Public Sector Open Source Program Offices
Archetypes for how to Grow (Common) Institutional Capabilities

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Main Challenges

KNOWLEDGE

Limited knowledge on what open source

implies and how to consider it in established

processes (e.g., public procurement)

CULTURE

Limited culture of sharing knowledge and intellectual

property, as well as collaborating and communicating,

both in public sector and open environments

RESOURCES

No or limited resources in terms of funding, nor

human resources to enable consideration,

development, or collaboration on open source

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Defining OSPOs

OSPO = Open Source Programme Office

TODO Group

"Centre of competency for an organisation's open source operations and structure"
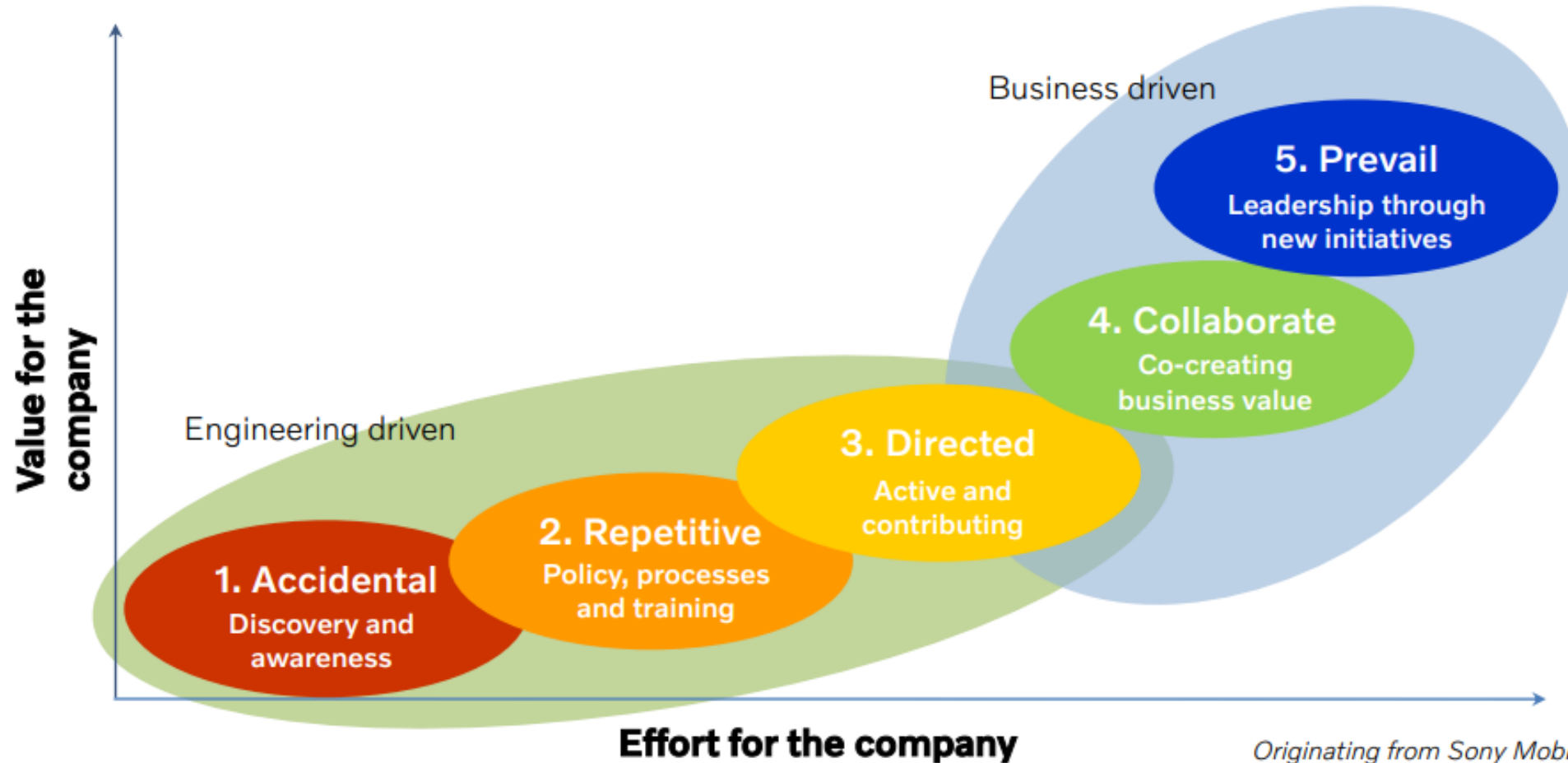
OpenForum Europe

"An institutional organisational construct that supports and accelerates the consumption, creation, and application of open source software"

OSPO Alliance

"A cross-functional team to help define and steer an organisation's open source management strategy and organisational readiness"

Helps to mature the organizational readyness

How are OSPOs organised and structured in public sector organisations?

Different archetypes available based on need and context

National Government OSPOs

Hosting organisation

National administrations or ministries responsible for digital transformation and government (in general or for specific domains)

Primary goal

Build and scale capacity in national public sector in adopting and collaborating on OSS

> Free Software Unit at the French Interministerial Digital Directorate
> *(Direction interministérielle du numérique - DINUM)*

> Developers Italia at the Department for Digital Transformation
> *(Dipartimento per la Trasformazione Digitale)*

> Centre for Digital Sovereignty
> *(Zentrum Digitale Souveränität)*

> Luxembourg House of Cybersecurity OSPO at the Ministry of the Economy
> *(Ministère de l'Économie)*

Case study: Italy

🏛 **Law** mandating public administrations to consider using OSS when procuring software solutions

ⓘ **Developers Italia**, founded in 2017 and jointly managed by the Department for Digital Transformation and the Agency for Digital Italy

🔧 Educates and supports **development and growth** of processes, knowledge, and culture

🔍 Guides, catalogues, and interactive **support** provided for users in terms of finding, choosing, and collaborating on open source

💬 Developer **community** spanning public and private sectors, academia, and civil society supporting efforts

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Institution-centric OSPOs

Hosting organisation
Internal departments responsible for IT service provisioning to the overarching institution

Primary goal
Build and scale capacity inside the institution in adopting and collaborating on OSS

> European Commission OSPO at DG DIGIT
> *(Directorate-General for Digital Services)*

> IT Department at the French Public Employment Service
> *(Pôle Emploi)*

> Bureau Open Source Software at CTO's Office of Dutch Tax and Customs Administration
> *(Belastingdienst)*

Case study: European Commission's OSPO

📍 Resides within the **Directorate-General for Digital Services**

⚙️ Executes on the **EC OSS strategy** and facilitates its renewal

📢 **Liaison** between the EC's departments and external actors on OSS matters

👥 External **outreach and collaboration** through European OSPO network

✏️ Promotes consumption and contribution through relaxed yet controlled processes for **compliance and security**

European Commission

Local Government OSPOs

Hosting organisation

Departments responsible for IT service provisioning within local government (including municipalities, cities, and regions).

Primary goal

Enable adopting and collaborating on OSS in the digital transformation of the local government

> IT Department at City of Paris, France

> Department for Digital Services and Innovation at City of Bratislava, Slovakia

> Digital Centre at City of Ventspils, Latvia

Case study: City of Bratislava

Part of the **Department for Digital Services and Innovation**, headed by the City's Chief Innovation Officer since 2019

OSS highlighted through Digital Innovation **policy** and Bratislava 2030 policy

OSS **preferred** within the Department, but strong business case needed for other parts

Develops, maintains, and provides **OSS-based services**, including the City's e-service platform

Works actively with **stakeholders** and uses **metrics** to improve and guide development

European Commission

Association-based OSPOs

Hosting organisation

Associations with PSOs as members or owners

Primary goal
Enable members to initiate and collaborate on OSS projects addressing common needs

⟩ OS2 – Public Digitalisation Network, Denmark
(OS2 – Offentligt digitaliseringsfællesskab)

⟩ Dutch Association of Municipalities, The Netherlands
(VNG - Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten)

⟩ Open Cities, Czech Republic
(Otevřená města)

Case study: Open Cities

A Czech non-profit gathering **20+ cities** in the Czech republic to support their digitalisation

Receives and hosts OSS projects initiated by public entities. **Facilitates** joint requirements engineering and planning, and performs the main development of the projects

Currently **hosts six projects**, including Cityvizor - an open source tool for transparent municipal management

Collaborates with civic tech and hacker communities

Actively **engaged** and driving efforts in creating a Czech national OSPO, and driving the European transformation through the Brno declaration

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Academic OSPOs

Hosting organisation

Institutions for higher education and scientific research

Primary goal

Provide support for development and dissemination of research outputs as OSS

> Technology Transfer Office at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

> OSPO at Lero - the Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre for Software, Ireland

Case study: Lero

◇ Constituted by an internal community of subject matter **experts**

🗃 Supports and trains **researchers** in how to develop, collaborate and disseminate software-based research-outputs as open source

⛗ Considers open source as an instrument for **open science**, with a broadening interest for other areas within

🖼 Ambition of **extending the OSPO** and open source as an instrument to the Technology Transfer Office, similar as to Trinity College Dublin

🗺 Rapid **growth** of Academic OSPOs in the USA

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Common challenges

- Culture, knowledge and organizational support for OSS lacking

  - E.g., license selection, business models, communiy growth…

- Growing sustainable funding for the OSS project's development and maintennace

- Typically very technical and specific knowledge required to contribute

- Narrow groups of end-users

- Parallell academic hieararchy inhibiting open collaboration and governnace

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Complementary support functions

Hosting organisation

Organisations independent of ownership or membership of any PSO, for example within the civil society

Primary goal

Build and scale capacity in national public sector in adopting and collaborating on OSS
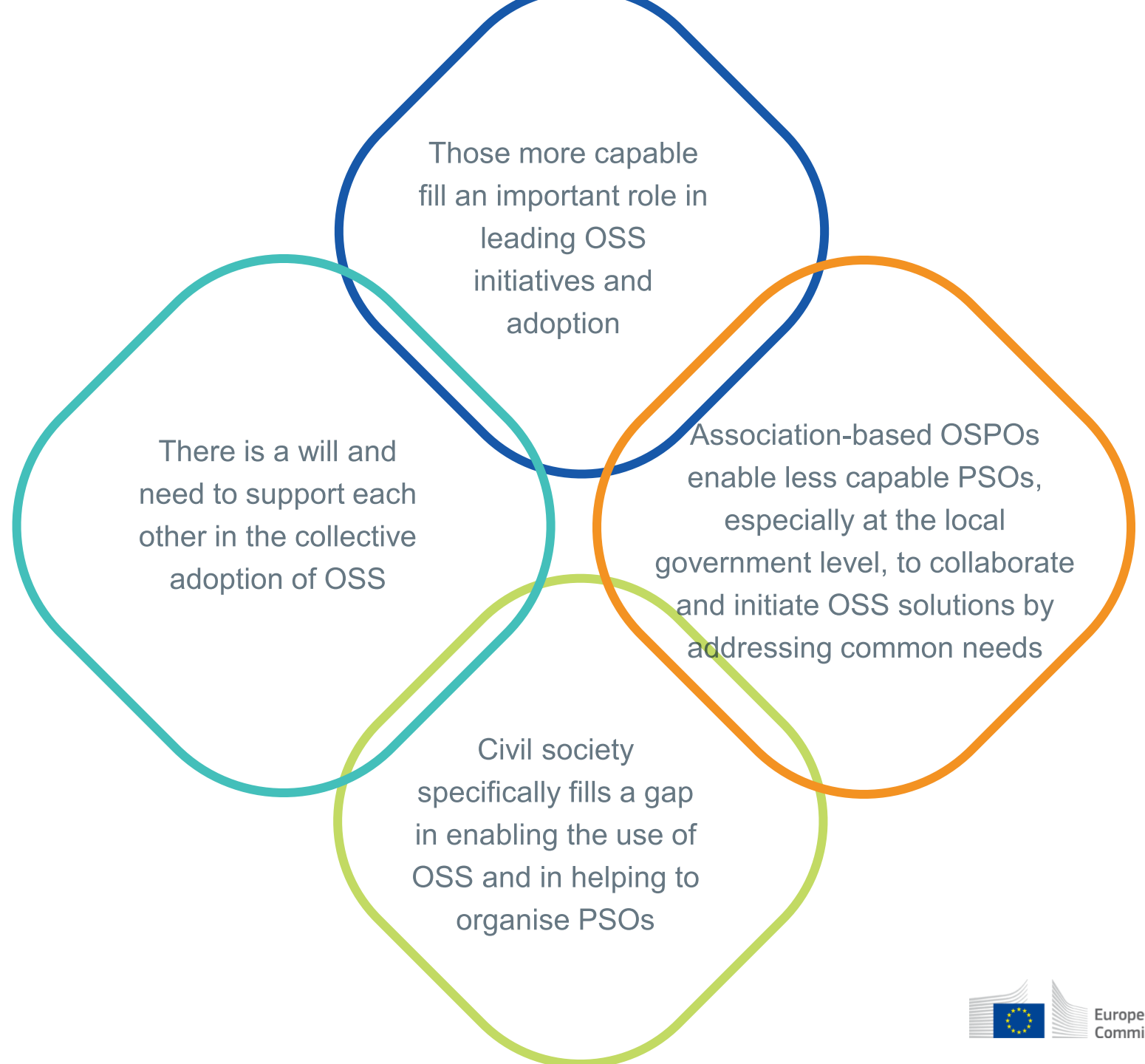
> Code for Romania

Case study: Code for Romania

🏠 National civic tech **non-profit** launched in 2016 with about 25 individuals on staff

⚡ Aims is to **equip** civil society and PSOs with OSS tools and solutions to better public services. Prioritises 37 areas identified as critical

📁 Provides about **50 different applications** across areas such as education, citizen engagement, health care, environment, and social services

🔑 All applications are maintained and offered as **hosted services** primarily for PSOs within Romania

⌁ Structured process for initiating, developing, and hosting services, with research and close stakeholder **collaboration**

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Which archetype to choose?
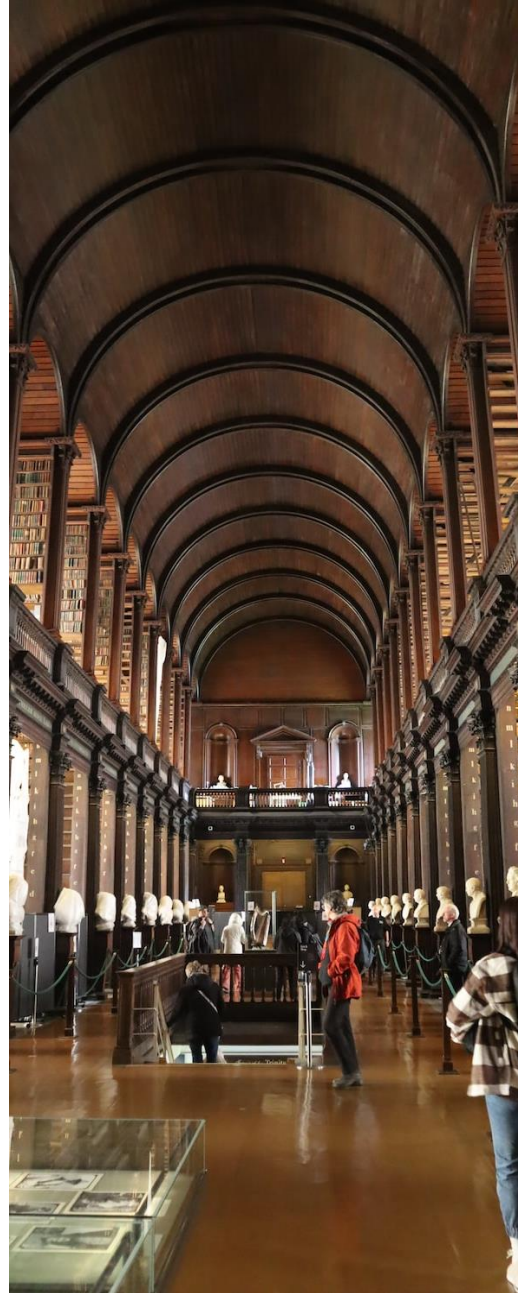
There is a need for growing
common institutional capabilities

Growing stronger…
Together

Those more capable fill an important role in leading OSS initiatives and adoption

There is a will and need to support each other in the collective adoption of OSS

Association-based OSPOs enable less capable PSOs, especially at the local government level, to collaborate and initiate OSS solutions by addressing common needs

Civil society specifically fills a gap in enabling the use of OSS and in helping to organise PSOs

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Bridging and growing common communities

Public sector

Academia

Civil Society
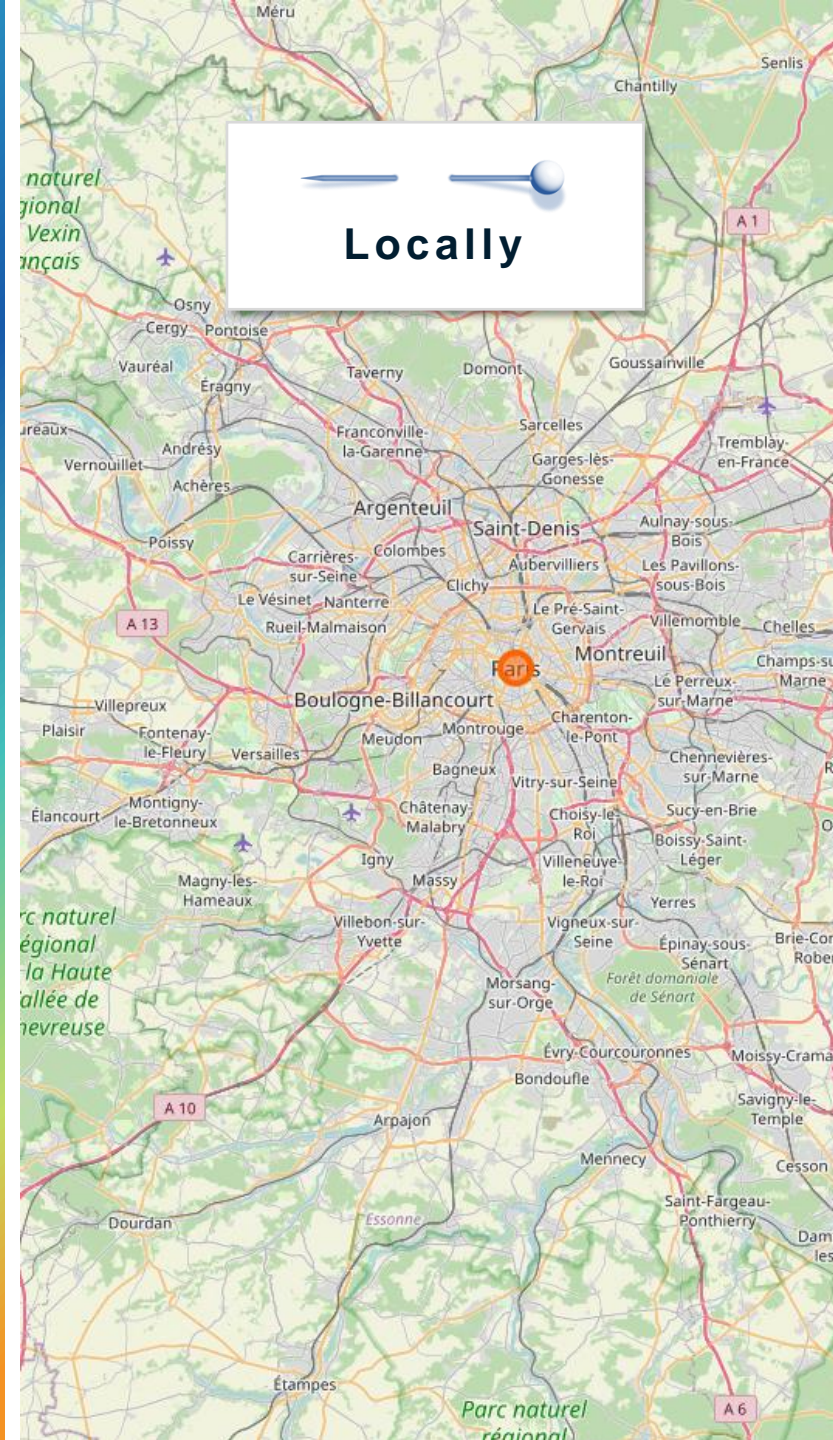
Industry

European Commission

Internationally

Nationally

Locally

Looking forward

> The OSPO constitutes a change agent and policy enabler

> OSPOs will continue to play a pivotal role going forward

> Helps enable a more digitally sovereign, interoperable, and innovative society

> "Open Source" will expand beyond code and software towards open technologies in society at large

Thank you!