



OGP Local Final Learning Exercise Summary Report

Detmold, Germany – Action Plan Period 2022 – 2025

Self-report; sourced and validated with stakeholders.

Local Context

Detmold’s 2022–2025 action plan was shaped by distinct local political and socioeconomic factors, including the city’s role as a role model for digitalization and sustainability. The administration underwent a significant transformation toward open, agile processes, guided by strong support from the local government and a broad coalition of civil society, scientific, and business stakeholders. Positive influences included increased budget allocations for smart city and sustainability projects, which enabled the development and deployment of new digital tools—such as the analysis tool Knotdots and the open, interactive budget system—making policy more transparent and accessible for citizens.

At the same time, implementation faced challenges, such as the complex reorganization of administrative structures required to embed transparency and participation as core practices. Communicating the scope and purpose of these changes was essential to maintaining trust during the adjustment period. Diversity in engagement was achieved by combining online and in-person participation, proactively including marginalized groups, and enhancing representation. While these measures strengthened local cohesion and empowered various stakeholders, ongoing coordination and adapting outreach approaches remain necessary to overcome lingering barriers to inclusion and ensure lasting impacts from the action plan.

Action Plan Co-creation Process

The co-creation process for Detmold’s 2022–2025 action plan featured numerous strengths, notably its inclusive multi-stakeholder approach and robust use of both online and analog participation tools. The city used platforms like Consul and WeChange to lower barriers to entry, enabling users from diverse backgrounds—including citizens, NGOs, students, businesses, and public authorities—to contribute ideas and follow decision-making processes in real time. Regular meetings of core teams, steering groups, and topic-oriented “Future Tables” ensured sustained engagement, while proactive dissemination of agendas and materials gave participants the opportunity to prepare and provide substantive feedback.



A major success was that stakeholders—including marginalized groups, younger people, and non-organized citizens—were not only invited but also actively incorporated into discussions. Innovative practices like joint agenda-setting, open workshops, and diverse communication channels (online and offline) fostered shared ownership among all actors. Documentation and reporting practices further strengthened trust, with meeting outcomes and action plan drafts made publicly available, and structured feedback loops highlighting how public input shaped the plan.

However, the process was not without challenges. Although inclusiveness was a stated priority, the city candidly acknowledged that representation skewed toward established organizations and older demographics; further work is needed to meaningfully involve more young people, migrants, and those not formally associated with any group. There were technical and procedural hurdles as Detmold’s digital initiatives outpaced the capacity of the existing government communication infrastructure, with city webpages still under development for much of the process.

Despite these limitations, the co-creation process surpassed minimum OGP requirements and implemented several recommended best practices, such as transparency in scheduling, iterative dialogue, and joint ownership of outcomes. The commitment to innovation—exemplified by the development of outreach tools and the integration of sustainability data into open infrastructure—reaffirmed Detmold’s intent to make collaboration accessible, transparent, and impactful, even in the face of lingering representational and technological challenges.

Recommendations moving forward:

- Establish a detailed co-creation timeline early, specifying phases like stakeholder mapping, idea collection and feedback rounds to ensure broad awareness and participation
- Form a diverse Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) including vulnerable groups through targeted outreach, such as low-threshold workshops
- Assign clear roles within a core team (government, civil society) from the outset with regular coordination meetings
- Integrate hybrid formats and provide reasoned responses to all public feedback
- Leverage academic partners like TH OWL for early external evaluation

Action Plan Commitments

Implementation of Detmold's OGP Local Action Plan 2022-2025 yielded notable highlights, including the successful launch of the "Knotdots" browser tool under Commitment 1 (Open Interfaces for Transparency), which visualizes urban sustainability data and empowers citizen action. The method box in the form of a digital platform for outreach participation



(Commitment 4) was developed with evidence links, promoting inclusive formats. Challenges included technical hurdles in data integration for "StadtDatenStadtDaten" (Commitment 2) and unclear impact assessment for outreach tools, as detailed in section 1 of End-of-Commitment Reports.

Opportunities arose from synergies with Detmold's Smart City pilot and climate neutrality goals, accelerating open data adoption, while challenges like resource constraints and cross-departmental coordination slowed progress. Section 1 reports highlight how external partnerships with TH OWL aided monitoring but required more agile timelines.

Commitments were adequately designed, with ambitious stretch goals aligned with OGP standards, verifiable milestones, and public-facing deliverables, though some lacked precise impact metrics, as per section 3 of the Inception and section 2 of the End-of-Commitment Reports. This led to substantial but not complete achievement in areas such as smart infrastructure monitoring.

Overall, the plan achieved key outcomes in transparency and participation, contributing significantly to Detmold's strategic vision of climate-resilient urban development by integrating OGP tools into sustainability monitoring.

Recommendations moving forward:

- Carry over Commitment 4 „Development of a method box for outreach citizen participation until its complete fulfilment (Fully developed and tested digital platform for citizen participation).
- Combine Commitments 1 and 2 into a strong commitment to the overarching strategic goal of achieving climate neutrality in 2035.
- Divide the new strong commitment into partial steps, concentrating on transparency, participation, and leaving room to set up later commitments contributing to this end in the action plan cycle.
- Enforce the emphasis on digital infrastructures for optimizing transparency through data-driven monitoring and Open data.
- Enhance comprehensibility and transparency throughout the finding process of the action plan and its implementation.