

Dear Committee Members,

As the Managing Director of Innobasque, I am very pleased to be writing this letter to add my support to the bid being promoted by the Basque Country's institutions to form part of the subnational program of the Open Government Partnership.

Innobasque is a non-profit Civil Society Organization that has more than 1,000 members, including institutions, knowledge and technology agents, and civil society entities. They have all joined forces and are combining their energy to transform our country through innovation.

Using public/private cooperation, we assist policy-makers in designing, implementing and evaluating new policies. We collaborate to help develop experimental processes with reflection groups and workshops that allow us to include the different viewpoints provided by a wide range of role-players all over our region. Because we realize that innovation takes place when we create the conditions allowing all of that potential and knowledge to go into action.

Innobasque is also a *"leading proponent of the work on social innovation in the Basque Country fostering collaborative action and joint research"* (OECD, Report on Innovation in the Basque Country). In this sense, we enthusiastically support projects that seek to get people who are not usually at the center of public life involved in political decision-making and our country's future.

Innovation is almost never easy. It means changing the culture at our organizations and institutions, and, more than anything else, it means changing our values and attitudes: each of us must be a part of that change. In our experience, we have found that the commitment by Basque institutions takes the form of real acts and not just empty words.

The principles of Open Government are increasingly being viewed as an opportunity to produce more public value, and not just an obligation. Mechanisms and systems are being developed that go above and beyond complying with the rules. They are making transparency, participation and cooperation less dependent upon political will and more a regular part of the way our institutions carry out their tasks in general. We are working side-by-side with different people, including politicians and public employees, who are showing us that we are moving in the right direction through their work and commitment. This means that the support we give to our institutions is not limited to this letter alone.

I believe that this is a great opportunity for Innobasque to continue helping our institutions follow down the same path of innovation, moving ahead and learning alongside others, as well as sharing our experiences as part of the Subnational Government pilot program.

It is because of all this that I would like to reiterate the support which Innobasque is giving to the Basque Government and the inter-institutional candidacy in its bid, with the hope that it will be decided upon favorably.

Sincerely,

  
Leire Bilbao

CEO of Innobasque