

Victory for public safety: recovery of stolen vehicles increased by 55%.

Federal government, state and municipality of Vitória takes joint actions and pools funds for public safety using Axis IP cameras.



Organization:

Vitória Municipal Secretariat of Urban Safety

Location:

Vitória, Brazil

Industry segment:

City surveillance

Application:

Safety and security, crime prevention

Axis partner:

Digifort, ISS

Photo: Diego Alves / Ascom

Mission

Vitória (Portuguese for "victory") epitomizes a common dilemma in many Brazilian cities. On the one hand, it has the highest per capita GDP in Brazil and it is the second-ranked city in the country in terms of its Human Development Index.* In 2013 the UN voted it the 4th best city in Brazil to live in. Its indigenous peoples call it "Honey Island" thanks to its natural beauty, but the city also faces violent challenges. In 2014, its metropolitan area was among the 15 most violent in the world.** It was decided by the federal government, the state of Espírito Santo, and the municipality of Vitória to take joint actions to meet the challenges.

Solution

The city and the state joined the national "Crack: We Can Beat It," program, which includes combating drug trafficking through mobile platforms that circulate throughout central Vitória, where 40 AXIS Q6034-E Network Cameras are operated by the military police.

Another 100 cameras of the same model have been purchased through an agreement with the Espírito Santo state government. The municipality also bought 25 AXIS Q6044-E Network Cameras, using its own funds, bringing the total up to 165 Axis cameras across the various projects.

Result

Camera images are shared among military police, municipal police, fire department and other agencies in order to provide efficient service to residents, who are already noting the results. Vitória recorded a 50% drop in homicides in the first half of 2015 compared to the same period in 2014, according to data collected since 2001 by the state's Department of Public Safety and Social Defense. In the same period, the city saw a 55% increase in the number of stolen vehicles that were recovered.

*Getúlio Vargas Foundation

**NGO Citizens' Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice



Joining forces

Joint actions by the federal government, the state of Espírito Santo and the municipality of Vitória ensured the implementation of three parallel public safety projects. The use of funds from federal, state and municipal sources reflects the understanding that public safety is not a challenge to be confronted within a single sphere: drugs and violence cross borders, cause public health problems and require a coordinated response.

This same logic was applied within the municipality itself. "In Espírito Santo, the public security agencies work together", said Edvandro Sipolatti Esguersoni, head of Vitória's integrated Surveillance and Operations centre. "All incidents that are picked up by the military police are also reported to the municipal police and other agencies, such as the fire department. This results in faster service, because the images are shared."

Strategic actions were organized in six areas: crime prevention and control; strengthening the relationship between police, community, and the justice department; creating a safe urban environment; prevention of violence against women and children; reducing risk factors; and strengthening social cohesion.

Sipolatti said the images from the video surveillance system are even more significant thanks to the intelligent management system that backs them up. "This sharing of resources enhances problem-solving and increases police officers' credibility. This means that residents end up calling for more cameras to be installed, because people know that wherever the cameras are present, the authorities can also see what is going on."

Printscreen via Whatsapp

Vitória's downtown area had only 11 cameras beforehand. 40 cameras were installed as part of the "Crack: We Can Beat It" campaign. These cameras are managed using software from Digifort, an Axis partner. Over time, other trouble spots were added to the coverage area: the system was further expanded using 100 AXIS Q6034-E Network Cameras, supported by SecurOS software from ISS, another Axis partner.

The addition of these cameras allowed monitoring of all main city accesses. The most recent addition was 25 AXIS Q6044-E Network Cameras, a PTZ model that offers quick movements and 30x optical zoom. "The cameras offer excellent performance," said Edvandro Sipolatti, director of CIOM. "We did a pilot here to test the new AXIS Q6044-E, and we installed one of these devices on a building to monitor drug trafficking. The camera generates a very good image quality, even from nearly 300 meters away."

The arrival of these 25 new units means there is expectation that the older cameras from another brand will be replaced. "Compared to standard cameras, the difference is enormous and striking, in terms of color and resolution," says Sipolatti.

The director notes that color fidelity is extremely important for police work. "We work closely with descriptions and features. So when you are able to identify colors and pass this information on, it helps a lot. You can even isolate a screen print and share it through Whatsapp."

Thanks to the quality of the images, operators can use the cameras to view license plates, in certain circumstances.

"The readability of a plate using the Axis cameras depends on distance and the environment: whether it is nighttime, whether the location is well lit, etc. Generally, you can clearly identify a vehicle at around 100 or 150 meters thanks to light compensation. Because they do not have infrared, readability depends on this compensation," says the CIOM director.



Vehicle recovery

If a suspicious vehicle appears on the screen, agents are advised to check and see if there is any database entry for the license plate. This means that any vehicle that passes through the areas covered by the cameras can be checked by the Integrated Operation and Monitoring Center (CIOM). In the first half of 2015 alone there was a 55% increase in the recovery of stolen vehicles compared to 2014.

The government is convinced that this increase in stolen vehicle recoveries was also the result of the greater number of video surveillance cameras. According to the coordinator, Fabiano Pimentel, "the cameras are installed at strategic locations, many of them already regarded as escape routes or places where crimes are committed". When agents confirm that there is a suspicious vehicle at a critical point in a region, they can run a license plate search. Depending on the results, patrol cars are called in and the individual is detained.

"On one occasion," says Sipolatti, "a stolen Volkswagen Gol (not to be confused with the Golf) was identified by one of the cameras on a street in a wealthy neighborhood and followed to an area known for high levels of drug dealing. The vehicle was recovered, with officers also seizing weapons, ammunition and drugs at a residence near another camera location."

Crime doesn't pay

The effects of the initiatives being carried out in Vitória are noticeable not only in the official data but also in an improved sense of safety. Vitória's Municipal Secretary of Urban Safety, Frônzio Calheira, acknowledges that "video surveillance brings more criminals to justice and increases citizens' sense of safety". The city's mayor, Luciano Rezende, agrees: "Crime doesn't pay in Vitória."

According to the mayor, the feeling of safety in the city is the result of a set of initiatives that enabled a collective undertaking capable of improving the city's image. "The cameras are bringing everything out in the open; you can't just change your shirt or clothing to cover things up."

"Crime in the city has gone down thanks to the deployment of the cameras and various other programs and city government initiatives, with a 50% drop in homicides in the first half of 2015 compared to the first half of 2014."

Frônzio Calheira, Vitória's Municipal Secretary of Urban Safety.



Made up of one major island and 32 smaller islands, along with a stretch of mainland, Vitória covers almost 100 square kilometers.



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Axis has more than 2,000 dedicated employees in more than 40 countries around the world, supported by a network of over 75,000 partners across 179 countries. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

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