**INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR APPLICANTS**

While Kosovo’s primary source of energy remains lignite-fired power plants, Kosovo’s government and citizens continue to struggle with how to maximize the benefits of energy independence while minimizing the costs.  At present, Kosovo’s citizen’s experience high energy and environmental costs due to a lack of energy efficiency and energy saving measures. While the government provides information, citizens struggle to understand energy data — which is the first step toward gaining more control over the energy consumption and the bills that they pay.  Furthermore, citizens could benefit from more transparency in whether bills are being fairly collected, to say nothing of whether revenues are being put toward necessary efficiency and green improvements in Kosovo’s energy portfolio.

Millennium Foundation Kosovo calls on open data movers, shakers and opinion-makers, start-ups, civil society, the private sector, academia, journalists, designers, technology innovators, and creative problem solvers to submit proposals that use open data to drive consumers and government to make better energy choices and combat misperceptions, so that consumers understand their rights, reduce energy consumption, and support policymakers and energy stakeholders to fulfill Kosovo's commitments regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy.

*Solutions must use open data (energy sources generation, consumption, distribution, revenues, complaints etc.) to explain why their tool or approach is needed and incorporate open data in their solutions which will to empower Kosovo’s citizens to:*

* + *to take constructive civic action to improve Kosovo’s fulfillment of energy efficiency and renewable energy generation goals, while maintaining the highest environmental standards and/or*
	+ *understand their rights, and adjust their own energy consumption, and/or*
	+ *improve their understanding around energy supply, electricity tariffs (rates), and against energy theft (or reduction of commercial losses)****.***

 All applicants should analyze open datasets from ERO, KEEA and/or other credible, vetted open data from national and international institutions to develop creative solutions which will inform Kosovo’s citizens about Kosovo’s energy sector. Solutions must empower Kosovo’s citizens to do one or some of the following: make better energy choices, take constructive civic action to improve the understanding of their rights, and support policy makers to fulfill Kosovo’s commitments regarding revenue collection, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Solutions do not need to address all the themes in their proposal--it is better to have a focused, clear approach that only addresses one or a few themes than an overly general one attempting to address all of the themes.

To address this barrier, MFK seeks proactive proposals from civil society, technology providers, academia, the private sector, start-ups, and creative problem solvers that:

1. Draw from trusted, accurate energy data from the ERO, KEEA and/or other international sources.
2. Clearly contextualize and interpret the data for everyday citizens. Contextualization efforts should include:
	1. Crediting the data source (e.g., ERO.),
	2. What factors the data is measuring,
	3. What how the data is being measured
	4. What the data may signify for vis-a-vis energy use—examples include but are not limited to, explaining the implications for:
		1. The costs and benefits associated with energy use reductions, efficiency measures, and behavior change
		2. Revenue collection
		3. Pollution and health
		4. Equitable distribution, rate setting, and responsiveness to complaints
		5. Revenue collection and expenditures relative to capital investments in retrofits, renewable energy, or energy imports and exports
3. Upon receipt of this information, everyday citizens should feel empowered and understand pathways they can take to address energy concerns on both:
	1. A personal level (purchasing efficient appliances, modifying behavior, improved understanding of their bill, etc.) and
	2. A civic level (a tip line to report network losses, advocating for increased energy efficiency programming, etc.).
4. Citizen activities should be productive and solution-oriented rather than selfish (eg, prioritizing personal benefit over community health) and antagonistic (promoting an adversarial relationship with the energy sector or government).
5. These activities should continue to build ongoing demand for more open government data.

Proposals do not need to address all of the themes in this challenge.  It is better to focus and address one or two of themes well than to try to generally address all of the themes.

**Awards:**

MFK will award up to five grants (total of 300,000€ available in funding) to implement a proposal that addresses the aforementioned objectives.  In addition to the award, grantees will also receive:

* **Mentoring:** Winners will work with mentors from MFK, the energy sector, and relevant ministries in the central and municipal government to help them adapt and grow their solution to more successfully meet customer needs.
* **Networking and professional matchmaking:** Introductions to relevant experts and stakeholders.
* **Profile-raising activities:** MFK will promote your winning innovation and celebrate your results.

**Eligibility Criteria**

**The Challenge is open to all and will accept entries that meet the following criteria:**

* Entries must be submitted in English.
* Late entries will not be accepted.
* Entries must be complete and may not leave questions unanswered questions or neglect requested documentation.
* Entries must directly relate to challenge goals, funding requirements and utilize credible open data from ERO, KEEA and other credible, vetted open data from national and international institutions.
* All competitors must use Challenge grant funds to implement a solution in Kosovo. International applications are eligible as long as applicants either already have a presence in Kosovo or must demonstrate they have a Kosovar partner (supporting partnership documentation is required).
* All solutions can propose a coordination or implementation partnership with KEEA or ERO.

**The Challenge particularly encourages proposals from:**

* Diverse groups that have clear, strategic, collaborative models to tackle the issue of clearly communicating data-driven information about both energy use and proactive steps citizens can take to address the issue.
* Private sector actors, entrepreneurs, and organizations with market-based solutions and/or clear plans for sustainability beyond the point of award.

**Dig Data Challenge will not fund:**

1. Solutions with a strictly research focus.  All research must include feasible recommendations for policy or programming actions.
2. Solutions in the idea phase with no demonstration of real-world application.
3. Solutions that center around the provision of free equipment or focus on building new infrastructure.
4. Solutions that do not use open data from the ERO, KEEA, and/or other credible, vetted open data from national and international institutions.
5. Solutions that are unwilling to establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders, particularly with energy stakeholders and Kosovan government ministries, agencies, and municipalities.
6. Solutions originating from foreign countries that do not have a local, Kosovan partner.
7. Solutions that do not deliberately and equitably include women and underserved groups.
8. Solutions that are a continuation of an existing project without a new component.
9. Solutions that are affiliated with a political party or engaged in political activity.
10. Solutions that are focused solely on religious activities.

**Judging Criteria**

**All eligible entries will be judged against the following criteria:**

**Criterion 1: Use of Open Data**

The submission should present a new, adapted or aggregated data-informed solution, able to add value to how Kosovans obtain, understand, and take action on energy issues.

We advise competitors to keep in mind:

* Whether the solution is a credible response to issues raised by data from the ERO, KEEA, and other credible, vetted open data from national and international institutions.
* The extent to which there is a well-reasoned, substantiated analysis of the data in the application that justifies why the applicant is taking that approach.
* The extent to which accurate, open data is incorporated into the product/service/output.
* How effectively the solution translates data into accessible, actionable, constructive insights for Kosovo citizens.

***Please Note:*** *Data should not be used or submitted that does not protect personally identifiable information.*

**For more information, please see the Data Guide.**

**Criterion 2: Actionable Information**

The submission should provide timely, context-appropriate, and actionable advice to users to enable them to understand both energy data and also a series of constructive personal and civic recommendations they can take to address their concerns.

We advise competitors to keep in mind:

* The effectiveness of the solution in communicating energy sector information and interventions.
* The extent to which any recommended interventions are proactive, constructive and build a culture of data-informed personal and civic accountability, with aim on raising awareness of citizens and encouraging civic engagement in changing behavior rather than selfish or adversarial culture.
* How effectively the solution presents timely, actionable, and context-appropriate insights for users, depending on the user’s attributes (age, languages spoken, geographic location, etc.).
* The extent to which the advice presented reflects best practices and guidelines with respect to reducing energy use and efficiency, health, environmental stewardship, and renewables.
* How effectively the solution uses best practice methods, that may include but are not limited to, behavior change communications (BCC) and human-centered design (HCD).
* Direct feedback from testing with users about whether they can utilize the insights from the solution to make timely, action-oriented decisions with respect to energy use, efficiency, enforcement, expenditures, and customer service.
* Solutions that demonstrate the vision and potential to continue to encourage productive public discussion about addressing energy issues.
* Solutions that may demonstrate new or adaptive ways of collaborating with energy stakeholders and/or central and/or municipal governments, in order to better target government programming or communications.
* Please note, context-appropriate advice should take into account issues including but not limited to:
	+ The different degrees of literacy and digital access among population groups such as the elderly and less educated.  Competitors should also consider Kosovo’s linguistic diversity.
	+ The availability of certain interventions in a given geography, and at a given time (e.g., a solution should not recommend products that are not available or approved for use in Kosovo).

**Criterion 3: Accessibility**

The solutions should demonstrate that there is a clear understanding of citizen needs and meet those needs easily and affordably. Applications should take into consideration the accessibility of their solution with respect to gender, language and literacy, levels of education, digital literacy and connectivity, and cost.

**Competitors should keep in mind:**

* The need for a clear understanding of the target customer’s specific needs (e.g., what type of product/approach is most suitable for the ways your customers access the information).
* How easy it is for your target customer to use the solution.
* How accessible the solution is likely to be to its target audience, and for underserved populations (people with disabilities, and other socially relevant groups such as low-income, marginalized ethnicities, and landless or land-poor households).
* How the solution takes into account variations in digital penetration and digital connectivity.  It should demonstrate creativity overcoming those barriers.
* Value for money to the users (including ongoing payment, maintenance, or replacement considerations).

**Applicants should consider:**

* Technology access, social roles, and access to information and networks.
* Obstacles that may inhibit acquisition and use.
* Tactics to mitigate any barriers.
* How much it will cost customers to buy and maintain the solution.
* Who has the skills and capacity to maintain the solution?

**Criterion 4:  Potential Impact**

The applicant should demonstrate a real understanding of the situation that their solution is helping to address. Impact will be measured according to the degree to which the solutions can provide actionable information for Kosovan citizens to proactively and constructively address energy concerns for their personal and/or civic well-being.

**Applicants should demonstrate:**

* A clear articulation and understanding of the user’s specific needs and how they are being addressed at an individual level.
* A credible argument for the likely impact that the solution will have on customers, including gender and cultural dynamics, for instance, by providing a logical reason, or set of reasons for why it is likely to have an impact, and why that would be an improvement on the current situation.
* The extent to which a diverse range of customers (men, women, ethnic minorities, etc.) perceive the applicant’s solution likely to have a positive impact on supplying customers with insights on energy data and how to address it.

**Criterion 5: Market Potential**

The solutions should be financially and economically sustainable, with respect to both financial and environmental considerations. Applicants should consider the commercial and growth potential of the solutions.

Applicants should keep in mind:

* How well does the proposed solution fit into the market?  How is it better or does it relate to the existing solutions in the market? How well the solution has been developed in relation to a particular market and how well that market is understood? For instance, an understanding of how it fits with solutions that are already out there.
* Whether they can demonstrate how the solution sustains itself? They should demonstrate a sustainable business model that allows for ongoing product updates/service improvements and maintenance.

**Criterion 6: Communications and Outreach Strategy**

The applicant should demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of communicating data to their target group and a strategy to do so. The communications and outreach strategy must demonstrate how the applicant intends to attract, retain and communicate energy information to an identified target audience.

Applicants should demonstrate:

* An ability to translate data into well-understood, actionable information for the target audience.
* A communications and outreach strategy to attract and deliver the final product/service to the target audience.
* The communications and outreach approach should use appropriate means of communication to deliver the solution to the target audience (this may include TV, social media, brochures, awareness raising campaigns, etc. but the methods chosen must reflect the logical and preferred ways the target audience obtains information). .
* An approach that both attracts and retains the target audience while also having a means to tell the story of your solution and its impact to the general public.

**Timeline and Milestones**

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| Dig Data Energy Challenge Launches | Energy Dig Data Workshop | Application Deadline | Judging, Interviews, and Matching | Winners Announced | Implementation |
| 18 January 2021 | 26 January 2021 | 15 March 2021 | March 2021 – May 2021 | May 2021 | May 2021 - May 2022 |