



Final Learning Exercise Summary Report

Hamburg, Germany Action Plan 2022-2024
Department of IT and Digitalization, Senate Chancellery, Expert Urban Data
Governance
Municipality of Hamburg

Section I: Open Government in Context

Hamburg's first OGP Local Action Plan (2022–2024) was implemented within a political framework established by the Transparency Act of 2012 and the 2020 Digital Strategy, which emphasizes free data access and proactive citizen participation. A unique local success factor was the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg's "experimentation clause," which allowed for an iterative and explorative procurement process for technical solutions like the mobility pillar. Implementation was characterized by high levels of passion and interest from all participating actors, supported by the Chief Digital Officer (CDO) and a dedicated budget. However, the local context also presented hurdles. As with many local authorities, the implementation required extensive coordination across administrative structures, resulting in additional time and effort to ensure successful execution. Despite these internal frictions, the collaboration between the Department for IT and Digitalization (ITD) and the Körber-Stiftung effectively bridged the gap between technical administration and user-centered civil society needs.

Section II: Action Plan Co-Creation Process

2.1 Co-creation process review

The co-creation process was marked by strong multi-stakeholder collaboration, exceeding minimum requirements through seven public meetings and a comprehensive stakeholder analysis. A significant innovative strength was the use of Journey boards as a monitoring instrument, which ensured continuous documentation and transparency of progress. The process also benefited from the early involvement of public management students to ensure commitments were SMART-compliant.



Despite these strengths, the retrospective identified complex administrative bureaucracy as a major factor that delayed decision-making. At certain points, pragmatic administrative decisions had to be prioritized over participatory processes to maintain momentum.

Another identified weakness was the difficulty of maintaining civil society's motivation over the long duration of the co-creation phase. Furthermore, the technical and procedural requirements of the OGP structure were sometimes difficult for inexperienced stakeholders to grasp.

2.2 Co-creation process recommendations

- **Establish Transparent Expectation Management:** Clearly define from the start which processes will be participatory and where pragmatic administrative decisions are required to avoid frustration.
- **Develop an Early Communication Concept:** Implement a structured communication plan at the beginning of the cycle to balance information flow and prevent both over- and under-communication.
- **Utilize Temporary Expert Working Groups:** Continue the successful "temporary member" approach, which allows for the targeted integration of specific experts only when their skills are needed, preventing long-term fatigue.
- **Simplify Procedural Requirements:** Create low-threshold guides or briefings for stakeholders who are unfamiliar with OGP's formal structures and requirements.
- **Ensure Personnel Continuity:** Develop strategies to mitigate the impact of staff turnover within the administration to maintain institutional knowledge throughout the process.

Section III: Action Plan Commitments

3.1 Commitments implementation review

Hamburg achieved complete implementation of its commitments, with the retrospective highlighting that the Mobility Pillar actually ended up more strategically aligned with the city's vision of digitality and transparency than originally planned. The "Data Dialogues" format proved highly successful, which integrated volunteers and social entrepreneurs. These dialogues triggered a shift in organizational culture within the administration toward a deeper understanding of data governance.

The primary challenges were technical and bureaucratic. The development of the technical artifact (the information pillar) and its associated administrative procurement processes were significantly more complex and time-consuming than anticipated. Some citizen inputs for the pillar's functionality were found to be not technically feasible or useful, requiring a difficult balancing act in managing participant contributions. While the Data Dialogues were



successful, their long-term sustainability and permanent institutionalization remain an ongoing task.

3.2 Commitments recommendations

- Institutionalize Participatory Mindsets: Focus on sensitizing the administration to participatory approaches to ensure that open government becomes a permanent administrative attitude rather than a one-off experiment.
- Conduct Pre-implementation Bureaucracy Audits: Thoroughly analyze and map out necessary administrative and procurement processes before committing to technical artifacts in the action plan to ensure realistic timelines.
- Deepen Internal Administration Integration: Future Data Dialogues should more strongly integrate internal administrative topics to increase relevance for city officials and foster better internal data literacy.
- Define Sustained Monitoring Groups: Transition temporary working groups into permanent monitoring bodies to ensure digital solutions are continuously evaluated and updated based on user data.
- Adopt explorative procurement methods: Leverage the "experimentation clause" and other procurement methods more broadly in future plans to allow for agile development of citizen-facing digital tools.
