



# Final Learning Exercise Summary Report

Contagem (Province), Brazil Action Plan 2022- 2024

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## Section I: Open Government in Context

The city of Contagem is part of the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, the capital of the state of Minas Gerais. It is the third city with the largest population in the state, with 621,863 inhabitants, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – IBGE (2022). In the 20th century, it consolidated itself as an important industrial hub in the state context, as it has six large industrial districts, which makes the city currently the second-largest job market in the state. This industrialization process occurred quickly and thus caused a demographic explosion, with thousands of people migrating to Contagem in search of work and better living conditions. This peculiarity in the formation of the city resulted in part of the population in situations of social vulnerability.

The creation and implementation of the Action Plan of the Municipality of Contagem had the support of the current government, which, since 2021, began a movement to include the more active participation of civil society in the construction of public policies, with approximately 35 Municipal Public Policy Councils and 8 Regional Councils. Popular participation was decisive in strengthening open government policies, as well as the engagement of the City Council, which enabled fundamental standards for popular participation, such as Municipal Law no. 5,443, of December 29, 2023, which established the Municipal Policy for Popular and Citizen Participation, as well as the Municipal System for Popular and Citizen Participation of Contagem.

Currently, the municipality is working to implement and strengthen a culture of virtual popular participation, which has become a major challenge, given that it requires adaptation from



departments and citizens. The municipality still faced problems and restrictions with the Coronavirus pandemic, which impacted and limited some greater social mobilization actions in the initial period of creating the action plan and commitments. Furthermore, one of the main challenges in implementing the 2022 Action Plan was the impact of the 2024 elections. Due to restrictions imposed by electoral legislation, it was not possible to approve new laws during the period, which affected, for example, the approval of the law establishing the Chamber for Prevention and Administrative Resolution of Conflicts in Contagem (CPRAC-C).

## **Section II: Action Plan Co-Creation Process**

### **Review of the co-creation process**

By becoming a member of OGP Local in 2022, the municipality of Contagem developed its action plan for open government through the mobilization of different sectors of the municipal government, such as the Information Technology Secretariat, Municipal Comptroller General, Municipal Attorney General, and Government Secretariat. Considering the experience that the municipality has been building over the years with the inclusion of civil society in participatory processes, elections for works to be carried out and their supervision – through the actions of the Regional Councils, for example –, there is a considerable quality of collaboration between the government and the citizen in the construction of the commitments that would form part of the first Action Plan.

The co-creation of the five commitments of this Plan included the participation of the Association of Residents of Novo Progresso II (AMONP), the academy, represented by Centro Universitário UNA Contagem, and the local population. One of the highlights of this process was the use of the online tool “Decide Contagem”, which allowed citizens to vote on the prioritization of commitments to be implemented, directly contributing to the government's decision-making regarding the implementation of commitments.

Other positive aspects were the cooperative work between members of the Municipal Secretariats and representatives of Organized Civil Society and the Academy, which was structured based on active listening to the demands of the population and recognition of the specificities of each territorial region. Furthermore, the continuous support offered by the Working Group in monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan stands out, always available to contextualize and explain in detail the governance practices, as well as the particularities of the actors involved and the complexity of the topics covered.

Some challenges were also identified. In certain commitments, the estimated time for executing the milestones was insufficient, which impacted the effective completion of the actions. Furthermore, a pedagogical challenge became evident: the need to raise awareness among citizens about the principles and values of open government and the procedures of the co-creation process in order to ensure greater engagement and understanding of the co-creation stages.



## Co-Creation Process Recommendations

- To pay attention to the time needed to carry out certain actions, in the composition of commitment milestones, taking into account electoral periods, legislative rites, reduced teams, and analog insertion of information on portals, for instance.
- To develop, in a pedagogical manner, educational work on the concept and importance of Open Government for citizens, with the aim of engaging different sectors of civil society in the process.
- To publicize, in a more systematic way, events related to Open Government, promoted by the departments involved, such as elections, seminars, and meetings.
- To include a commitment related to environmental issues, since Contagem is an important industrial hub in the state, in order to encompass the different actions carried out in the municipality.

## Section III: Action Plan Commitments

### 3.1 Review of the implementation of commitments

The challenges faced in implementing the commitments were mainly related to limitations arising from the coronavirus pandemic and government activities during the 2024 electoral period, in addition to technological limitations on the part of the city hall and citizens. Some examples to point out are the following ones: the impossibility of approving the Bill establishing the CPRAC-C; the complexity of integrating the systems used by the city hall with the Transparency Portal; the restrictions of the current layout of the municipal Transparency Portal; and the population's adherence to the “Decide Contagem” platform, due to lack of knowledge of the digital environment and lack of knowledge about the impact of digital engagement on political decisions.

It is assessed that the commitments were, in general, well designed, considering both the problem they sought to solve, the methods adopted, and the effective implementation of the actions. An important note refers to the planning of the time for the completion of some milestones, which disregarded the limitations imposed by the 2024 electoral period, in addition to the limitations of the city hall's internal systems and the layout of the current Transparency Portal. As a suggestion to mitigate some of these aspects, it is proposed that, in the second Action Plan, the co-creation of commitments focused on digital education and popular awareness of the values, principles, and importance of open government practices be considered.

By creating a favorable environment for the dissemination of open government values, the first Action Plan managed to achieve the expected global results. The experience gained in the strategies and processes for implementing the 2022 commitments generated motivation and confidence for the formulation of a second Action Plan, creating an opportunity to finalize



partially completed commitments, but essential for the Municipality, in addition to enabling the deepening of open government values in the structuring of participatory governance.

### **3.2 Commitment recommendations**

- When preparing commitments involving processes of digital popular participation, to consider working on actions linked to the digital education of citizens, especially those in situations of social vulnerability.
- To develop, in parallel with the commitments (or as one of their milestones), popular awareness of the importance of open government practices, in order to encourage greater citizen adherence to participatory processes.
- To enable the continued development of commitments related to the implementation of the Chamber for Prevention and Administrative Resolution of Conflicts in Contagem – CPRAC-C and the Municipal System for Popular and Citizen Participation in Contagem, in order to ensure that the efforts already made will be expanded.
- To bring civil society closer to open government initiatives and the action plan itself in partnership with OGP, through greater inclusion in events held with the international community, thus enabling an understanding of the municipality's integration with the global goals of participatory governance.

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