



# Final Learning Exercise Summary Report

Osasco, Brazil Action Plan 2022- 2024

Gabriela de Brélaz

Universidade Federal de São Paulo

## Section I: Open Government in Context

Founded in 1962, Osasco is a city with an area of approximately 65 km<sup>2</sup>, home to around 730,000 inhabitants, according to the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2023). Initially an important agricultural and commercial center, the city grew rapidly, especially during Brazil's industrialization. Today, the municipality is a living portrait of a dynamic economy. Due to its strategic location and solid growth, the city of Osasco has been consolidating itself as an important technological and logistics hub. Driven by the presence of one of the country's largest private banks, five unicorn companies, and large technology and logistics organizations, the city of Osasco has the eighth-largest GDP and a growth rate above the country's average. It is the city in Greater São Paulo that attracts the most investment and is in the process of implementing a Technology Hub - which aims to act as a connection between the public and private sectors, further consolidating its technological vocation and a Strategic Technology Plan for Smart Cities.

Osasco has a high population density, being one of the most populous cities in the state of São Paulo, and a large part of the population is in a situation of vulnerability, which leads to challenges linked to housing, the environment, flooding, and landslides in risk areas, among others. Even though it can be considered a rich city, it has strong inequality among citizens.

The discussion about open government in Osasco began in 2017 due to interactions with control bodies, which led to innovation in local management public policies and the Freedom of Information Act. In 2021, Osasco joined OGP and started co-creating its first Action Plan, which is now under final analysis.



## Section II: Action Plan Co-Creation Process

### Review of the co-creation process

A weakness of Osasco in the co-creation process was the absence of civil society organizations and social movements that dealt with open government topics. The 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan was created during the COVID-19 pandemic by Osasco City Hall, which invited civil society to participate in the co-creation stages (public consultations and workshops) by Zoom meetings. The pandemic affected the development of a co-creation forum that could set the roots for the development of a Civil Society Forum that would participate in and monitor the implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan.

Additionally, by then, the Open Government Department (OGD) located at the Secretary of Planning and Management (SEPLAG) faced challenges with the Secretariat's Institutional Portal and also had to focus on developing the Osasco Multi-Year Plan 2022-2025. The work was laborious, complex, and voluminous in front of a reduced team. In this sense, SEPLAG could not provide any other solution to the issue of transparency around open government/OGP other than using social media to enable more open and far-reaching communication about the co-creation stages.

According to SEPLAG, the team adopted some strategies to publicize actions around the co-creation process, especially the workshops. The Official Press of the Municipality (IOMO) was used; letters were sent to Secretaries and Councilors inviting them to participate and mobilize the population to contribute to the co-creation of the Plan; an invitation was issued with information about the workshops on the social networks of the City Hall, SEPLAG and Osasco Aberta; an invitation was sent to WhatsApp groups with servers not only at the office level but also from public equipment's in different areas of public policy; an email was sent with an invitation to the Municipal Participatory Councils, as well as contact with their presidents in order to reinforce the importance of participation in this open government agenda. The communications were made exclusively in digital/virtual format, making it impossible for digitally excluded people to receive. There were no restrictions on participation for those who tried to access the meetings on the scheduled days.

The pandemic context also affected the final decision-making and approval of the 1st Action Plan. The participation of civil society was very small, with most participants being members of the city hall and legislative power.

In terms of strengths, it is important to mention the political support of the Osasco Mayor and Osasco Planning and Management Secretary to the Process of entering OGP, as well as the motivation of public servants and their action to put into practice a complete and competitive application to enter OGP. Their support and focus in following the organization's guidelines were vital.



## **Co-creation process recommendations**

- Work on creating a diverse and strong co-creation Civil Society Forum.
- Develop an amplified communication campaign to invite civil society to participate in the process of co-creating the 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan. Engage public servants and members of city councils in the process.
- Develop digital and non-digital tools to access populations' needs and aims regarding public policies and open government as public consultations and public hearings are distributed among all the neighborhoods.
- Ensure that the entire process is documented and recorded, publicize the process, and guarantee feedback to the public on their contributions. Build a group list of citizens interested in the topic and constantly communicate with them. They can be a central part of the city's open government ecosystem.
- Establish climate change as a relevant topic in the co-creation process

## **Section III: Action Plan Commitments**

### **3.1 Review of the implementation of commitments**

A challenge that affected the process was that the update of the Transparency Portal and Visão 360, important communication, transparency, and accountability tools, hadn't been accomplished until the end of the IRM assessment. This occurred due to a more profound reformulation conducted by Osasco City Hall regarding many systems and electoral legislation limiting some activities.

In terms of commitment design, it was possible to observe intersectionality among intentions and actions, which in some moments can turn into a potentiality but in others into a difficulty in terms of putting activities into practice.

Moreover, the absence of a Civil Society Forum hindered Civil Society participation and monitoring in the process of making the government more accountable. The creation of a diverse and strong Forum is essential for alignment with the principles and values of open government.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Open Government Plan was developed in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic with limitations in its process and in creating a Civil Society Forum due to sanitary limitations of the moment. However, the plan achieved the desired outcomes overall and helped develop expertise and knowledge of open government processes and strategies. This might be vital to the planning and co-creation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Government Action Plan. Also, it contributed to making open government policies more known to civil society and public servants and, in this



sense, helped the values of open government to grow and mature in the city. However, there is a long path ahead in developing the next steps and institutionalizing open government in Osasco.

### **3.2 Commitment recommendations**

- Civil Society Forum: Work on creating a diverse and strong co-creation Civil Society Forum that afterward can become a strong Civil Society Forum that will accompany and help implement the 2nd Action Plan.
- Commitment Design: Draw up commitments that differ, are based on consistent and in-depth actions, and can provide empirical evidence of impact.
- Open Government Inside and Outside: It is essential to work on institutionalizing open government initiatives internally, with the municipal secretariats, complementary bodies, and municipal councils, and externally, with civil society. Standardizing processes and initiatives and training actors involved in open government are essential in implementing an open government policy. Aligning knowledge on the subject and training people in practices that promote participation, transparency, and accountability, as well as specific issues such as municipal councils and their role, processes, and potential.
- Work on the creation of an Inter-secretarial Committee and an Inter-council Committee. The creation of the former would involve the presence of members of the secretariats who hold strategic positions with the Open Government Department to promote open government in the secretariats and hold monthly exchanges on agendas and opportunities involving the open government agenda. In the case of the councils, it would be essential to hold meetings with the councilors and the Open Government Team to monitor activities and strengthen this vital space for civil society to participate with the government.
- Climate Change: Climate change should be established as a relevant topic in co-creation and commitment development.