Open Government Case Study - Sample Case Submission Form

[Open Data, Participation, Collaboration, Citizen Engagement, and Public Sector Innovation]

Important Information

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are conducting a joint study on the economic and social impact of open government for the Arab region. The study will reflect on literature review and previous studies and reports made by OECD and ESCWA and other organizations, and it will consider case studies and best practices from Arab and OECD countries. As such, and for the preparation of the study, this Sample Case Submission Form is intended to help the collection efforts for inspiring case studies and best practices from government entities and agencies in the Arab region. It should be noted that selected cases may be published within the ESCWA portal for the open government, which is under design and implementation, as well as the OECD Open Government case platform[1]. Furthermore, the relevant experiences will be in featured in the planned Joint OECD-ECSWA meeting of the MENA Working Group on Open and Innovative Government this year, in coordination and collaboration with authorities concerned by these experiences.

The attached form serves as a submission form for open government activities that have been or are currently being developed and implemented at any level of government, and specifically those authorities that are working on open government development in the country, including local levels. The Case Study might cover one of the following topics: Open Government, Open Data, Stakeholder Participation, Collaboration, Citizen Engagement, Transparency, Accountability or Innovation in the Public Sector.

In the context of the attached form, an "activity" refers to any processes and actions taken to work towards the achievement of open government at national, area or local levels. An activity can consist of one or more actions. Participants can submit as many activities they wish, and it is preferable to choose activities with an economic or social impact. ESCWA will make the analysis of the contributions and may contact participants with follow-up questions.

To share a case, please complete the MS Word form, either in English or in Arabic, as many times as you wish. We must receive all submissions no later than [15/05/2020]. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to send an email to Ms. Nibal Idlebi, chief of Innovation at ESCWA (email: idlebi@un.org, & escwa-tdd@un.org) and to the OECD Open Government Unit (Opengov@oecd.org).

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[1] https://oecd-opsi.org/case_type/open-government/

1. Organisation Details

1.1. Organisation Name	*Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR)*
1.2. Organisation Type [Government, NGO, International, Academia, Private Sector]	*Government*
1.3. Country	*Lebanon*
1.4. Primary Sector [Economic affairs, Education, Public administration, Health, Transport, etc.]	*Public Administration*

2. Activity Case Study

Now, we are going to ask you several questions about your activity. We are very excited to find out what you did, how you did it and who benefited from it. The more comprehensive your answers are, the easier it will be for the reviewers and readers to appreciate the aims and achievements of your activity.

2.1. Title [a title for your activity]	*Support the implementation of the Access to Information Law*
2.2. Website [the website about your activity, if existed]	https://www.omsar.gov.lb/
2.3. Year Your Activity was Put Into Practice	*2019*

X	*Open Data*
X	*Participation*
X	*Collaboration*
X	*Citizen Engagement*
X	*Transparency*
X	*Accountability*
X	*Public Sector Innovation*

2.4. Which of the following best describes your activity? [Please mark the main category]

2.5. Summary (Short and Simple Explanation)

The summary should describe your activity and be short and simple (few sentences), and it should use clear language, compel the reader to continue reading, use simple, not sector-specific terminology (no idioms, slang, or domain-specific "buzz" words). The summary should answer the following questions:

- What the activity is?
- Why it was developed or the problem/opportunity being addressed?
- And who it benefitted?

Law number 28 of 10 February 2017 was adopted, however this law was not effectively implemented. Based on that, OMSAR worked with the support of UNDP and OECD to develop a National Action plan to implement the Access to Information law. This plan is composed of 10 areas of work responding to the challenges facing the implementation of the law.

In 2019, implementation of the plan started and activities were conducted: consultations with Civil Society Organizations; participation in awareness raising activities; training for public information officers; development of guide for citizens on access to information law and guide for obligated administrations;

2.6. Case Study Overview

The Overview is an overview of the activity and outcomes. You will have the opportunity to elaborate on some of the details. Please tell us:
- What problem the activity solves or what opportunity was taken advantage of
- What the activity is
- Objectives
- Beneficiaries
- How is it envisioned for the future? For example, how will it be institutionalised in its current context? How will it scale even bigger?

The National Action plan to Implement the Access to information law was developed to enhance the proper implementation of the law through overcoming many challenges facing its effective and proper implementation.
Its main objectives are to:
1. *Develop a comprehensive list of Obligated Administrations by the ATI Law and provide them with pressure and incentives to comply.*
2. *Appoint ATI Officers (ATIO) within all Obligated Administrations and provide them with pressure and incentives to comply.*
3. *Provide information about ATI rights and procedures.*
4. *Provide training and support.*
5. *Develop electronic tools to implement the ATI Law.*
6. *Appoint the members of the National Anti-Corruption Institution (NACI) and activate it.*
7. *Develop oversight mechanisms to ensure proper application of the Law.*
8. *Develop mechanisms for receiving and handling complaints related to the implementation of the Law.*
9. *Issue implementation decrees in areas of necessity.*
10. *Develop effective systems for filing, archiving and extracting administrative documents and automating the administrations.*
This action plan will target a wide range of beneficiaries, it will help the obligated administrations to better implement the law and will benefit citizens who will be more aware of their rights and will be able to access the information without obstacles. It will also benefit the country as a whole because it will increase level of transparency and accountability which will increase trust and encourage investments.
The first period of the Action Plan is set for 2 years. A Follow-Up Committee will be established to follow-up and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan. This mechanism will be institutionalized as It will include all relevant public institutions and it will be open for the participation of Civil Society Organizations.
OMSAR with the support of UNDP and OECD has already started implementing activities in relation to the action plan. Activities especially targeted objectives number 1, 2, 3, and 4 and they were launched and are still in progress:
Objective 1*: Mapping all Obligated Administrations, their addresses and oversight entities; Compiling Consultative and Judicial decisions related to the identification of the Obligated Administrations.*
Objective 2: *Drawing a list of Administrations that appointed an ATIO with their contact specifics and state if a relevant job description was issued; Compiling a national list of Obligated Administrations and ATIO together with their contact specifics, to be published by all available means; Developing ATIO job descriptions templates and draft circulars to facilitate cooperation with ATIO, as well as an adequate mechanism to assess their performance.*
Objective 3: *Developing, publishing and distributing informational guidebooks, to inform the general public and the Obligated Administrations about rights and obligations of the Law. A handbook to inform the general public about ATI upon application was developed; A handbook to inform Obligated Administrations about their various obligations, is under development and will be finalized in the near future;*
Objective 4: *Organizing specialized training workshops for Obligated Administrations, their ATIOs and targeted stakeholders; Developing, disseminating and assessing detailed training material (including templates) about all ATI rights and obligations, targeted for each type of Obligated Administration;*

2.7. What Makes Your Activity Different, Unique, or Innovative?

This initiative/activity is the first of its kind in Lebanon. It is the first National Action Plan developed to enhance implementation of an inactive law. This work is introducing new cultural concepts in Lebanon and is transforming the public administration from a closed and bureaucratic one to an open and automated one. It is facilitating the Government to Citizen relation and is making the administration more transparent and accountable.

3. Development

3.1. Collaborations & Partnerships

Were there partners involved? Describe what each brought to the table and why it was important to the case. These may include: Citizens, Government officials, Civil society organisations, and Companies.

Yes partners were involved, international and national, governmental and non-governmental, private and public. The plan was developed by a committee including relevant public institutions in consultation with civil society organizations, private sector and with the support of international partners UNDP and OECD. This work allowed different stakeholders to be part of the policy making and gave the plan more legitimacy, credibility and alignment with the real challenges and context.

3.2. Users, Stakeholders & Beneficiaries

Who are the users, beneficiaries, and stakeholders targeted? How each group are affected. These may also include: Citizens, Government officials, Civil society organisations, and Companies.

Citizens will benefit from the implementation of this plan in terms of raising their awareness on their right to access information and the means to access it, facilitating their access to information through enhancing the proactive disclosure of information.
Government officials and public administrations will benefit through building their capacities to respond to citizens request of information and proactively disclosing the information as per the law; they will also get the chance to become more automated through developing electronic platforms;
Civil Society Organizations will be able to play their oversight and accountability since they will be able to get the information they need for their work.

4. Reflections

4.1. Results, Outcomes & Impact

- What results and impacts have been observed from the activity so far?
- How have the results and impacts been measured (e.g., methodologies used)?
- What results and impacts do you expect in the future?
- To the extent possible, please indicate the tangible or numeric results.

More citizens are aware of their rights provided by the access to information law; They know about the channels of complaints; they are enabled to access the data/information more easily; The obligated administrations are more encouraged to appoint information officers and to get advantage of the National Action Plan which will give them opportunities to develop websites, receive capacity building, etc; more administration are approaching the Ministry to get support and trainings.

The plan includes Key performance indicators and a monitoring and evaluation framework, however it is not yet uses.

In the future, this work will make a change in the Lebanese culture and will progressively turn the administration from a closed one to an open one and will increase transparency and accountability which will reduce the risks of corruption. It will also enable citizens to take part of the policy making processes.

In 2 years, about 80% of the obligated administrations will appoint information officers; more than 50% will develop and use their online platforms to publish information; a 20% increase in request of information; a 30% increase in awareness of citizens about their rights;

4.2. Challenges

- What challenges have been encountered?
- What failures have been encountered along the way (e.g., structural failures or significant setbacks)?
- And how, if at all, have those challenges and/or failures been responded to?

The challenges encountered are mainly about changing the mentality of the obligated administrations. Administration are bureaucratic and resistant to change. Moreover, administration have a misconception that implementing the law will add more work on them and they give the excuses of not having the means.
By showing success stories and by showing that there is opportunities for the administration to benefit from support in terms of its infrastructure (website; systems etc) and in terms of capacity building, they became more encouraged to make efforts in implementing the law.

4.3. Conditions for Success

What conditions do you think are necessary for the success of your activity? Conditions for success may include:
- Supporting infrastructure and services
- Policy and rules
- Leadership and guidance
- Human and financial resources
- Personal values and motivation

Supporting infrastructure and services: lot of administrations do not have the infrastructure to publish information; therefore support should be provided in this area.
Human and financial resources: the implementation of the access to information law requires trained information officers; supporting materials such as handbook to guide their work on applying the law; template for annual reports; template for request of information.

4.4. Replication

Has the activity been replicated to address similar problems? If so, how? In your opinion, what is the potential for it to be further replicated in the future? You may wish to discuss how the activity has already been used by others, as well as how you believe it could be used by others in the future. These others may be in: Other organisations, within your organisation, larger or smaller agencies, organisations or governments.

It will have high potential to be replicated since there is a lot of inactive laws in Lebanon and there is a good number of laws related to anti-corruption that have been adopted lately and some will adopted in the near future. Therefore, some of these laws will for sure need an action plan to make sure they will be effectively implemented.

4.5. Lessons Learned

What lessons from your experience would you like to share with others like you? Where there any pitfalls to avoid?

The more the activity or the initiative is done in a consultative way involving all stakeholders the more it will get chances of success. Enforcement of laws should not only follow the traditional means it should include behavioural insights and nudges in Obligated Administrations to encourage them in engaging positively. Ongoing reporting about positive results and advancement is good to build citizens trust.

4.6. Anything Else

Is there any other information you would like to share about the activity?

[response of no more than 300 words]

5. Materials

5.1. Materials

Do you have online materials you would like to include with your submission? Please use the fields below to insert your links.

Link for images	
Link for supporting files	https://www.omsar.gov.lb/Assets/docs/Citizen-Guide-Access-to-Information-Law-Arabic.pdf
Project-Related Video URL 1	
Project-Related Video URL 2 Other related URL	
5.2. Could you give us the permission to republish the data and information, or part of them, included in this form?	*Yes*
5.3. Please provide the correct reference for re-publishing purposes.	