

Brazil – The Maturity of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems of the Brazilian Public Administration

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to present the main results of the audit carried out in 2013 by the Federal Court of Accounts–Brazil (TCU) to evaluate Brazilian ministries' capacity to respond to demands for and utilize evaluations and to describe their evaluation systems. With this work, the TCU hopes to contribute to the discussions on how governments can develop the necessary national capacities in order to evaluate sustainable human development.

Evaluation practices have been established as an important tool to support effective governance of public policies. As such, these practices should be guided by principles that aim to ensure credibility, reliability and use of the evaluative knowledge produced. Decision-makers could then adopt more effective actions to improve public policies towards results that promote social betterment.

In Brazil, evaluations are an attribute of the management of public policies, which also comprises the implementation, monitoring and review of public budgets. They articulate the means and tools necessary to enable the execution of such public policies that are translated into the thematic programmes constituting the Multi-Year Plan (PPA). The PPA is the Government's plan for the medium term (four-year plan), and is reviewed annually to ensure the necessary resources for social and economic development.

According to the Ministry of Planning, one of the main objectives of the current multi-year plan (PPA 2012-2015) is to overcome the inequalities that persist in the country. Social equity requires different arrangements and interactions that enable the desired outcomes from public policies. Therefore, evaluation and continuous monitoring within the context of the policy, plan or programme are tools for obtaining reliable and timely information on a given reality, in its most relevant aspects, for equitable and efficient delivery of goods and services. (Brazil Government Planning Model PPA 2012/2015)

A monitoring and evaluation system was developed to support the management of PPA 2012-2015 consisting of a central monitoring system called SIOP (Integrated Planning and Budget System). The existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks in public administration serve as a complementary tool.

Because the evaluation of programmes and public policies is one the most important functions of the Government, including for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Member States need to develop their own capacity. Superior audit institutions (SAIs), such as the TCU, can significantly contribute to the overall achievement of the development strategy through their controlling functions, transparency and accountability.

In recognition of that reality, in 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/69/228 recognizing the essential role of SAIs and their capacity to ensure government accountability regarding the use of public goods.

The TCU use performance audit to evaluate government programmes regarding their efficiency and effectiveness. It is an evaluative approach recognized in the evaluation literature that the TCU has carried out routinely since the 1990s.

In order to ensure that the policy outcomes meet citizens' expectations, returning to them in the form of higher quality public services, given the heavy tax burden, it is necessary to invest in efficient budget allocation, good public governance and effective risk management. To this end, public organizations need a steady stream of reliable and timely information. Therefore, information systems such as evaluation are key instruments to guide policymakers in the best path, so that the expected results can be achieved.

To do so, it is necessary not only that public organizations have the means, resources and adequate information to implement public policies, but also that they have the ability to develop, according to their needs, the relevant instruments to produce or demand information of the performance and results of these policies, embodied by their decision-making processes. This is the evaluative capacity-building of public entities, through the incorporation of evaluation practices into their organizational processes.

It is through evaluation systems that a stream of evaluative knowledge provides feedback for the decision-making processes in organizations. This knowledge, when used, must contribute to learning and improvement of programmes and policies as well as to promote accountability.

Due to the importance of this subject, the TCU, in 2013, carried out a performance audit of 28 ministries with the purpose of characterizing their government programmes evaluation systems and to provide a diagnosis of the capacity of such ministries to continually monitor and evaluate their programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The first step in this work was to develop an evaluation system's conceptual framework, which was shown in NEC 2013 in Sao Paulo and published in that conference's journal. This framework has four foci of analysis (evaluative demands, evaluative supply, organization

capacity learning and evaluation use). These foci were broken down into 14 dimensions and 44 criteria of analysis to evaluate the perception of the stakeholders.

The unit of analysis was restricted to 28 ministries of the Brazilian Federal Government, for which a web survey was sent to 2,062 governmental managers from these ministries. One ministry did not return the survey due to technical problems. There were 750 respondents, all of whom were members with executive positions of decision-making responsibilities. The results were analysed through a Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis Methodology, a constructivist approach (MCDA-C), along with descriptive statistics and content analysis. This is not a probabilistic sample, since the approach is that of descriptive inference and not causal inference based on the perception of relevant participants of the object of study.

Regarding Focus I and Focus II, we investigated the perception of decision-makers about the issues presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. CRITERIA OF ANALYSIS – FOCUS I AND FOCUS II

EVALUATIVE DEMANDS		
FOCUS I	Do governmental decision-makers:	
	have well-defined programme objectives, targets, goals, budget and other resources?	
	know which, when and for what purpose evaluative information is needed?	
	know who needs the evaluative information to be produced?	
EVALUATIVE SUPPLY		
FOCUS II	In order to produce evaluative information, do Brazilian ministries have:	
		institutionalized organizational process?
		evaluative procedures and practices?
		skilled resources to develop or to ask for evaluation?
	evaluative rules and organizational support (resources to do evaluation)?	

Regarding Organizational Capacity Learning (Focus III), we were interested in the perception of decision-makers about their organizational environment to support evaluation; regarding Evaluation Use (Focus IV), we analysed the benefits of using the evaluative information.

To score the results of respondents’ perception, we built a scale (Table 2) to classify the maturity of the mechanism and instruments to characterize the evaluation systems and their components (focus and dimensions). This scale ranges from ‘not structured’ to ‘advanced’, according to the score of each focus. On the other hand, we determined that a score of 50 (on a scale from 0 to 100) was a minimum requirement for the eligibility of a characterization of evaluation systems (Focus I and Focus II).

This analytical criterion was defined based on the questionnaire scales, where the centre of the scale represents that the respondents have at least a minimum condition (or elements)

about the criterion surveyed. According to the analytical framework developed by the TCU to investigate the evaluation systems, if a ministry did not have the necessary elements to demand evaluative information (Focus I > 50), and was not able to produce or request such information (Focus II > 50), the evaluation system could not be characterized.

TABLE 2. SCALE TO CLASSIFY THE MATURITY OF FOCUS AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

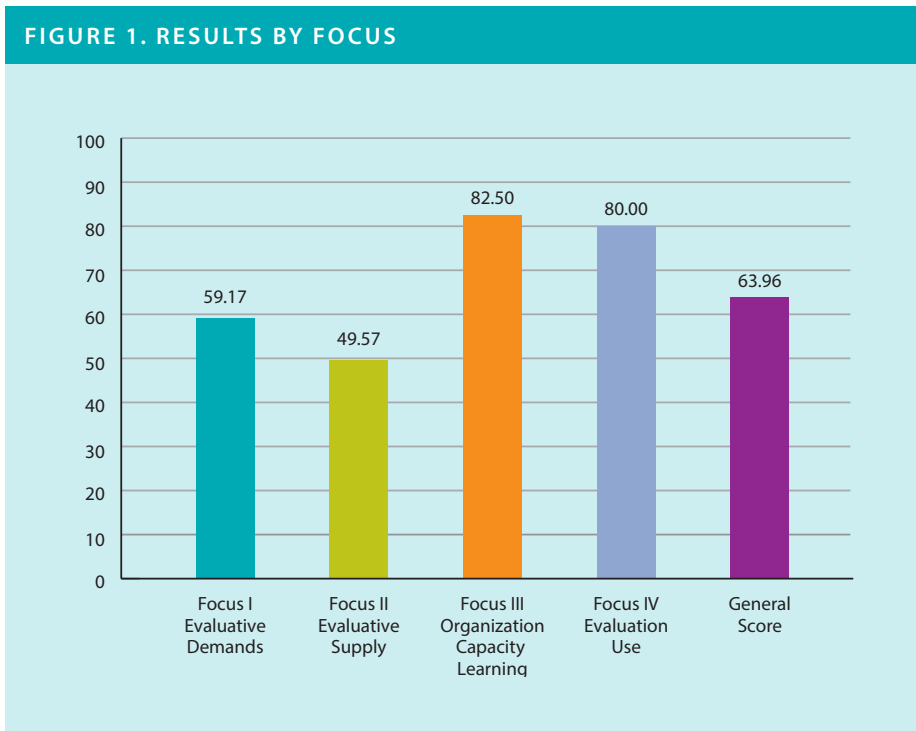
MATURITY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Not structured	A system or focus is considered not structured when the mechanisms and instruments needed to characterize the evaluation systems are partially present and they are not enough and do not regularly meet the decision-makers' needs of evaluative knowledge	> 50
Incipient	A system or focus is considered incipient when the mechanisms and instruments needed to characterize the evaluation systems are present , but they are partially sufficient and do not regularly meet the decision-makers' needs of evaluative knowledge	≥ 50 and ≤ 60
Intermediate	A system or focus is considered intermediate when the mechanisms and instruments needed to characterize the evaluation systems are present, partially sufficient and regularly meet the decision-makers' needs of evaluative knowledge	> 60 and ≤ 70
Improved	A system or focus is considered improved when the mechanisms and instruments needed to characterize the evaluation systems are present, sufficient and satisfactorily meet the decision-makers' needs of evaluative knowledge	> 70 and ≤ 80
Advanced	A system or focus is considered advanced when the mechanisms and instruments needed to characterize the evaluation systems are present and entirely adequate to meet the decision-makers' needs of evaluative knowledge	> 80

MAIN RESULTS

The outcomes show that only nine ministries developed the evaluative capacity to regularly produce information on the performance and results of public programmes. The institutionalization of evaluative practices is still in early stages and the execution of these practices is compromised by the deficiencies in programme implementation, such as shortcomings of budgetary and financial resources, lack of personnel, inadequacy of organization infrastructure, information technology, and many others. However, although the information produced may not be sufficient for the regular needs of managers, they are used for a multiplicity of means, mainly for the promotion of accountability, the improvement of programmes and organizational learning.

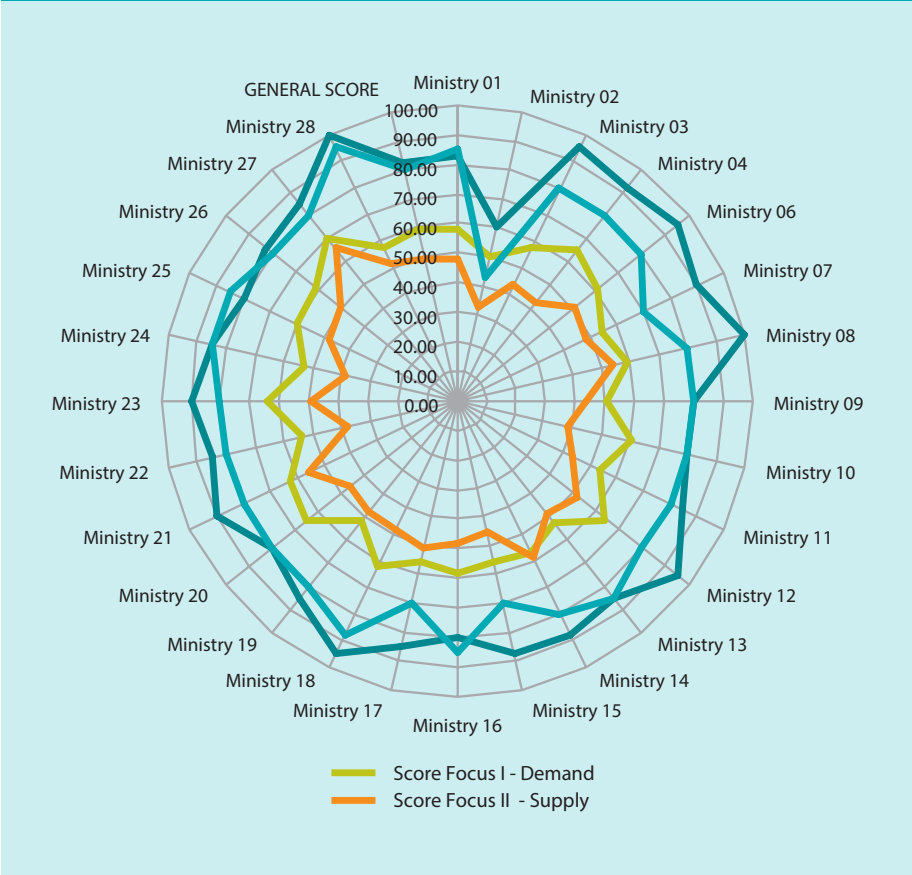
Among the evaluated ministries, only 33 percent (nine) had an evaluation score of more than 50 regarding their evaluative capacity (Focus II). That is, although the demands are structured or partially structured in the ministries that were surveyed (Focus I) the evaluative capacity of 67 percent of the ministries is not sufficiently developed to meet this demand. Therefore, even when the elements for the demand of evaluative information are partially sufficient, the ministries are not capable of promoting the necessary production of information on performance and results of programmes and policies.

The overall evaluation by focus showed that the managers perceived the ministries as having a high organizational learning capacity (Focus III – 82.5) and high capacity to use evaluative knowledge (Focus IV – 80.0). However, the ministries have a low level of evaluative capacity-building (Focus II – 49.6), that is, the capacity to produce information on the performance and results of programmes and policies executed by them (Figure 1).



It was also noted that 70 percent of the ministries (19) do not have adequate organizational structure, nor definition of the responsibilities and mandates to produce information related to the performance and results of the programmes. The assessment of personnel and means (budget resources and IT infrastructure) available to produce evaluation knowledge can be considered incipient in over 50 percent of the ministries surveyed because they do not meet regularly the needs of managers (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. COMPARABLE ANALYSIS PER FOCUS AND MINISTRY

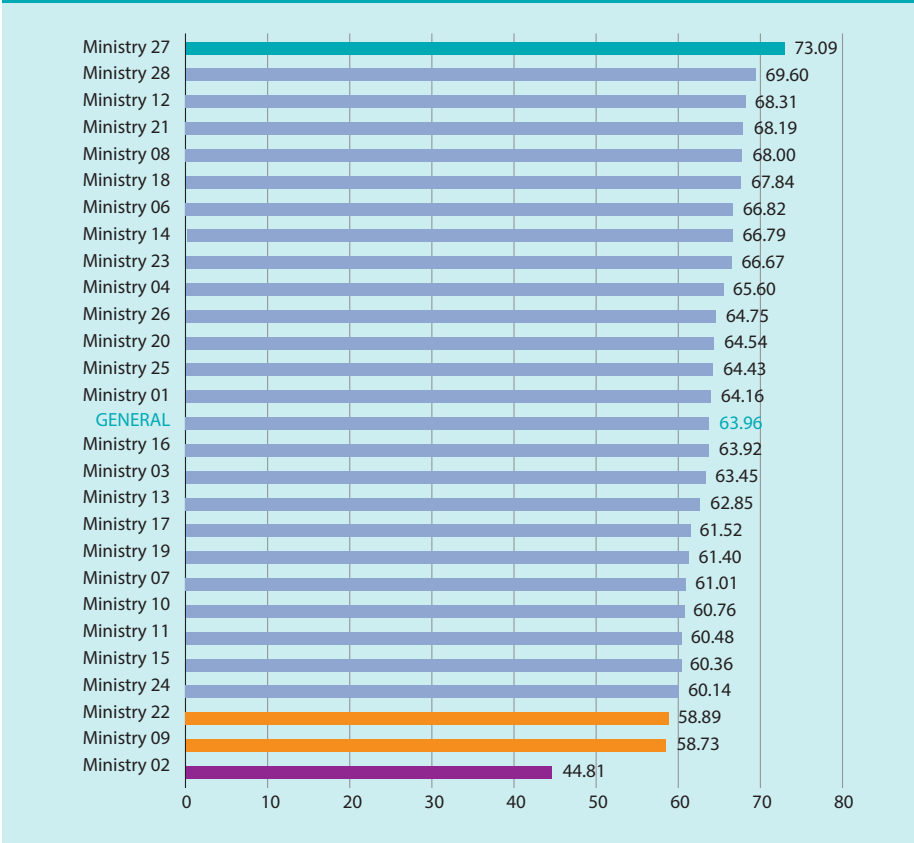


It is worth highlighting that, when analysing the profile of the respondents, 57 percent of the managers have been in office for two years or less in their present positions. This fact is significant since the turnover could compromise the development of the evaluative capacity of the units surveyed.

The overall results for the four foci of maturity were 63.69, corresponding to an intermediate level of maturity. This shows that the mechanisms and tools needed to characterize the evaluation systems are present, are partially sufficient and meet the minimum needs of federal governmental managers.

Based on these results, we developed an index to characterize the maturity of Brazilian ministries' evaluation capacity-building, which we call iSA-Gov Index. In summary, 85 percent of the agencies (23) have an intermediate level of maturity. Only one agency had an improved level of maturity, with a grade of 73.09. Two agencies had an initial level of maturity and one was classified as not structured, with a grade of 44.81 (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. MATURITY LEVEL OF BRAZILIAN MINISTRIES' EVALUATION CAPACITY-BUILDING (ISA-GOV INDEX)



CONCLUSION

The Bangkok Declaration recalls the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/237 “on Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level and call for national and international stakeholders, to support efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation, in accordance with their national policies and priorities. [...]” and this Declaration also noted that “statistical monitoring and reporting are important but insufficient for providing Member States with opportunities for learning, accountability and decision-making. Evaluation should play a more important role in making implementation of the new development agenda more evidence-based than it did in engaging with the MDGs”.

The TCU has fostered the importance of evaluation as a component of national governance to improve public entities’ capacity to deliver better public goods and services through its audit’s recommendations. In this way, the TCU sent an individual report to each of the

27 ministries that took part in the survey and made recommendations for improvements in each ministry's evaluation capacity. The Court also intends to follow-up these recommendations in order to assure the improvements took place, as well as to make periodic evaluations of ministries' evaluation capacity-building.

Based on the audit's results, much is needed to be developed in the Brazilian ministries in terms of means and instruments to strengthen national and sector evaluation systems in order to monitor and evaluate the performance of policies and programmes. One way of initiating the implementation of these instruments would be through the establishment of national evaluation legislation and policies.

Building evaluation capacity in public sector in Brazil's Federal Government is a priority to monitor and evaluate the SDG goals and targets to assure that no one will be left behind.

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