

# Access Info Europe

Cava de San Miguel 8, 4C

28005, Madrid



Madrid, 24 February 2016

Dear Members of the OGP,

I am writing to you, from civil society organisation Access Info Europe, to express support for the application of the Ayuntamiento de Madrid (the local government of the city of Madrid) to the Open Government Partnership pilot program for subnational governments.

Access Info Europe is a human rights organisation based in Madrid, Spain, dedicated to promoting and protecting the right of access to information in Europe as a tool for defending civil liberties and human rights, for facilitating public participation in decision making, and for holding governments accountable.

The city of Madrid is a suitable candidate for the OGP pilot project following the administration's recent commitment to openness. Since elections earlier last year, the new administration has pushed an open government agenda, reshaping the relationship between local government and the residents of Madrid by focussing on actively increasing transparency, encouraging greater citizen participation, and developing policy and mechanisms to ensure accountability.

Already, Madrid's local government has taken positive action in these three areas in a number of ways:

- » The proactive publication of agendas, assets declarations and other information related to elected officials in the local government.
- » The launch of an ambitious Transparency Ordinance which will implement Spain's criticised Transparency law at the local level. Currently in a phase of public consultation, the Ordinance aims to reach international standards on access to information, albeit limited by the constraints of the national law.
- » The Ordinance also includes provisions to regulate lobbying around decision-making processes.
- » The city of Madrid has set up a participatory mechanism via the open-source web portal 'Decide Madrid' (<http://decide.madrid.es>). Residents of the city of Madrid can make proposals through the portal that if voted upon by a quorum of residents, will be discussed by the local government and put to vote in plenary. The software has already been adopted by the city of Barcelona and is being considered for use by other Spanish municipalities to increase citizen participation at the local level.
- » The government has also launched a citizens' budget worth €60m that over the next few months will receive proposals from residents on how to spend the money at both the city-wide level as well as district by district.
- » The city of Madrid's local government regularly promotes the use of open data by organising events such as hackathons. Action in this area is supported by the city of Madrid's adoption of the principles of the International Open Data Charter.

These actions already undertaken by the city of Madrid are fully in line with the principles and values of the Open Government Partnership. As the capital of Spain, actions undertaken in Madrid have begun to set precedents already around Spain at the sub-national level.

The city of Madrid would be a perfect candidate for the OGP pilot project, and we recommend their inclusion in this new scheme.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Helen', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Helen Darbshire  
Executive Director  
Access Info Europe