

You are About to Win an Influential Award!

Imagine that you are now in September 2011. You have just been informed that PoliticsOnline.com has announced that the Department of Social Security and its GESS platform was voted as the organisation having the greatest impact on the way the Internet is changing politics. You have managed to do it all:

- ✎ As a basis you have succeeded in creating a vibrant knowledge sharing culture and processes within your department.
- ✎ You have integrated all sorts of partners and stakeholders (constituents, other international organisations, civil society, experts, ...) in a meaningful way, so they found working with your department in general and on the GESS platform in particular to be an extraordinary experience.
- ✎ You have built up the GESS platform as a true hub of knowledge sharing. People from all these areas do not only find the best information they request. But GESS is also a platform where a vibrant exchange of ideas, experiences as well as the generation of new ideas take place.

The award is conceded by Barack Obama, the US president candidate of 2008, who had then lost the election by only 2% difference. In 2008 he had won the same award for my.barackobama.com and the way he used the internet to run his presidential campaign and to raise funds for it.

1st Task: Formulating a Provocative Proposition

This prestigious award seeks to recognize the innovators and pioneers, the dreamers and doers who bring social change and democracy online. Obviously one does not win an award just by doing the normal things – awards are always given for outstanding and extraordinary achievements that the world has not seen before!

In your group, think of a provocative proposition on how to implement knowledge sharing and how to integrate, use and promote GESS over the next 3 years.

You have 40 minutes in your group to elaborate two proposals. A proposal should be no longer than 50 words.

Before you begin in your group, appoint

- ✎ a person to facilitate the discussion
- ✎ a person to keep time



A good provocative proposition should meet the following criteria:

- **It is provocative.** It stretches and challenges your department, forcing it to move beyond the parameters of its normal routines.
- **It is grand, but still practicable.** Similar challenges have been met in the past and, as such, the vision represents a compelling possibility.
- **It is desired.** All your working group members would like to be part of it as it is described in the proposal.
- **It is stated in the present tense and in affirmative language.** This helps you project a positive image of itself.
- **It is highly participative.** Achieving the statement will require effort and input from all department members.
- **It addresses multiple aspects of the group's structure and activities.** This could include such things as leadership, societal purpose, communication, staff, structures, business practices, community relations, etc.

2nd Task: Prepare a Presentation

Once you're done with the 1st task, vote in your group on which of the two proposals you want to pursue.

Now you have the following challenge:

[The first 4 paragraphs are alternative tasks for 4 different groups – delete 3 of them before printing sheet]

Barack Obama will hold a speech at the award ceremony and must prepare his script. He wants to know why you deserve it. He can only be reached by e-mail. Yet, as he is very busy, he has only time to read very short e-mail messages. In 60 words or fewer, describe why the GESS platform and all your knowledge efforts around it are so exceptional and successful, what gives it life. Write a 60-word e-mail.

You have 30 minutes for this task.

Before you begin in your group, appoint

 *a person to facilitate the discussion*

 *a person to keep time*

 *a person to present what you have elaborated*

Take your Provocative Proposal developed in task 1 and craft it into your presentation – tell from the perspective of September 2011, what has come out of it and how you got there.

(Session based on: G. Ashford & S. Patkar, The Positive Path, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2001)