The Open Government Ecosystem in the City of Buenos Aires

A Model for Change

Prepared for the Innovation in Citizen Services Division by:

Andrea Castagnola
Álvaro Herrero

The Open Government Ecosystem in the City of Buenos Aires

A Model for Change

Prepared for the Innovation in Citizen Services Division by:

Andrea Castagnola
Álvaro Herrero

February 2019

Inter-American Development Bank

Contact: Nicolas Dassen, nicolasd@iadb.org.

The Open Government Ecosystem in the City of Buenos Aires

A Model for Change

Andrea Castagnola
Álvaro Herrero

IDB
Improving lives

Summary

About the Authors

Andrea Castagnola

Andrea Castagnola has a Ph.D. in political science (2010) from the University of Pittsburgh and a post-doctorate in quantitative methods from the University of Bergen (2017), Norway. She is an adjunct professor of political science, international relations and law at the Torcuato Di Tella University and an external consultant for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and World Bank. She is an expert in the areas of transparency, justice, institutions, accountability, and fighting corruption. Her background in econometrics has enabled her to combine quantitative research with qualitative research in her areas of expertise. Dr. Castagnola was a full-time research instructor at FLACSO-Mexico, where she coordinated the master's degree course in politics and public affairs. She is currently a member of editorial board of the journal *Desarrollo Económico*. Her research has been published by Routledge, Cambridge University Press, and specialized international academic journals, such as the *British Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Journal of Politics in Latin America, and Política y Gobierno.*

Álvaro Herrero

Álvaro Herrero is an expert in governance, transparency, and the rule of law, with wide-ranging experience in Latin America. He has worked across the globe with NGOs and international organizations such as the IDB the Inter-American Dialogue, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. He has also served as a consultant on projects for the UNDP, USAID, the IDB, and the World Bank in more than 15 Latin American countries. He was the Executive Director of the Civil Rights Association and served on the board of the Public Policies Lab and Citizen Power (Poder Ciudadano). He is currently an undersecretary for strategic management and institutional quality for the government of the City of Buenos Aires. He has a law degree from the National University of La Plata, a master's degree in Latin American studies from Georgetown University, and a Ph.D. in political science from Oxford University.

Abstract

The City of Buenos Aires (CABA) is one of the pioneer cities in the Latin America and the Caribbean region in terms of open government, and forms part of the Subnational Government Pilot Program of the Open Government Partnership. For several years, the city developed diverse initiatives using a participative and innovative management model until, in 2017, the Open Government Ecosystem (www. buenosaires.gob.ar/gobiernoabierto) was established. This initiative combines and enhances all the policies based on open government principles. This paper analyzes CABA's open government management model both at the center of government and in its organizational culture, as well as its external aspects, such as service provision and citizen relations. The case study places emphasis on two initiatives: Government Commitments and BA Public Works (Compromisos de Gobierno and BA Obras). Government Commitments is a program that introduces more than 50 management goals with measurable targets and that discloses information to enable citizen monitoring. Moreover, the CABA Chief of Government periodically gives an account of the progress on its commitments. For its part, BA Public Works is the first website in the region that openly reports all public works in a single city, detailing when the public works begin and end, how much they cost, and who executes them, as well as posting photographs and videos to monitor progress. The legal documentation relative to the procurement process for each public work can also be accessed. The management model developed in the city is the result of collaborative work among different government ministries. Likewise, the model incorporated participation by citizens and civil society organizations, whereby it has boosted trust in government and accountability. Based on these concrete achievements, CABA's Open Government Ecosystem still faces the challenge of improving practices to bridge the gap in the feedback loop between ecosystem users and the government.

Prologue

Today there is a new kind of citizen, more committed to the community in which they live, conscious of their rights, and able to benefit from the digital revolution to be better informed, participate in the public debate, and demand greater transparency in management and better public services. Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries are adapting to this new reality. At the national and local levels, they are carrying out a profound modernization of public administration to achieve more effective, efficient, and open management.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is helping to drive these changes. It promotes the adoption of concrete commitments to greater transparency, citizen empowerment, the fight against corruption, and the use of new technologies for public innovation.

The City of Buenos Aires (CABA) has been part of this trend for over a decade. It has been providing access to information and open data policies, increasing participation for greater social monitoring, and making advances in the digitalization and decentralization of its services. This led to its selection in 2015 as one of 15 cities to participate in the OGP cities pilot program.

This publication discusses how the Open Government Ecosystem was created in the city, addressing questions that have long been concerns in the sphere of public administration. For example, how can a new organizational culture be promoted in the public sector, and how can different areas of government be coordinated around a common objective?

After narrating how the city implemented a set of commitments and ensured their subsequent monitoring based on a delivery unit called Compliance Management Unit (Unidad de Gestión de Cumplimiento or UGC), this publication describes 13 tools for reaching out to citizens, offering information in open formats about the administration, as well as disclosing budget data; responding to complaints, and setting up participatory forums for debating questions of public interest. The document emphasizes one in particular, BA Public Works, a georeferencing tool for the

urban infrastructure plan that provides accountability and promotes greater social control in an area that is sensitive due to the sheer volume of spending, complexity of execution, and potential to disrupt the daily lives of the city's inhabitants.

For local governments committed to open data, transparency, and citizen participation in management, one of the most informative results of this case study is how, in practice, the institution progressively appropriated technological tools precisely to achieve the aforementioned objectives. It is also apparent, however, that each institution must follow its own path, without a set formula. This study reveals the usefulness of internal technological tools in accelerating this process.

The publication is part of initiatives by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to broaden its knowledge agenda within the region. It highlights the successful outcomes as well as the challenges faced by public policymakers when implementing the open government agenda.

Through this narration of the CABA's experience, the hope is to inspire other cities around the world to build local governments that are closer to their citizens.

Nicolás Dassen
Senior Specialist in Modernization of the State
Innovation in Citizen Services Division

Javier Reyes
Lead Specialist in Modernization of the State
Innovation in Citizen Services Division

Introduction

Today's societies are speaking up and increasingly demanding their rights. The penetration of information and communication technologies has enabled citizens to be better informed, to participate more, and to demand better quality and more accountability from their public services. This characteristic poses significant challenges for political structures and institutions in LAC countries, as well as for the development of democracy. In this context, the open government management model proposes an interesting methodology for combining and exploiting the changes in society to satisfy the needs of citizens. Open government "…promotes a fundamentally different relationship between the State and its citizens, with the aim of building stronger democracies and improving the efficiency and transparency of services based on the use of new technologies" (Ramírez-Alujas and Dassen, 2016: 4–5). Open government is a key management model for those countries in the region that are modernizing public management, as it can help them create more effective, efficient, and open governments.

Although there are numerous publications that compile the experiences of open government in the region at the national and subnational levels,[1] this case study analyzes the experience of the CABA in depth, with emphasis on the processes of change in organizational culture and administrative management. The CABA is an interesting case study for other cities or localities that are shifting to a new management model, because of the characteristics and peculiarities of how the open government model emerged and how challenges were resolved. For many years, the CABA has been seen as a regional technology hub, known for innovation in public policies.[2] By 2013 it had already gained international recognition as a pioneer city in implementing open data policies and practices.[3] The creation in 2017 of the Open Government Ecosystem was considered part of this change in the management model, since it served as a conceptual framework for driving cultural transformation in the existing bureaucracy and in administrative management and public policy.

This publication documents the development of open government in the CABA, with emphasis on the impact of the new management model (a) on the center of government and its organizational culture and (b) outward, that is, on service provision and the rela-

---

1 See, for example: OECD (2015); Ramírez-Alujas and Dassen (2016); Naser, Ramírez-Alujas and Rosales (2017); Herrero (2012).

2 In 2017, it was considered the "most intelligent" city in the region, due to the fact that it listens to its residents and implements innovative responses to problems (http://citiesinmotion.iese.edu/indicecim/). In September 2017, it hosted the international Smart City Expo World Congress.

3 The Ibero-American Association of Research Centers and Telecommunications Companies (Asociación Hispanoamericana de Centros de Investigación y Empresas de Telecomunicaciones, or AHCIET) awarded the city the prize for best practices in local government in the open government category. The civic innovation organization GovFresh recognized it as the City of the Year for its commitment to open government and civic innovation policies.

tionship with citizens. Throughout April and June 2018, in-depth interviews with civil servants were conducted, and internal administrative management documents (such as work proposals, plans of activities, and internal memos) and management statistics were examined.[4] The first part of this paper sets forth the concepts that will be used as part of the conceptual and analytical framework and for the study of open government. The second section analyzes the origins of the Open Government Ecosystem and its management model.[5] The subsequent sections present detailed case studies of two ecosystem initiatives: Government Commitments and BA Public Works. These projects were selected for the degree of public policy innovation and the level of coordination and harmonization required from the government to establish and implement them. The final section presents recommendations and lessons learned from the study for the City of Buenos Aires, which might be useful for other cities or localities in similar situations.

---

[4] Special thanks go to Florencia Álvarez for coordinating the interviews with key informants and facilitating communication and exchanges with the technical groups of BA Public Works and Government Commitments.

[5] In 2017, the government of the CABA created a macro project that compiles and coordinates all the open government policies within the administration. This was named the Open Government Ecosystem. Seehttps://gobiernoabierto.buenosaires.gob.ar/.

I. The "Open Innovation" Model as a Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Changes in Traditional Bureaucracy

Over many years, Latin American governments have been implementing changes in their public management model and their organizational cultures. These changes seek to incorporate basic principles of open government, which produce a significant break with the management paradigm and the way that innovation is introduced in public administration. These transformations are similar to those identified by Chesbrough (2003) within private sector organizations. Chesbrough states that, in response to changes in market trends, organizations have undergone a paradigm shift from "closed innovation" to "open innovation." The open innovation conceptual framework can be usefully applied in this study, since it shares dynamics and principles with those of open government and maximizes the explanatory capacity of the change.

"Open innovation" vs. "closed innovation." Traditionally, innovation in organizations was conceived of as a closed process in which the efforts and initiatives to introduce changes emerged from inside the organization itself: the organization's own members developed the innovation and the change (closed circuit of innovation). According to Chesbrough, transformations in the market and the dynamics of the economy in recent decades have produced a gradual transformation of the change process paradigm. Organizations have become increasingly open and

permeable to changes that happen in their surroundings, and the outside is no longer viewed as a threat but rather as an opportunity. Open innovation favors a dynamic process in which the organization's innovation efforts might be the result of an interaction with the outside.

Open innovation as a driver of change for open government. The assumption that underpins open innovation is that most organizations do not have a monopoly on either the knowledge or the tools necessary to generate all the innovations that they desire, nor are they quick or dynamic enough to adapt to changing trends; therein lies the need to seek and to interact with the outside. Although the concept of open innovation proposed by Chesbrough is often used when studying the development of new products or processes in the business realm, it can also be applied to analyze the development of new public services, as in the case of open government in the CABA. In 2017, and as a consequence of the many open government initiatives carried out since 2008, the CABA created the Open Government Ecosystem. This establishes the city's new management model and identifies all the areas of public policy currently implementing open government initiatives. Many of these initiatives have points of intersection that enable transformation in the culture of government and enhance its effects.

Stages and actors in open innovation. Chesbrough identifies three stages in implementing open innovation, together with a group of actors that intervene in each (Table 1). The first stage is **funding innovation**, which may be driven by investors who finance projects already in the market to give them greater impact and scope, or by benefactors who finance projects currently in the first phase of development. The second stage is **generating innovation**, which might be undertaken by explorers (those who research the market to create innovations), merchants (who innovate in search of an economic return), architects (who involve different actors in the process of innovation, giving coherence to the final product), or missionaries (who innovate to serve a cause). The final group identifies those who would be responsible for **commercializing innovation**: the innovation marketers or the so-called one-stop center (which markets low-cost products or services by creating communities of users). Throughout the creation and implementation of the CABA open government management model, many of these actors were present and played a key role.

Table 1: Stages and Actors in the Open Innovation Model

Funding innovation	**Innovation investors:** finance projects that are already in the market to provide greater impact and scope.
	Innovation benefactors: finance projects that are in the first stage of development.
Generating innovation	**Innovation explorers:** research the market to create innovations.
	Innovation merchants: innovate seeking economic gain.
	Innovation architects: involve different actors in the innovation process, providing coherence for the final product.
	Innovation missionaries: innovate in the service of a cause.
Commercializing innovation	**Innovation marketers:** identify the needs of the market to incorporate products profitable for the organization.
	One-stop center: commercializes low cost products or services by creating communities of users.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Chesbrough (2003).

II. The Open Government Ecosystem as a Management Model in the City

Buenos Aires has been one of the pioneer cities in the country in developing a participatory and open data management model (see Box 1). Past experience served as the basis for formalizing a management model based on the principles of open government that, in 2017, turned into what the government called the Open Government Ecosystem. Past experiences in increasing access to information and adopting electronic government policies were applied to public administration management, and activities such as hackathons and the creation of the city's Smart Lab helped disseminate the new modalities within the administration. The CABA thus became the first to implement a policy that has become increasingly sustainable over time. At the same time, the city's participation in the OGP[6] strengthened the work methodology that was already being implemented in this direction. The open government management model became a conceptual framework for generating a change in the concept of public policy and its relationship with citizens.

The creation of the Ecosystem in 2017 shaped the management model that was already under development in the CABA and gave unity and coherence to the practices of co-creation[7] and citizen participation. Open government was one of the CABA government's strategic priorities. The Ecosystem helped boost its visibility and give greater momentum to projects and management models, while helping to create a new organizational culture.

---

6 The OGP emerged around mid-2011 with the aims of (1) increasing the availability of information about the government's activities, (2) supporting citizen participation, (3) applying standards of professional integrity to all governments and their civil servants, and (4) enhancing access to new technologies for more open data and accountability. The OGP has gradually gained supporters among the most important cities and countries of the world.

---

7 The principle of co-creation is one of the pillars of open government. Co-creation means developing initiatives through a multisector process that enjoys the active participation of citizens and civil society.

Box 1: Background Factors that Contributed to the Emergence of Open Government in the City

The Access to Public Information Act: Law 104, 1998, established that the State is required to provide truthful and complete information in response to a request from citizens, without the latter needing to justify such a request.

Digitalization of records: In 2010, the public administration modernization plan was created (Law 3.304). It established the implementation of e-government and new technologies for digitalizing procedures and government communications. Over the years, the Document Administration System (Sistema de Administración de Documentos, or SADE) for electronic transactions was created, which progressively incorporated a number of document management modules until it became the SADE ecosystem.

Creation of the Ministry of Modernization (Decree 660/11): In December 2011, the Ministry of Modernization was established, with a clear top-down leadership approach. The Open Government Directorate was charged with creating the open data portal (BA Data).

The open data portal and its dissemination activities: In March 2012, the Ministry of Modernization launched the data.buenosaires.gob.ar platform, which creates a catalogue of databases available to the citizen containing information on the different areas of public administration in formats that permit data reuse. When the website was launched, there were 37 databases available for consultation or download in an easy access format. In April 2018, the number of available databases reached 214. At the same time, activities were carried out to promote the use of data, such as BA hackathons, BA Apps, BA Camps, the Government Lab, and Gob Camp.

Participation in the Open Government Partnership: Toward the end of 2015, the OGP launched its Subnational Government Pilot Program, and the CABA was one of the 15 pioneer cities selected to implement an action plan. In 2017, the city participated in the Third National Open Government Action Plan. Government and civil society worked together to co-create the CABA goal. The General Directorate for Institutional Coordination and Communication, part of the Ministry of Urban Development and Transportation, presented the goal, which was called the Observatory of Open Urban Works: accountability and citizen participation.

The ecosystem currently encompasses13 open government initiatives (Table 2) on the same website (gobiernoabierto.buenosaires.gob.ar), where specific information about each of them can be found and their progress monitored. The initiatives within the ecosystem are (1) BA in OGP, (2) Open Budget, (3) BA Data, (4) BA Chooses, (5) Collaborative Request Management, (6) BA Public Works, (7) Open Government Plan, (8) Olympic Legacy, (9) Citizen Participation, (10) Government Commitments, (11) Participatory Strategic Plan of Buenos Aires 2035, (12) Dialogue BA, and (13) BA Collaborative City. Different areas within the government lead the projects. The Ministry of Economy is responsible for the Open Budget Initiative, while Collaborative Request Management is the responsibility of the Citizen Services and Management Secretariat. Nonetheless, the General Secretariat and International Relations (Secretaría General y Relaciones Internacionales, or SGYRI) and the Undersecretariat for Strategic Management and Institutional Quality (Subsecretaría General de Gestión Estratégica y Calidad Institucional, or SSGECI) coordinate the areas involved in each initiative and drive new initiatives in other sectors of government.

Table 2: Open Government Ecosystem Initiatives

Project	Description	Project leader	Link
1. Open Budget	Publishes the detailed budget of the City of Buenos Aires	Ministry of Economy and Finances	http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/presupuestoabierto
2. Government Commitments	The Government Commitments are specific and measurable goals, which are announced by the Chief of Government, and allow accountability	General Secretariat and International Relations	http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/compromisos
3. Open Government Plan	Publication of the Government Plan in a simple and easy-to-access format	Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers / General Secretariat and International Relations	https://plandegobierno.buenosaires.gob.ar/
4. BA Public Works	Observatory of Open Urban Works	Ministry of Urban Development and Transport / General Secretariat and International Relations	http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/baobras
5. Collaborative Request Management	Online platform for making requests and for dealing with requests made by citizens	Citizen Services and Management Secretariat	https://gestioncolaborativa.buenosaires.gob.ar/prestaciones

6. Participatory Strategic Plan of BA 2035	The Council puts forward consensual strategic plans to inform policy-making in the city	Strategic Planning Council Coordination Unit (Unidad de Coordinación del Consejo de Planeamiento Estratégico, or UCPE)	http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/cope
7. BA Data	Publication of databases with information about government management in a reusable format	General Secretariat and International Relations	https://data.buenosaires.gob.ar/
8. Olympic Legacy	Monitors progress of public works and the procurement processes linked to construction of the Olympic Village	Vice-Chief of Government / General Secretariat and International Relations	http://legadoolimpico.buenosaires.gob.ar/
9. Citizen Participation	Participative practices that enable citizens to collaborate and share their opinions about certain initiatives	Undersecretariat for Communication / Citizen participation	http://bapc.buenosaires.gob.ar/
10. BA Chooses	Online platform for proposing ideas and projects for the city	Undersecretariat for Communication / Citizen participation	https://baelige.buenosaires.gob.ar/
11. BA in OGP	The city's open government action plan in the OGP	General Secretariat and International Relations	http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/agendadetransparencia/gobierno-abierto/bsas-en-alianza/cronograma
12. Dialogue BA	A program that holds thematic round tables to help build democratic institutions and sustainable policies	Ministry of Government	http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/gobierno/dialogandoba
13. BA Collaborative City	Public-private coordination program that promotes the construction of a common agenda between business, NGOs, and the government based on social responsibility, business, and sustainability in the city	Secretariat of Citizen Culture and Civil Service	https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/jefaturadegabinete/culturaciudadana/ciudad-colaborativa

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data available at: https://gobiernoabierto.buenosaires.gob.ar/.

II. THE OPEN GOVERNMENT ECOSYSTEM

Institutional Design and Actors in the Ecosystem

Developing and implementing open government in the CABA began as a top-down process. Since its inception, the process enjoyed the strong support of the Chief of Government and became one of its top priority policies. Since developing and implementing open government require a strong component of collaboration and coordination, backing from the city's Chief of Government became a crucial element in understanding the scope and the magnitude of the Open Government Ecosystem. Top-down leadership was also essential when difficulties or coordination problems arose, as it allowed the initiative to be re-energized and redirected.

Interest and support from the Chief of Government in the new management model was apparent from the very beginning of Horacio Rodríguez Larreta's administration at the end of 2015. It manifested itself in concrete measures such as the creation of an organizational structure designed to implement open government policies. Under Rodríguez Larreta's management, the SGYRI)[8] was given new functions, some of which remained in the hands of the new SSGECI (see Diagram 1), while others became the responsibility of the UGC. The SGYRI took on the role of innovation investor, sponsoring the initia-

tive, while the SSGECI became the architect of open government innovation. Within the Undersecretariat, the Directorate General for Institutional Quality and Open Government (Dirección General de Calidad Institucional y Gobierno Abierto, or DGCIGA) was created. It became a key actor in the process, as the innovation missionaries were responsible for disseminating the principles of open government and the new way of working.

The new organizational structure, as discussed above, included the creation of the UGC, whose mission, functions, and initiatives include high-profile projects that comprise the Open Government Ecosystem. Thus, the UGC shares with the SSGECI the role of innovation architect. Its initiatives feed into the open government policy, especially the Government Commitments project. The UGC also leads the development of evidence-based public policies and the use of data for designing and evaluating public policies in the metropolitan sphere.

---

8 The SGYRI reports to the Chief of Government's Office. Its purpose has been to assist the Chief of Government coordinate strategic priorities since open government became a government priority at the end of 2015.

Diagram 1: Organization of the General Secretariat and International Relations

CABA Tourism entity

· · · ·

General Secretariat and International Relations (SGYRI)

· · · ·

Compliance Management Unit (UGC)

Strategic Plan Coordinating Unit (UCPE)

· · · ·

Undersecretariat for International and Institutional Relations (SSRIEI)

Undersecretariat for Strategic Management and Institutional Quality (SSGECI)

Directorate General for Protocol and Ceremony (DGPRYCE)

Directorate General for Strategic Management (DGGE)

Directorate General for International Relations and Cooperation (DGRIC)

Directorate General for Institutional Quality and Open Government (DGCIGA)

Directorate General for Religion (DGCUL)

This new organizational chart established clear rules with respect to the capacities, responsibilities, and resources that each actor would have to achieve the goals. The change in design at the center of government marked a significant transformation in relation to the way initiatives had previously been implemented, ushering in a more holistic and collaborative approach.

The SSGECI project portfolio was expanded over time and, consequently, so were its structure and its resources. Many activities and responsibilities became concentrated within the SSGECI, especially following the dissolution of the Ministry of Modernization, when the activities of the open data portal were transferred to the SSGECI (Decree 119/2018). The

unification of open government activities and initiatives under the auspices of a single sub-secretariat further facilitates coordination, communication, and policy implementation.

Many SSGECI and DGCIGA civil servants and employees of the SSGECI came from civil society and had gained experience in matters such as transparency, participation, and accountability. This important aspect explains the speedy development and implementation of the management model at the center of government. The training and expertise of the civil servants in this area meant they could quickly put the work methodology into action, and they were well received within the civil society sector.

Implementing Ecosystem Initiatives

The transversality[9] in the design of the initiatives represented an essential change in the management model. The methodology of co-creation[10] between different areas of government and civil society implied

9 Transversality refers to collaborative work undertaken by different areas of government, which goes beyond ordinary coordination or organizational integration, and presupposes establishing new lines of work or objectives that surpass sector-based objectives of each area or organization. Transversality helps build capacities in ministries, maximizes the potential for joint work, and creates synergies (see Serra, 2005).

10 Co-creation is a term traditionally used by the private sector, but which has recently begun to be applied to the public sector. The idea of co-creation presupposes that governments and citizens initiate, design, or implement programs or projects together.

a change in public policymaking. This principle gave rise to understandable resistance in certain sectors of the government that were unaccustomed to interacting either with other areas within government itself or with sectors of civil society.

Generally, the success or failure of the open government initiatives was largely attributable to the interest and willingness of the leaders (both government and civil society) in each area in developing and implementing a genuine co-creation and collaboration work agenda. Along with the activities related to designing the initiative, the DGCIGA performed a fundamental task with respect to diffusing and disseminating, both within and outside the government, the principles of open government and their impact on public management. One of the main obstacles in this process was the difficulty of explaining the management model inside the government, because it implied a transformation of its organizational culture.

Initially there was resistance from different areas of the administration and some civil servants to working collaboratively with other areas of government and with citizens, or an unwillingness to share data. Such resistance was due to various factors. First, civil servants did not grasp the importance and the potential benefits of transparency, open information, and working collaboratively. Second, it collided with the administration's organizational culture, since civil servants associated transversal collaboration in the design of public policies with a loss of power or managerial autonomy. Faced with this scenario, members of the

DGCIGA assumed the laborious task of educating staff about the virtues of the new management model, especially to recalcitrant segments of the center of government where there was less awareness about open government and greater resistance to change.

Members of the DGCIGA were responsible for working on coordination and collaboration problems at the center of government in each initiative. Initially, an open government diffusion strategy was developed in each area, especially the recalcitrant ones, but this strategy became costly because it was time consuming and did not produce the expected results. The second strategy adopted was based on the search for internal leaders, or "champions," to generate a positive agenda around the change. The champions included areas within the government that developed innovative open government policies with successful results for the administration in terms of public service provision. These success cases enabled the DGCIGA to give greater visibility at the center of government to the benefits that accrue from a co-creation and participation policy and thereby achieve greater acceptance of the new management model. The strategy of promoting champions meant teaching by example and creating a contagion effect in the center of government.

The leadership capacity of the SGYRI facilitated this work. Since the SGYRI is the part of the center of government tasked with setting the Chief of Government's strategic agendas, it wields far-reaching influence over the design and the implementation of crosscutting projects that involve or affect all the ministries.

This has been a significant factor in the success of the initiatives, since it forced diverse areas of government to sign on to an open government agenda that was, in some cases, largely unknown to them. It endowed the initiative with a multi-ministerial character, as well as greater thematic variety, since it tackled a range of themes such as budget transparency, public procurement, citizen services, public works, transportation, and sexual and reproductive health.

The Open Government Ecosystem is a new public management model for generating change. While all of its initiatives bear the hallmark of innovation, two of them—Government Commitments and BA Public Works—were chosen to be analyzed in depth in the following sections. They were chosen because of the degree of public policy innovation that they propose, and the level of coordination and harmonization that they require from the government to be implemented.

III. Case 1: Government Commitments

In December 2015, the new administration took office with a message of accountability and the need to deliver on its campaign promises and public policies. The Government Commitments initiative emerged from the government's requirement to move toward results-based management and improve the degree of fulfillment of election promises, with a view to winning citizens' trust. To achieve these objectives, the Chief of Government created the UGC, which fell under the SGYRI (see Diagram 1). In this way, the CABA Chief of Government was the innovation investor, while UGC became the innovation architect.

The UGC is the basis for the open government model because it strengthens monitoring. Citizens have access to information on each policy's progress and, consequently, its results. The initiative is based on the government's view that the administration should reach out to citizens and strengthen its relationship with them, as well as improve the level of trust. The UGC is a management tool that promotes compliance with government priorities while fostering transparency and the creation of a more efficient results- and evidence-based administration. Opening government to citizens and offering them easily understood information about the degree of progress made on commitments produces, as a positive externality, an improvement in citizens' trust in their institutions and politicians. The CABA is currently the only Latin American capital that publishes all its information in an open data format to enable citizens to monitor its compliance with government commitments.

What are the Government Commitments?

Government Commitments is an initiative led by a delivery unit, the UGC, that helps the government improve compliance with public policies. The UGC supported the SGYRI and the Chief of Government in selecting a group of priority policies—the so-called Government Commitments—within the universe of policies presented in the government plan. The UGC identifies the actions needed to fulfill the commitments by establishing an action plan to achieve them, in line with the government plan and coordinated from the Chief of the Cabinet's Office. Alongside the other initiatives that comprise the Open Government Ecosystem, Government Commitments puts into practice a new results- and empirical evidence-based management model.

The UGC developed the www.buenosaires.gob.ar/compromisos platform, which featured information about all of the 54 commitments assumed. The commitments were announced gradually: 20 were launched in February 2016, 15 in August 2016, 15 in February 2017, and 4 in February 2018. The platform offers the citizen detailed and updated informa-

tion about each commitment, with both the actual and planned trajectories. There is a search engine through which the commitments can be organized by year of compliance or state of progress (from 0 percent to 25 percent, from 25 percent to 50 percent, from 50 percent to 75 percent, and from 75 percent to 100 percent). The commitments are grouped into four main strands of management: (1) enjoyment and co-existence (13 commitments); (2) human-scale cities (15 commitments); (3) creativity (10 commitments), and (4) social integration (16 commitments).

Each commitment has a data sheet with information explaining the reasons why it is a priority for the government, the areas of government involved, the actions and tasks to be carried out, the state of progress, and the way it furthers compliance with United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda goals, to which the CABA subscribes. Each data sheet contains multimedia material, such as videos, figures, photographs, and tables to support the information given.

Creating and implementing the Commitments

The UGC is responsible for leading the initiative within the framework of the SGYRI. It therefore designed the methodology that established the criteria for selecting the Priority Commitments. It also created a prioritization matrix and a set of tools to use for monitoring compliance with the commitments. The methodology was developed as part of a rigorous process

that involved establishing precise and measurable indicators. The unit team put it into operation within two months and applied it to a universe of 80 projects taken from election campaign promises and proposals from each ministry.

The process of implementing and accompanying the commitments required actions to promote transversality and co-creation practices among the different areas of government. The UGC created three tools aimed at monitoring implementation of the commitments: (1) a probability of compliance index,[11] (2) compliance trajectories,[12] and (3) chains of compliance.[13]

With respect to monitoring activities, the UGC coordinated citizen monitoring and evaluation activities such as, for example, holding local council meetings between the Chief of Government and residents. Nowadays, co-creation with citizens is in the process of development and is one of the areas that needs to be strengthened. Monitoring is also carried out within the government, via monthly or fortnightly monitoring meetings with each ministry or area to review progress with a view to correcting potential

11 The aim of the probability of compliance index is to give a numerical value to the progress made on each commitment to identify the feasibility of achieving the stipulated goal in the agreed timeframe.

12 The compliance trajectories consist of comparing the expected trajectories with the planned trajectories to establish whether the commitment is progressing at the expected level and rate; if not, adjustments can be made to rectify the situation.

13 The chains of compliance help identify the actors responsible for carrying out each activity needed to ensure that the commitment is completed in time and correctly..

deviations, quarterly presentations in the Chief of Cabinet's Office, and publication of progress on the Government Commitments website, among others.

Although the UGC had a strong technical focus during the design and implementation phases, it also played a key role in internal diffusion of the initiative, since its members became the innovation missionaries. Initially, the ministries knew very little about the initiative and still less about the commitments they were expected to fulfill. To turn this situation around, a strong internal communication campaign was carried out, which included: hanging banners on public buildings with the list of the commitments, organizing talks and informative meetings in each area, sending emails, and short recordings by the ministers and their subordinates and civil servants about the commitments that had been assumed and that should now be achieved. The activities to monitor compliance reinforced the initiative's profile in the ministries until it became a model for government management. The inclusion of the commitments in the Chief of Government's speech at the opening of sessions has also helped to strengthen the initiative's publicity campaign and its visibility at the center of government.

Results and Achievements

The Government Commitments initiative is a new kind of management that has had a demonstrable positive impact on citizens' trust levels, which is one of the principles of open government. Likewise, the initiative increases the efficiency of government processes, produces outcomes that can be achieved over the medium term, takes full advantage of the benefits of transversal coordination, and improves communication with citizens to enhance accountability. The commitments have enormous potential to optimize government performance and institutionalize a results- and evidence-based management model that can be reproduced in other cities or municipalities, such as Pilar in the province of Buenos Aires and, recently, Madrid, Spain. According to existing and collected data, the initiative's achievements can be evaluated in terms of citizen trust and results-based management.

1. Improving trust

In December 2016 and 2017, experimental online interviews were carried out with a group of Internet users about the Commitments initiative and the level of trust in the government (Government Commitments, GCBA, December 2017). The level of trust in the government did not change for those users who were already aware of the initiative (expected result), while the level of trust in government increased significantly among those who were unaware of the initiative (see Figure 1). The survey results reveal, on the one hand, the importance of the initiative in improving levels of trust in the government and, on the other, that there is room for improvement in generating communication strate-

gies to ensure that the results-based management model becomes part of the public agenda and is institutionalized in practice.

Moreover, participation by local residents in public accountability events has increased significantly since the Commitments were announced in February 2016 until the second accountability meeting in February 2018, as has the number of views and the time spent on the web platform.

It has yet to be established whether the initiative has helped citizens increase accountability and involvement in monitoring government actions, beyond the initiatives already mentioned. This might be an interesting area in which to explore opportunities for co-creation and promotion of the use of data.
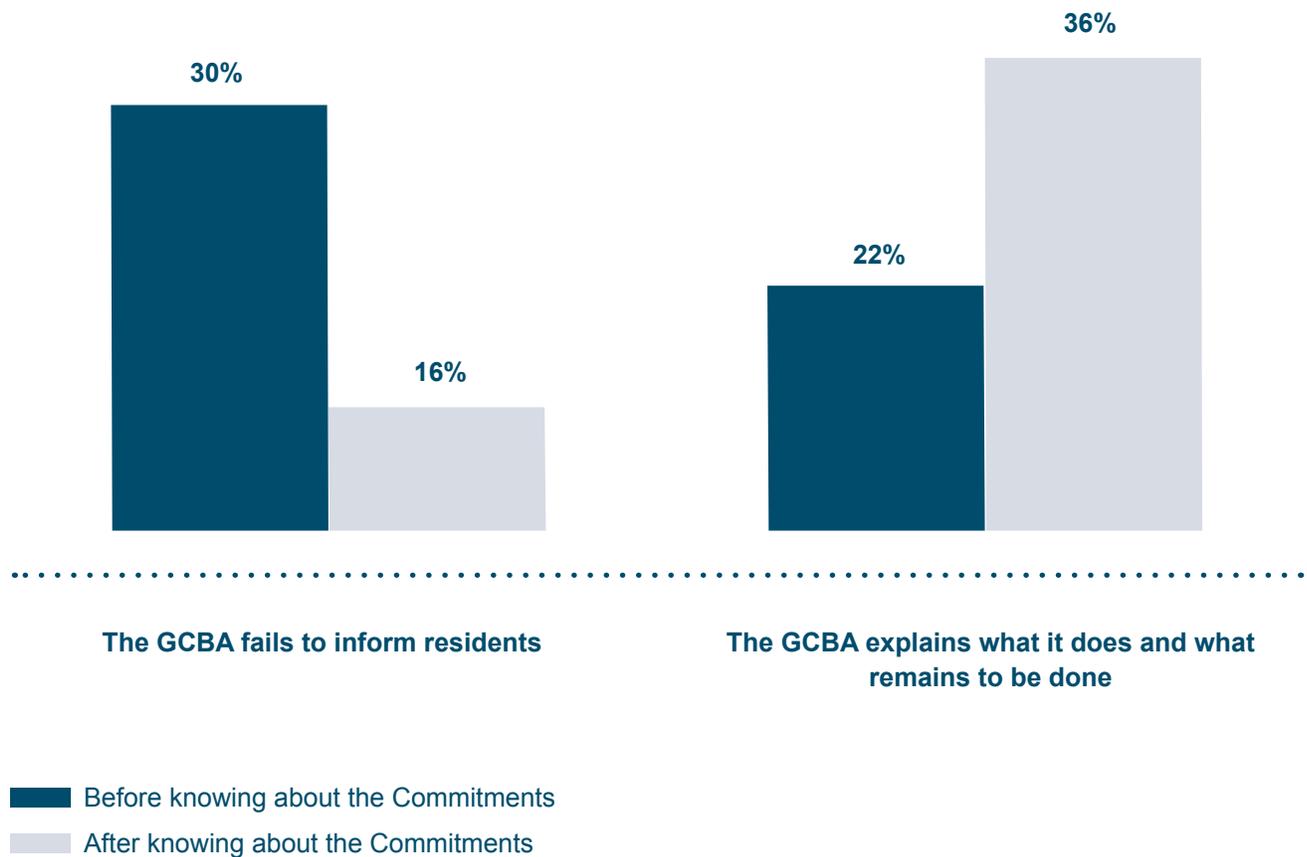
2. Results-based management

With respect to the achievements under the new results-based management format, the first stage has posted satisfactory results related to more efficient internal processes. Of the 54 commitments assumed between February 2017 and 2019, 17 were met (as of June 2018), while three were not. The majority of the commitments were achieved in 2017 (see Figure 2). Using the total number of commitments fulfilled or unfulfilled, the percentage of compliance can be calculated. For 2016, compliance reached 66.7 percent, and in 2017 it rose to 87.5 percent. The majority of the commitments still

to be completed are expected to be met in 2019. It remains to be seen whether the upward trend in compliance will be maintained throughout 2019.

It is worth mentioning that several of the commitments include two sub-commitments. This makes it difficult to evaluate them, especially in cases of non-compliance with just one of them. For example, in 2016, the unachieved commitment was "Subway every 3 minutes and free WiFi." The free WiFi goal was 100 percent executed, but the 3-minute frequency of subways was only 93 percent achieved. As a result, the commitment is classified as not met although one of the components was satisfactorily achieved. Likewise, in cases where both commitments are fulfilled in both time and form, they are counted as a single commitment, when in reality they should be treated as two. In these cases, the way the commitments are defined needs to improve. This strict approach to evaluating compliance with the commitments comes from a conservative methodological stance that, while aiming to avoid overvaluing positive results, ends up undervaluing the government's performance.

The growing rate of compliance under the Government Commitments also reflects an improvement in communication at the center of government and in transversal coordination. The tools for ensuring compliance with the commitments put consistency in communication within the government and the capacity of the areas to coordinate and collaborate to

Figure 1: Impact of Awareness of the Government Commitments

The GCBA fails to inform residents

The GCBA explains what it does and what remains to be done

■ Before knowing about the Commitments
□ After knowing about the Commitments

Source: Survey of Government Commitments, GCBA (December 2017).

the test. Nowadays, there is a culture of "appropriation" of the commitments by the ministries, which is a product of the strong communication campaign and the positive outcomes that implementation has delivered, although the initiative remains to be strengthened among the mid and lower ranges of the ministries. This appropriation has taken place in the higher ranges of the administration, and inclusion of the

Figure 2: Status of the Government Commitments as of 2017

Legend:
- ■ Commitments per year of compliance
- ■ Commitments met
- ■ Commitments pending completion
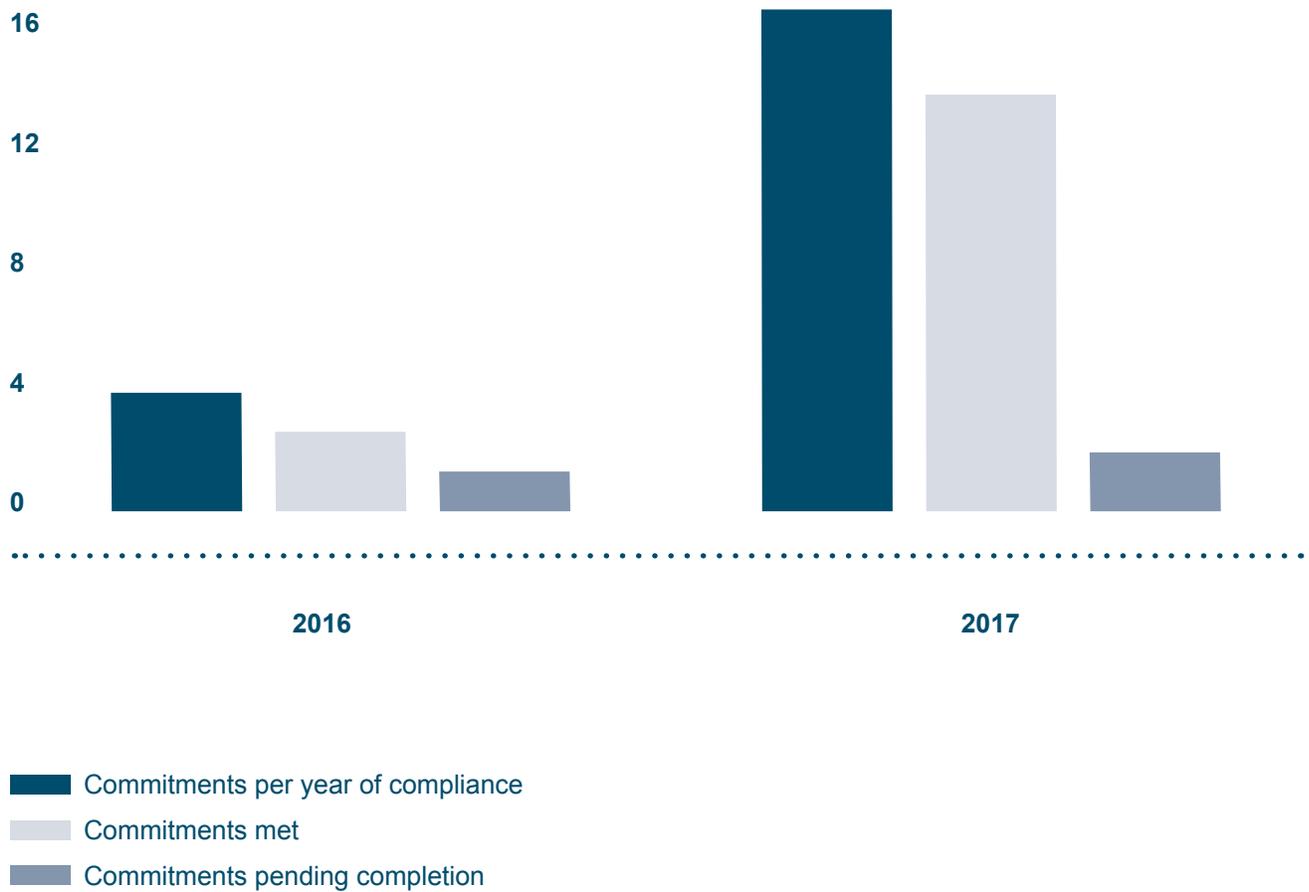
Source: Authors' elaboration, using data available at: www.buenosaires.gob.ar/compromisos.

state of progress of the Government Commitments has now been institutionalized as part of the Chief of Government's speech during the opening of ordinary sessions of the City of Buenos Aires Legislature.

IV. Case 2: BA Public Works

In 2015, the Chief of Government of the CABA launched an urban infrastructure plan that was ambitious both for the volume of investment and for the scale of the public works. This plan includes the urbanization of various illegal settlements, construction of the Paseo del Bajo, a freeway that will link the south of the city with the north, and the completion of all the public works around the new Olympic Village for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games. In this context, the need arose to publicly showcase the aforementioned plan of public works, which accounted for 26 percent of the city's budget and included more than 900 projects. Throughout 2015, numerous public corruption scandals surfaced, most of them related to infrastructure and public works projects carried out by the national government between 2007 and 2011.[14] Although the scandals were not linked to CABA projects or civil servants, the causes of the corruption affected the trust and belief of citizens in the policies linked to the issue. In view of this situation, the Ministry of Urban Development and Transportation (Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Transporte, or MDUyT) proposed the creation of an open data portal—the Observatory of Open Urban Works—featuring information about the public works taking place in the area.

In the beginning, the MDUyT acted as an innovation architect. Subsequently, public works from other ministries were progressively added, which led to a rearrangement of the roles of all the innovation actors. The BA Public Works portal is part of the 54 Government Commitments of the Chief of Government and has been one of the city's goals in the Third National Open Government Action Plan (2016–19). In both cases, the commitment was satisfactorily achieved, exceeding initial expectations. BA Public Works has enormous potential to develop further and become an excellent open government management model with respect to public works and infrastructure.

What is BA Public Works?

BA Public Works is an online platform (www.buenosaires.gob.ar/baobras) in an open format that provides georeferenced and visualized information about the public works carried out by the city government. Due to the large number of public works underway in Buenos Aires, those related to routine maintenance are not included on the portal, while those relating to building maintenance or renovations of one or more buildings are included. Large-scale public works that involve a combination of smaller works, such as the Olympic Village or the Ecoparque, are classified as part of the same group to make their visualization on the portal easier. Toward the end of August 2018, the

---

14 For more details, see: https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1951531-investigan-60-casos-de-corrupcion-del-kirchnerismo.

website registered 974 public works and projects (74 percent of them already completed). The areas responsible for the highest number of public works are the Ministry of Education and Innovation (24 percent), the Ministry of Environment and Public Spaces (21 percent), the MDUyT (15 percent), and South Buenos Aires Corporation (12 percent).

Each public work has a technical data sheet with 30 indicators that are updated every four months. The indicators measure different aspects of the public work: the full name of the public work, type, description, location, budget, the firm responsible, the number of workers employed, expected completion date, photographs of the work, percentage of progress, and direct access to the procurement contract. The team is currently working on incorporating new indicators to the technical data sheet to bring BA Public Works up to the standards of CoST (an NGO that seeks to enhance transparency in the infrastructure sector). The portal has a search engine that enables searches to be filtered by variable, such as district, responsible area, stage, type, size of investment, contracting firm, and name of the project.

BA Public Works has three clear objectives: communicate, disclose, and monitor. The government presents the Internet portal as a good communication platform to inform local residents about the public works carried out and the characteristics of the process. Based on the information from the website, the government developed a public works diffusion and outreach strategy for citizens to improve communication channels

and participation (see Box 2). BA Public Works also imposes greater transparency on government management, so that citizens can access information without having to previously request it. At the same time, open data enables citizens to monitor the government, since they have all the information required to monitor public works.

Creating and Implementing BA Public Works

The process of creating and implementing BA Public Works was characterized by close collaboration among different areas of government and a significant transversal coordination effort undertaken by the SSGECI. The portal initiative started within the MDUyT, and comments from citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) were taken into consideration during its design. When the initiative was presented to the Chief of the Cabinet's Office, the portal featured 70 public works, all by the MDUyT. The Chief of Government proposed broadening the scope of the initiative because of its enormous potential, which could be deployed both in the center of government and the wider community. The Chief of Government's proposal was to include all the public works carried out in the city (e.g., schools, hospitals, theaters), as well as those that were executed by other ministries. The expansion of the project meant rearranging the actors involved and a change in the portal's management and implementation strategy. The Chief of the Cabinet of Min-

isters thereby became an innovation investor, and the SGYRI became part of the innovation architects team. When the website was launched in August 2018, it featured 974 public works from seven ministries. The launch of BA Public Works was widely reported in both the national and the local press.

BA Public Works has placed the open source code at the disposal of citizens and other public entities so that other localities can download it and adapt it to their needs.[15] The municipalities of Bahía Blanca, Mar del Plata, and Olavarría are currently working on their own versions of BA Public Works. The SGYRI has developed two manuals to help the municipalities that wish to implement this proposal, and

15 For more details, see: http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/baobras/codigo-abierto.

Box 2. BA Public Works: Diffusion and Outreach to Citizens

BA Public Works has various channels of communication that enable citizens to find out about the initiative and access information.

1. Outreach meetings with the Head and Vice-Chief of Government: publicity totems, flyers, and banners are posted in neighborhood meetings to announce the most important public works underway in the district and demonstrate the portal's usefulness as a citizen monitoring tool.

2. Communication through community networks, via neighborhood meetings in which totems, flyers, and banners are used to publicize the most important public works in the city and the locality, enabling citizens to familiarize themselves with the portal.

3. On-site communication. The website's URL is displayed on signs at the building site itself, enabling local residents to get an update on the progress of the work.

4. Citizen services via Chat box 147. Queries from citizens regarding public works channeled through the chat box are redirected to the BA Public Works portal. The chat box is a virtual tool that is used to resolve citizens' queries relating to bureaucratic procedures, complaints, and information requests.

technical assistance will be provided to the municipalities that require it. The open source code was also shared at the Urban 20 Mayors Summit (within the framework of the G20), attended by mayors from all over the country. The city is also working with the Inter- IDB to incorporate the code into its store of online open data tools.

During the implementation phase, various challenges arose, some of which were tackled and solved as the months went by.

1 - Creation of a standardized public works data matrix, compatible for the different areas of government

One of the first obstacles faced by civil servants was determining which data to publish. During this process they identified two problems. First, the work team found that available data on public works were not in a standardized format and that the way in which the data were measured varied according to the criteria of each area. Second, the sources of information about public works were dispersed throughout the administration.

With respect to the first problem, the DGCIGA asked all the communication and planning areas participating in the project to draft a coding manual with clear rules on how to code the information for each variable. The process of deliberation and participation of the different areas led to the approval of a coding manual that established clear coding instructions for the technical data sheets, technical specifications for photographs uploaded to the portal, and the data-

loading procedure. The implementation process highlighted the importance of having a data matrix that is comprehensible and applicable to the different areas. The matrix is the work tool that establishes a common language, and the starting point for implementing the initiative.

With respect to the second problem, the work team, with the support of the SGYRI, began to identify the locations of the sources of information, which led to a reorganization within the public administration. Although a more comprehensive level of information is now available, work is continuing on automating the data process, via the Chief of the Cabinet's Office and the Integrated Management Platform (Plataforma Integral de Gestión, or PIG).

2 - Reluctance of some areas of government to disclose the necessary information about public works

Although the project gained the support of other areas of government, some sectors were less willing to disclose information, due to apprehension about being evaluated by citizens. This apprehension was not always related to revealing poor performance; rather, in some cases they were unaccustomed to having their practices evaluated. Support from the Chief of Government was a key factor in this respect, since he backed up the actions of the civil servants during the internal meetings and highlighted the value of the portal initiative for the government.

One key lesson was the importance of being able to rely on high-level political backing for the initia-

tive, which contributes to uptake and collaboration by government actors. The city also enjoyed international backing from the OGP, as BA Public Works was part of the Third National Open Government Action Plan. The support of both the leadership and international actors boosted the initiative's legitimacy, especially in those areas that were more resistant.

3 - Governance and transversal coordination

Putting BA Public Works into operation required extensive collaboration among the different areas and transversal coordination by the SSGECI. The challenge consisted of identifying the partner in each area with whom to work to implement the portal. One lesson learned was that the best allies in each area are those that work in the communication and planning sectors. The communication area can provide good-quality graphic information for creating a record to illustrate how the public works are progressing, while the planning area provides technical information on the public works to be included in the database's technical data sheets. It is crucial to designate an area coordinator to lead the initiative, with strategic allies in the management monitoring area and the respective communication and planning areas of the ministries.

Another coordination challenge is that allies can often change, since in many areas those responsible for communication and planning and for interacting with the SSGECI are replaced over time. The process can be slowed down if the partners are constantly changed, as any new allies have to train and interi-

orize the initiative. Although the coding manual might mitigate this effect somewhat, the challenge remains.

4 - Updating the database

Since BA Public Works began to publish, the data have been updated every four months. Each area is contacted for this purpose. The update reveals how the public works are progressing, which ones have been completed and which new public works are being incorporated into the database. Due to the volume of information to be updated and the number of actors that intervene in data updating in each ministry, the updating process is one of the most time-consuming tasks and requires coordination.

Progress is being made on a joint work plan with the Directorate General for Management Coordination, which reports to the Chief of the Cabinet's Office, to increase the interoperability of two databases: the internal projects and public works monitoring database, through which management is monitored, and database used by the BA Public Works website to function. Once this work plan has been concluded and database compatibility achieved, the following key improvements will help make the BA Public Works initiative sustainable over the long term:

- Reducing the time required to update the website: updating will be carried out monthly.

- Automated updating will be carried out without prior consultation with the areas, because the information will be taken from a centralized da-

tabase that the areas must upload to the PIG, the internal management monitoring program, before any new work for which they are responsible is begun.

Results and Achievements

Although it is still too early to measure the impact of BA Public Works, some performance indicators in the areas of communication and transparency can be identified.

1 - Communication

BA Public Works is the DGCIGA's most frequently viewed website and one of the three most consulted within the Open Government Ecosystem (Google Analytics, BA Public Works website, October 2017 – October 2018). If the flow of visits to BA Public Works is compared to overall traffic on the buenosaires.gob.ar domain, the pages most frequently consulted are related to queries about procedures, infractions, and appointments, at 8.81 percent, and BA Public Works, at 0.12 percent.

A more detailed analysis of visitor traffic to the portal reveals that the highest circulation occurred when the website enjoyed greatest coverage in the media: during its launch in November 2017 (around 30,000 views) and in April of 2018, following the first update (around 15,000 views) (see Figure 3). The launch of the portal was accompanied by a high-profile campaign in the media, in which the Chief of Government participated along with journalists. Later, the Chief of Government began to include information about BA Public Works in meetings with citizens.

As Figure 3 reveals, from November 2017 to September 2018, 109,335 visits to the portal were recorded, with an average permanence time of 2 minutes 25 seconds. Of those, 34.73 percent were new visitors and 65.27 percent were returning visitors. The most frequently consulted public works were those with the largest scale and impact in the city, such as the Exhibition and Convention Center, the Olympic Village, the Paseo del Bajo, and the Olympic Park. Due to the high number of ongoing public works, the website has a section dedicated to "highlighted public works," with information directly related to eight public works selected at random.

BA Public Works also indirectly improved communication at the center of government. First, standardization of common formats for coding information about public works improved the accuracy and quality of the data and enabled a common language to be created within the government that is comprehensible to all civil servants. Second, BA Public Works managed to centralize information about procurement contracts, which had previously been dispersed throughout each area of government or was hard to find on the portals. Centralizing and reorganizing the information made communication more agile and efficient.

Figure 3: Unique Visits to BA Public Works (November 2017 to September 2018)

● Number of unique visits to website

*Source:* Google Analytics, website BA Public Works.

2 - Transparency

From the launch of the Observatory until the creation of BA Public Works, there has been a growing trend to incorporate more public works and areas of government into each successive update (see Figure 4). In December 2016, when the pilot platform of the Observatory began to circulate, there were only 70 public works for a single ministry. By the time the BA Works platform was launched on 31 October 2017, there were 838 public works from 11 areas: seven ministries (Ministry of Environment and Public Spaces, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Urban Development and Habitat, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Modernization); the Social and Urban Integration Secretariat, the Public Management Undersecretariat, the South Buenos Aires Corporation, and the Housing Institute. The Ministry of Justice and Security and SBASE were incorporated during the first update, bringing the total number of areas that reported public works to 13. In the most recent update, the number of ministries was reduced following the

dissolution of the Ministry of Modernization. Of the 30 technical data sheet variables, those corresponding to "image" and "procurement contracts" experienced recurring difficulties in achieving compliance.

In general, the initiative supported the government's existing open data policy through transparency and making new databases available for download in an easily accessible format. There is a growing trend to-

Figure 4: Number of Public Works and Areas of Government involved in BA Public Works
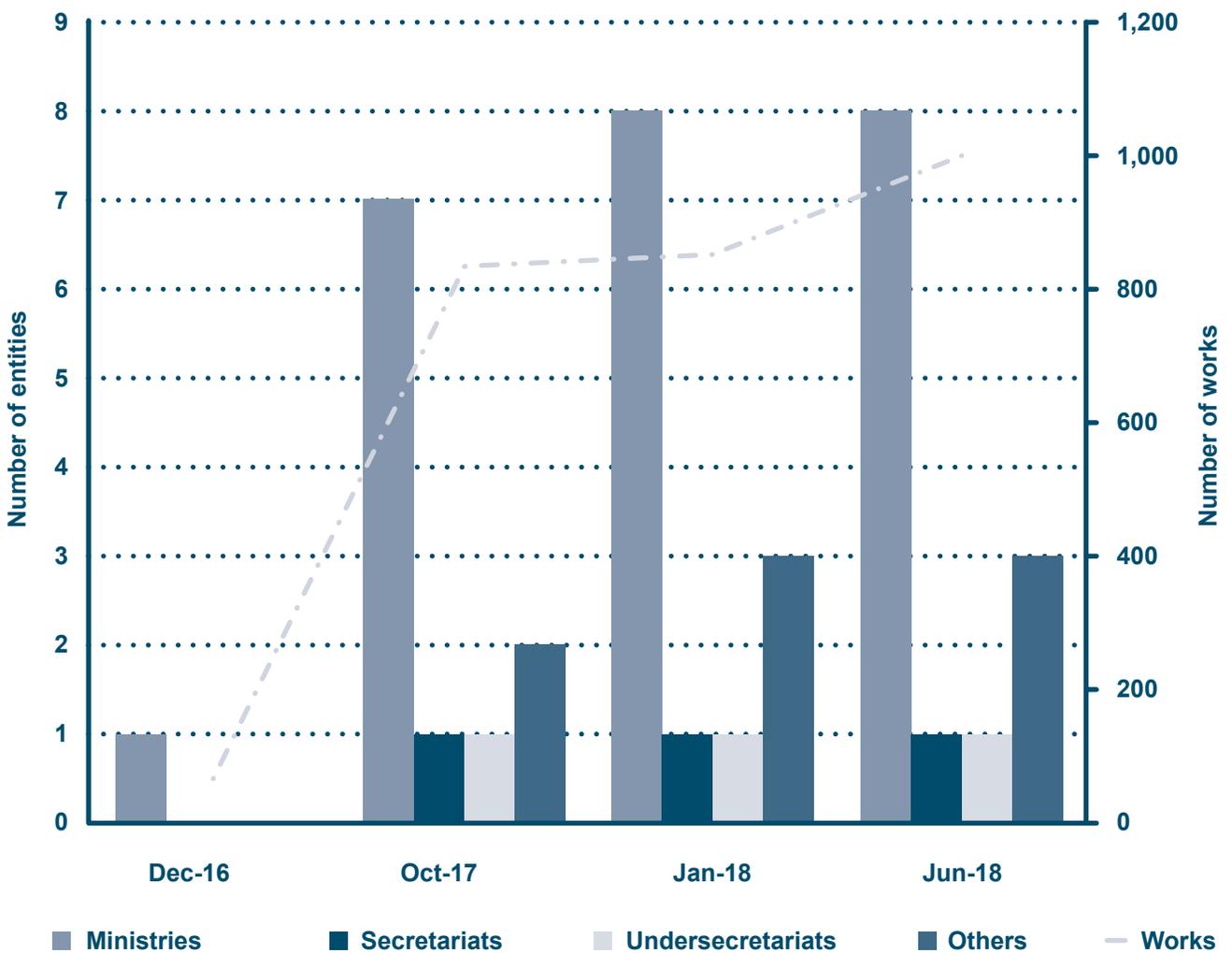
Source: Directorate General for Institutional Quality and Open Government (2018), Statistics for BA Public Works.

ward transparency, both in the number of public works published and in the number of actors that provide the information. Although there are nine ministries in the city government, the ministries of Economy, Finance and Government do not carry out public works, which is further proof of the high uptake of the initiative by the other actors.

With respect to data visualization and citizen participation, there is scope for further improvement. Data must be easy for citizens to read and interpret, which makes it important to identify the users' needs and the type of information they would want to access. The public works featured on the portal are currently represented on a map with a colored dot (depending on the type of public work). However, because of the high number of public works featured on the website, it is hard to identify the most important or the largest ones on the map. Although a section features "highlighted public works," these could be represented on the map with a different marker. Likewise, because BA Public Works is part of the Open Government Ecosystem, there could be greater interaction with the other initiatives, since some of them are part of the Government Commitments, or are the result of a participatory budget or a BA Chooses citizen participation mechanism (as in the case of choosing the name for the new Line H Subway station).

V. Conclusions: Lessons, Challenges, and Recommendations

Open government has become a conceptual framework for driving changes in the CABA management model. This section presents the conclusions of the case study, emphasizing the lessons learned and the challenges, and proposes recommendations.

1· Planning and management systems as a catalyst

The existence of consolidated planning and monitoring systems in the CABA government was decisive in the successful implementing of the open government initiatives described in this study. For successful execution, all of them required information related to the management of different projects. This information was provided through the tools available to the Chief of the Cabinet's Office, in particular the PIG, a control panel for all government projects. This information was always disclosed in a timely fashion and with the necessary standards of quality. In certain cases, when it was necessary to generate specific categories of information (as in BA Public Works) or establish new mechanisms to track the progress of the initiatives (Government Commitments), teams at the Chief of the Cabinet's Office were able to rapidly produce them.

Consequently, management planning and monitoring infrastructure is a de facto precondition for the viability of complex open government projects. Although some projects, such as BA Public Works, are available in open code and can be freely reproduced by any other city or subnational entity, their implementation requires a minimum level of information, provided on a regular, timely, and reliable basis, without which progress is impossible. In other words, the political will to drive open government reforms of medium or high complexity must be accompanied by a series of management tools that are used frequently. These tools constitute the foundations upon which complex initiatives can be built, based on open data and accountability.

2· The advantages of institutional design (or the center of government[16] as a facilitator of transversal policies)

Open government policies require, among other things, concerted efforts to raise awareness and bring about cultural change. Because this is a new management model based on the co-creation of policies with civil society and the use of open data, different areas of public administration have shown varying levels of receptivity to it. Similar efforts are required to get civil servants to familiarize themselves with the tools and to use them.

---

16 For more details about the center of government, see Alessandro, Lafuente, and Santiso (2013).

The decision to assign responsibility to the SGYRI for designing and implementing the open government policy was one of the factors that contributed to its success. The center of government performs a key role in prioritizing policies and implementing transversal projects. This is demonstrated by the numerous innovative and complex initiatives that have been implemented in a short period of time (the Open Government Ecosystem). In complementary fashion, all the functions relating to open government were unified in 2018, with the open data portal relocated from the Ministry of Modernization to the SGYRI. In this way, an area was consolidated at the center of government with all the necessary authority to ensure suitable design and implementation of the policy.

3· Top-down open innovation

As a keen proponent of open government, the CABA Chief of Government has generated constant interest in the matter over the years. Political will has always been a key component of success, since the Chief of Government created organizational structures within the government, provided human and economic resources for these purposes, stressed the importance of open government for management in its communication campaigns, and supported implementation at crucial junctures, thereby facilitating uptake of the management model by the different areas.

The low level of institutionalization of the new management model remains a challenge for the future. Only in certain areas, for example, access to public

information, has the initiative been supported from the regulatory point of view. This lack of institutionalization could threaten the continuity of the Open Government Ecosystem, in future administrations, since the decision to either continue working in the same direction or return to previous practices will depend on the political will of the next Chief of Government.

One way to mitigate the risk would be to institutionalize the principles of open government so that political will can crystallize around them. Likewise, the city's participation in the OGP might help the management model to survive changes in government, provided that there is a group of civil servants within the government committed to the model. Although the existence of a regulatory framework does not necessarily guarantee effective implementation of open government practices, it is a fundamental tool that citizens and civil servants can use to bring continuity to the initiative.

4· The impact of open government on organizational culture

The change in the management model presupposed a transformation in the city government's organizational culture. The new structure was created to implement open government. SGYRI, SSGECI, and DGCIGA identified those who would become innovation investors and architects. Defining the roles that each would play helped to maximize the effectiveness of the actions, but it also endowed the areas with the appropriate human resources for the required functions. For example, the people who formed the innovation

missionaries group possessed sufficient skills in terms of open government to work cohesively on collaborative tasks and dissemination practices at the center of government. Generally, the newly created structure meant breaking with (or, in certain ambits, questioning) hierarchical public policymaking processes, thereby achieving collaborative and transversal practices at the center of government and with citizens.

Although some changes have been achieved in the organizational culture by incorporating the principles of open government, as the two case studies presented in these pages show, some sectors, such as middle-ranking civil servants, find it difficult to adopt the new management model.

One way to advance the process of cultural change would be to move toward professionalizing the civil service so that its members become fully aware of the benefits of open government both for service provision and for performing their own functions. The communication campaigns within and outside the government can help raise awareness in this area.

5· Open government, its impact on service provision, and its relationship with citizens

Open government means managing public affairs from a citizen-centered standpoint, by implementing policies that promote transparency, citizen participation, and collaboration to co-create public value. This is one of the most important challenges facing the city, since there are still many areas where these practices must be strengthened. In terms of innovation, for example, the challenge is to raise its importance until it becomes a central tenet of management, part of the administrative processes of public policymaking. The city can already draw on isolated experiences that show how, through methodologies that focus on the user's experience, collaboration with citizens can resolve complex problems and improve public service provision. Another area in need of strengthening is the use of the databases published in open formats so that civil servants, citizens, and CSOs can consult them when proposing changes in public policies or processes or designing visualizations to better communicate outcomes or goals achieved. Impact evaluation areas also need to be strengthened to carry out rigorous studies that demonstrate what really works and what needs to be improved.

6· Closing the feedback loop [17]

The introduction of new technologies and the principles of open government have modified the city government's management model. An unusual feature of the 13 ecosystem initiatives is that they link new technologies with citizen participation and accountability. One of the future challenges is to bridge the gap in the feedback loop so that the platforms developed can bring citizens closer to policies and become a tool for generating greater interaction with civil servants, in

17 The so-called feedback loop is a monitoring tool that is used when a system is created. For the case of public policies, see Gigler and Bailur (2014).

such a way as to feed back into public policies. Many initiatives can be put in practice in this area, with enormous potential for ultimately improving public service provision and trust in the government.

References

Alessandro, M., M. Lafuente, and C. Santiso. 2013. El fortalecimiento de los Centros de Go-
bierno en América Latina y el Caribe. IDB Technical Note No. 591. Washington, D.C.:
IDB. Available at: https://publications.iadb.org/es/publicacion/15400/el-fortalecimien-
to-del-centro-de-gobierno-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe.

Chesbrough, H. 2003. The Era of Open Innovation. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 44(3):
35–41.

Dirección General de Calidad Institucional y Gobierno Abierto. 2018. Estadísticas sobre BA
Obras. City of Buenos Aires: City Government.

Gigler, B. S. and S. Bailur (eds.). 2014. Closing the Feedback Loop: Can Technology Bridge
the Accountability Gap? Directions in Development; Public Sector Governance.
Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/
en/100021468147838655/pdf/882680PUB0978100Box385205B00PUBLIC0.pdf.

Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. 2017. Survey of Government Commitments (Decem-
ber 2017). Unpublished.

Google Analytics. Undated. BA Public Works (November 2017 – September 2018).

Herrero, A. 2012. Acercando el gobierno al ciudadano: herramientas de gobierno abierto para
estados provinciales y municipios. Buenos Aires: Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas.

Naser, A., A. Ramírez-Alujas and D. Rosales (eds.). 2017. Desde el gobierno abierto al Estado
abierto en América Latina y el Caribe. ECLAC Publication, No. 144 (LC.PUB.2017/9-P).
Santiago, Chile: ECLAC.

OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). 2015. Gobierno Abierto
en América Latina. *Public Governance Reviews*. Paris: OECD.

Ramírez-Alujas, A. and N. Dassen. 2016. Winds of Change II: Progress and Challenges in
Open Government Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean. IDB Technical Note
No. IDB-TN-998. Washington, D.C.: IDB. Available at: https://publications.iadb.org/
en/winds-change-ii-progress-and-challenges-open-government-policy-latin-america
-and-caribbean.

Serra, A. 2005. La gestión transversal: expectativas y resultados. *Revista del CLAD, Reforma
y Democracia*, No. 32 (June), pp. 1–17. Caracas: Latin American Center for Develop-
ment Administration (CLAD).

Download the publication here:

IDB
Improving lives