsible app**

“Be Responsible” is a mobile app that allows citizens to report local problems – from illegal waste dumps, misuse of official vehicles and irregular parking, to failure to comply with tax regulations, and issues over access to healthcare and education.

- **Philippines - citizen audits**

The Citizen Participatory Audit (CPA) project is exploring ways in which citizens can be directly engaged in the audit process for government projects and contribute to ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public resources. Four pilot audits are in progress, covering public works, welfare, environment and education projects

- **Romania – transparency in public sector recruitment**

The PublicJob.ro website was set up to counter corruption and lack of transparency in civil service recruitment. PublicJob.ro takes recruitment data from public organisations and e-mails it to more than 20,000 subscribers in a weekly newsletter. As a result, it has become more difficult to manipulate the recruitment process.

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