

ORGANISATIONAL READINESS FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT DATA- DRIVEN CO-CREATION

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Open government data (OGD) is widely promoted for transparency and innovation, yet reuse remains uneven. Co-creation offers a route to public value by enabling public organisations and external stakeholders to jointly design or improve services and policies using open data. This paper synthesises what the OGD-driven co-creation literature says about internal organisational conditions that support effective participation. We conducted a systematic literature review of English-language studies indexed in the Web of Science database. The analysis focuses on organisational factors, understood as both drivers and barriers, within public organisations rather than ecosystem-level conditions. The findings indicate that readiness depends on more than data release: it also requires strategic commitment to openness, clear procedures and incentives, a learning-oriented culture, leadership that enables cross-boundary collaboration, staff competences in data and participatory methods, and the ability to assure data quality. We discuss implications for strengthening organisational capacities for sustained, data-enabled co-creation and identify priorities for further empirical research.

DOI

[https://doi.org/
10.18690/um.fov.4.2026.18](https://doi.org/10.18690/um.fov.4.2026.18)

ISBN

978-961-299-152-4

Keywords:

barriers,
co-creation,
drivers,
open government data,
public organisations



University of Maribor Press

1 Introduction

Over the past decade, open government data (OGD) has become an important policy instrument within broader open government and digital governance reforms. Governments increasingly publish administrative datasets to improve transparency and accountability and to enable the reuse of public sector data for innovation and new services (Janssen et al., 2012; Janssen & van den Hoven, 2015). In the literature, these developments are commonly discussed as part of broader debates on open government, public governance, and the role of data disclosure in supporting citizen participation (Janssen et al., 2012; Ruijter et al., 2018).

Empirical research shows, however, that increasing data availability does not automatically lead to effective reuse or policy impact. Janssen et al. (2012) identify technical, organisational, and institutional barriers that constrain data utilisation. Ruijter et al. (2018) demonstrate that transparency initiatives do not necessarily result in democratic engagement. Together, these studies indicate that the outcomes of OGD initiatives depend on the conditions under which data are accessed and used in practice (Janssen et al., 2012; Ruijter et al., 2018). As open data does not create value simply by being accessible, its contribution depends on how it is interpreted, combined, and applied in decision-making or service development processes (Charalabidis et al., 2018; Hitz-Gamper et al., 2019).

One such mechanism is co-creation. In the public sector context, co-creation refers to collaborative processes that involve multiple stakeholders, including public authorities, citizens, and other actors, in the development and improvement of public services (Vrbek & Jukić, 2024). By enabling citizens, civil society actors, and private organisations to collaborate with public authorities, OGD can serve as a foundational resource for jointly developing public services and solutions (McBride et al., 2019). In this context, OGD-driven co-creation refers to collaborative processes in which publicly available datasets are utilised by diverse actors to design, implement, or improve services that generate public value (Callinan et al., 2018). Such initiatives typically involve multiple stakeholders and rely on open data resources as a key input (McBride et al., 2019).

Despite the growing body of research on both OGD and co-creation, these strands of literature have largely developed separately (Callinan et al., 2018). While OGD research has often focused on the provision of datasets, governance arrangements, and technological infrastructures, co-creation scholarship has primarily examined participatory processes and stakeholder interaction. The organisational conditions required to integrate these domains in practice remain underexplored, and in particular, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how public organisations can develop the internal organisational conditions that influence their readiness (i.e., maturity) to support and sustain OGD-driven co-creation initiatives.

Accordingly, this paper seeks to identify and systematise factors (understood as drivers and barriers) influencing the readiness of public organisations to engage in OGD-driven co-creation. The study addresses the following research question: *What makes public organisations ready to co-create successfully based on OGD?*

The next section presents the methodological approach, followed by a structured analysis of the factors affecting organisational readiness for OGD-driven co-creation. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings, their implications, and the study's limitations.

2 Methodology

This study is based on a systematic literature review of OGD-driven co-creation, aimed at identifying key organisational factors (i.e., drivers and barriers) influencing the organisational readiness of public organisations to engage in OGD-driven co-creation.

The search was conducted in the Web of Science (WoS) database using the query: (All fields = “open data” OR “open government data”) AND (All fields = co-creation) AND LANGUAGE: English. The search yielded 51 publications. A screening of titles and abstracts excluded four articles that were either not related to OGD-driven co-creation or focused primarily on the private sector. A subsequent full-text assessment led to the exclusion of two further articles. The final sample consisted of 45 studies, supplemented by one further article considered relevant but not retrieved through the initial search.

The selected publications were systematically coded to identify factors (i.e., drivers and barriers), which were classified according to whether they relate to: (i) features of public organisations, (ii) external co-creators, (iii) the co-creation process, or (iv) the broader environment. For the purposes of this article, the analysis concentrates primarily on factors from the first group shaping the organisational readiness of public organisations to engage in OGD-driven co-creation, understood here as their ability to co-create successfully based on OGD. Selected contextual factors were also considered where relevant for understanding organisational readiness.

3 Factors affecting the organisational readiness of public organisations to engage in OGD-driven co-creation

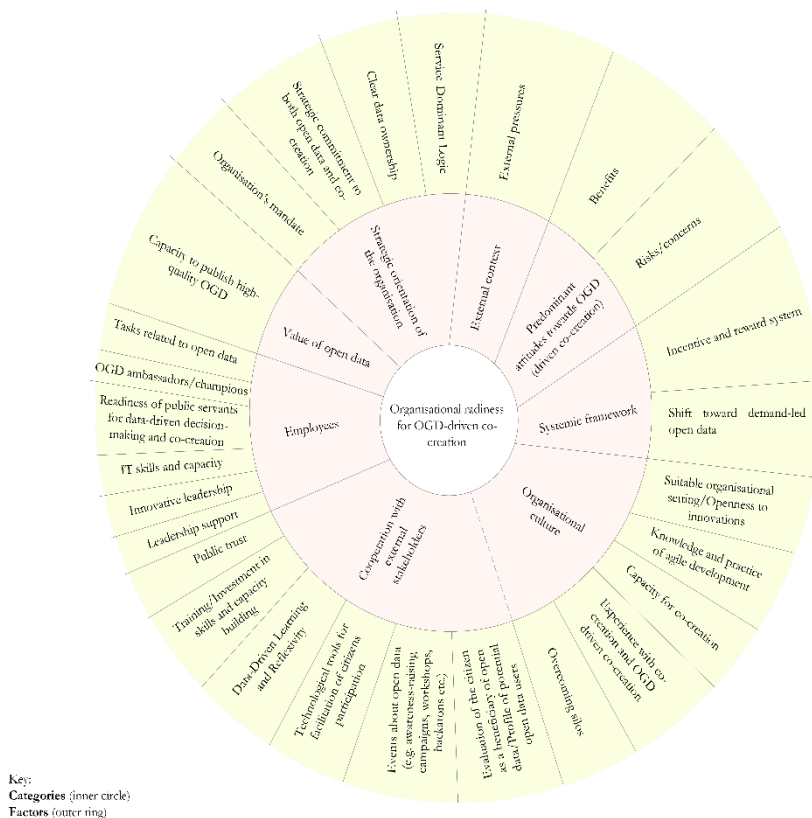


Figure 1: Conceptual overview of categories and factors shaping the organisational readiness for OGD-driven co-creation.

Source: Own

Building on a systematic review of the literature on OGD-driven co-creation, this section synthesises the key factors shaping the organisational readiness of public organisations to engage in OGD-driven co-creation. These factors are organised into analytically distinct categories of organisational readiness (see Figure 1, which provides a conceptual overview of the identified categories and associated factors). The categories were developed inductively through the reviewed studies. Each category and its associated factors are discussed in the subsections that follow.

3.1 Strategic orientation of the organisation

Within this category, four key factors emerge from the literature (see Figure 1 for an overview). A clear strategic commitment to both OGD and co-creation is identified as a key enabling factor for OGD-driven innovation and the creation of public value (Scheibein et al., 2022; Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). However, this commitment cannot remain limited to formal declarations and strategic documents. It entails reconsidering how public organisations balance efficiency concerns with democratic engagement, with greater emphasis placed on the latter (Cubuk et al., 2019). Moreover, the institutionalisation of open data depends on binding legal and political mandates. Public bodies operating under explicit and enforceable requirements to publish and reuse data tend to implement OGD in a more systematic and consistent manner, including in co-creation contexts (McBride et al., 2020).

Data ownership represents an additional critical issue, particularly in large-scale collaborative initiatives that result in the joint generation of data (Toli et al., 2022). For this reason, establishing transparent ownership and licensing arrangements at the beginning of co-creation processes is essential. Such arrangements support responsible data management, facilitate open reuse, and contribute to the continuity of data-driven public service innovation (Toli et al., 2022). In these situations, questions of ownership go beyond internal uncertainties within public organisations, such as determining which entity retains rights over a specific dataset.

An additional factor shaping organisational readiness for OGD-driven co-creation is the adoption of a service-dominant logic (SDL). In contrast to state-centric understandings of public services as outputs delivered unilaterally by government institutions, SDL conceptualises service provision as a participatory and interaction-based process. Within this perspective, citizens and other non-state stakeholders are

regarded as active co-creators of public value rather than passive recipients (McBride et al., 2018; Potra et al., 2015). Adopting this logic requires a corresponding shift in administrative mindsets, recognising citizens as legitimate partners and prosumers within service ecosystems (Nikiforova & McBride, 2021; Toots et al., 2017a).

3.2 External context

External pressures, particularly in the form of citizen demand, have been identified as a primary motivating factor encouraging public organisations to increase data availability and pursue more participatory and collaborative governance approaches (Toots et al., 2017a). More broadly, drivers for opening government data and engaging in co-creation processes tend to stem from external forces (such as citizen demand, technological developments, and policy pressures) rather than from purely internal administrative initiatives (McBride et al., 2019; Toots et al., 2017a).

3.3 Predominant attitudes towards OGD-driven co-creation

Within this category, two key factors emerge from the literature (see Figure 1 for an overview). The first factor relates to the degree of awareness of the potential benefits of OGD (McBride et al., 2019; Toots et al., 2017; Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). When these benefits (particularly those extending beyond economic value) are not clearly understood or sufficiently acknowledged, the incentive to participate in OGD initiatives remains weak (Scarano et al., 2019). In the specific setting of OGD-driven co-creation, Khayyat and Bannister (2017) point to the perception among certain public organisations that such initiatives are warranted primarily when the main advantages are realised by governmental actors. For this reason, enhancing the recognition of the wider societal value that may emerge from OGD-driven co-creation becomes important.

The second factor concerns perceived risks linked to OGD, especially those associated with confidentiality and privacy. The possibility of re-identification through the combination of datasets can limit decisions to make data openly available, reusable, or linkable (Dall-Orsoletta et al., 2022; Scheibein et al., 2022; Toots et al., 2017). Furthermore, compliance with data protection frameworks, including the GDPR, may generate administrative burdens and constrain flexibility in the design of co-creation processes (Kavouras et al., 2023). Additionally,

unwillingness to share data - particularly among certain stakeholders (e.g. private sector actors) due to concerns related to confidentiality, competitiveness, and misuse - may hinder open collaboration and limit the innovative capacity of OGD initiatives (Taylor, 2014; Toli et al., 2022).

3.4 Systemic framework

Within this category, several systemic factors emerge from the literature (see Figure 1 for an overview). A structured system of incentives plays a central role in motivating public organisations to prioritise open data activities and engage in co-creation. Where incentive structures are weak or absent, open data initiatives risk being sidelined within routine administrative practices (McBride et al., 2020). Equally important is the availability of organisational resources. Research highlights that human competencies, financial capacity, technical expertise, time allocation, and IT infrastructure substantially shape the capacity of public organisations to support Open Government Data Value Co-Creation (OGD VCC) (Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). Adequate resourcing strengthens the management of data infrastructures and facilitates stakeholder involvement in co-creative service development.

The existence of clearly defined internal procedures for data publication represents an additional systemic factor. Transparent and consistently applied organisational processes clarify responsibilities, regulate data-related rights, and uphold data quality standards. In contrast, unclear procedures for data preparation and dissemination may discourage both internal data providers and external users, thereby limiting the effectiveness of open data initiatives (McBride et al., 2019; Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). Institutional rigidity represents an additional structural constraint affecting the systemic environment. Bureaucratic structures that restrict flexibility may hinder cross-departmental coordination and cross-sector collaboration, which are necessary for sustainable open data governance (Toots et al., 2017a).

A further systemic factor relates to predictable publication practices. Regular and transparent data release schedules enhance usability and enable the development of data-driven services (Taylor, 2014). Finally, literature emphasises the importance of shifting from supply-oriented data publication towards demand-responsive approaches. Rather than prioritising internal administrative convenience, strategic data release focuses on datasets that are most relevant to stakeholders (Köster &

Suarez, 2016). This transition strengthens usability and public value creation through open data (Taylor, 2014). Operationally, such a shift requires feedback mechanisms that allow administrations to identify user needs and adapt data provision accordingly (Khayyat & Bannister, 2017; Toots et al., 2017a).

3.5 Organisational culture

Within this category, five key factors related to organisational culture emerge from the literature (see Figure 1 for an overview). Organisational openness to new ideas and practices has been identified as a key enabler of value creation based on OGD (Mergel et al., 2018; Toots et al., 2017a). However, innovation in the public sector frequently encounters barriers, particularly institutional resistance to change and rigid administrative structures (McBride et al., 2018; Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). Such constraints undermine organisational adaptability and weaken the development of mechanisms necessary for value co-creation, including cross-sector collaboration and structured stakeholder feedback (Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). Political resistance, risk-averse leadership, and conservative governance practices may further limit openness and experimentation (Seo & Myeong, 2021; Toots et al., 2017a). In addition, regulatory rigidity and systemic inertia characteristic of traditional bureaucratic settings can limit the adoption and scaling of OGD-related strategies (Seo & Myeong, 2021). Within many public organisations, fear of failure discourages engagement with innovative approaches and collaboration with external actors (Seo & Myeong, 2021), partly linked to efforts to preserve institutional authority (Potra et al., 2015). As a result, OGD initiatives may be regarded as marginal or even threatening (McBride et al., 2020). Addressing these challenges is associated with shifts towards more open and collaborative governance arrangements (Callinan et al., 2018).

Beyond these constraints, organisational culture also manifests through capabilities and practices that actively enable co-creation. In this respect, organisational capabilities related to agile development and co-creation practices play a critical role in enabling OGD-driven co-creation. Agile approaches support iterative learning, early testing, and adaptive development processes by replacing linear project models with more flexible cycles and instruments such as Minimum Viable Products (MVPs) (McBride et al., 2019; Toots et al., 2017a). Capacity for co-creation is equally critical, involving the application of participatory methods such as data walks and policy

canvases to engage diverse stakeholders and design socially responsive services (Cubuk et al., 2019; Jarke, 2019). The use of open-access tools and international knowledge exchange further supports inclusive innovation processes (Atenas et al., 2019; Khayyat & Bannister, 2017). Experience with co-creation, particularly in OGD-driven initiatives, enhances organisational readiness and strengthens stakeholder relationships by fostering trust and demonstrating concrete outcomes (McBride et al., 2020; Mergel et al., 2018). Nevertheless, issues related to scalability and the evaluation of social impact remain challenging (Jussila et al., 2019; Scarano et al., 2019). Finally, overcoming internal and cross-organisational silos remains essential, as fragmented structures hinder collaboration and data integration, thereby limiting coordinated and innovative public service development (Jussila et al., 2019; Potra et al., 2015).

3.5.1 Cooperation with external stakeholders

Within this sub-category, six interrelated factors emerge from the literature (see Figure 1 for an overview). Several factors relate to organisations' engagement with external stakeholders, including efforts to assess user profiles, organise open data-related events, promote data-driven learning through feedback, and investing in the development of skills and capacities.

In this context, digital technologies play a central role in facilitating stakeholder participation. The effective deployment of digital technologies supports meaningful engagement in OGD-driven co-creation processes. Digital tools such as social media, collaborative platforms, and open-source applications provide opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the design, testing, and implementation of public services (Cubuk et al., 2019; Emaldi et al., 2017; Gebetsroither-Geringer et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2021). These platforms also enable participatory innovation by offering access to data repositories, structured toolkits, and feedback mechanisms (Jussila et al., 2019; Morelli et al., 2017). More advanced technologies, including 3D visualisations, may further enhance engagement, although their effectiveness depends on usability, accessibility, and available infrastructure (Atenas et al., 2019; Dambruch, 2018; Gebetsroither-Geringer et al., 2018).

Public trust represents an additional critical factor influencing stakeholder participation in OGD-driven co-creation. The credibility and reputation of public organisations influence citizens' willingness to participate in co-creation activities. Higher levels of trust support sustained engagement and contribute to the perceived legitimacy of collaborative initiatives (Wiedenhöft et al., 2023).

3.6 Employees

Within this category, a set of key employee-related factors emerge from the literature (see Figure 1 for an overview). These factors encompass the formal incorporation of open data-related tasks into employees' regular job responsibilities; the presence of open data champions who actively promote and advocate the OGD agenda; employees' IT competencies and their capacity to manage, analyse, and interpret data; and leadership support expressed through priority-setting, allocation of resources, and sustained organisational commitment to advancing open data practices.

An additional factor concerns the presence of innovative leadership. Leaders who demonstrate openness to experimentation and new approaches, particularly in uncertain contexts, play an important role in fostering organisational learning, adaptability, and co-creation practices. Such leadership contributes to embedding open data reforms and aligning co-creation initiatives with broader strategic objectives (McBride et al., 2018b; McBride et al., 2019; Mergel et al., 2018).

A further factor relates to the readiness of public servants to engage in data-driven decision-making and co-creation processes. Beyond fulfilling open data obligations, employees need to recognise citizens as legitimate partners in the development of public services and policies. This requires an attitudinal shift towards data-informed approaches and acceptance of co-creation as a valid governance practice (McBride et al., 2018b).

3.7 Value of Open data

A fundamental driver of OGD VCC lies in the ability of public organisations to ensure the availability of high-quality and sustainable datasets (Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). Effective value co-creation requires a comprehensive understanding of the

data lifecycle, encompassing stages from data collection and processing to publication and subsequent reuse (Wiedenhöft et al., 2023). This capability involves not only technical proficiency but also familiarity with the data value chain, including activities such as data collation, cleaning, transformation, and standardisation (McBride et al., 2018). Such competencies contribute to improving data accuracy, interoperability, and reusability, thereby enhancing their applicability in co-creation contexts. Crucially, the capacity to integrate heterogeneous datasets and connect them to societal or user needs constitutes a central mechanism through which meaningful public value can be generated (Wiedenhöft et al., 2023).

4 Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the systematic literature review indicate that organisational readiness for OGD-driven co-creation cannot be reduced to technical data publication capacity alone. Although the ability to generate, curate, and maintain high-quality datasets constitutes an important precondition, it does not in itself ensure meaningful collaborative engagement. This observation aligns with broader research on co-creation and organisational maturity, which emphasises that structural, organisational, and behavioural factors shape the capacity of public organisations to engage in collaborative processes (Baptista et al., 2019; Jukić et al., 2022).

OGD-driven co-creation requires broader organisational adaptation, including adjustments to strategic priorities, internal procedures, and institutional arrangements. Rather than prioritising internal control and procedural compliance, public organisations need to adopt more externally oriented and flexible approaches to governance. In this respect, moving from supply-driven data release towards demand-responsive practices becomes particularly relevant, as co-creation depends on the alignment of datasets with societal needs and stakeholder expectations (Voorberg et al., 2015).

Such transformation also entails a reconsideration of how public value is understood and generated. Drawing on public service logic, value emerges through interaction and resource integration among multiple actors rather than through unilateral service delivery (Rösler et al., 2021; Jukić et al., 2022). OGD-driven co-creation is therefore characterised by iterative learning, experimentation, and adaptive development processes. These dynamics may challenge traditional conceptions of efficiency and

performance that favour predictability and short-term accountability. Consequently, organisational readiness encompasses not only structural reforms but also deeper cultural and cognitive shifts within public administration.

The review further underscores the significance of leadership, organisational culture, and employee capacities. Research consistently demonstrates that leadership plays a central role in enabling collaborative innovation by legitimising experimentation, mobilising resources, and fostering organisational learning (Baptista et al., 2019; Rösler et al., 2021). At the same time, public servants must develop both the competences and willingness to integrate data and external input into decision-making processes, recognising citizens and other stakeholders as legitimate partners in public value creation (Voorberg et al., 2015). Skills related to data management, participatory methods, digital tools, and cross-sector collaboration therefore represent core components of organisational readiness. Moreover, prior experience with co-creation and the strategic institutionalisation of collaborative practices strengthen the conditions for sustained engagement (Jukić et al., 2022).

This study contributes to the literature by integrating insights from OGD and co-creation research through the lens of organisational readiness. While previous studies have examined these domains separately, this review provides a structured synthesis of organisational factors that jointly shape readiness for OGD-driven co-creation. Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged. The review relied exclusively on publications indexed in a single database. Furthermore, the identified factors are derived from literature spanning diverse administrative and national contexts, implying that their practical relevance may vary across institutional environments. Future research should therefore examine and validate these factors in specific empirical settings in order to assess their contextual applicability and relative importance.

Acknowledgment

The research was funded by the Slovenian Agency for Research and Innovation (ARIS) under grant n. J5-50166.

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