A research of the program evaluation systems of the direct federal administration in Brazil



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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of research on systems for monitoring and evaluating government programs of the federal public administration. The theoretical framework was based on the criteria adopted in Leeuw and Furubo (2008) to characterize an evaluation system. Data from the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the Federal Government's Multiyear Plan-(PPA (SIGPlan), from 2005 to 2009 were used, and 31 Monitoring and Evaluation Units (UMA) of the Ministries of the Executive Branch were surveyed. The results indicate the spread of computerized systems for monitoring physical targets of programs that meet the objectives of performance measurement, although not integrated to sector and central monitoring and evaluation systems. Sector monitoring systems were identified in various ministries and in some bodies that appear as more appropriate alternatives to the management needs of sector policies than the management model of PPA programs. It was further observed that although there is a significant number of program evaluations, one cannot say that the development of evaluation capacity in sector bodies has evolved in the same proportion. Finally, it is observed that although the PPA Monitoring and Evaluation System has not been able to fulfill the functions it was intended to, 49% of sectoral bodies had not yet deployed their own evaluation systems.



Keywords: Direct federal administration. Evaluation of government programs. Programs monitoring and evaluation systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to apply a conceptual model to identify and characterize systems for assessing governmental programs of the federal public administration in Brazil. Therefore, from literature review, there were established criteria for the research of evaluation practices adopted in the direct administration of the executive power, with the potential to be characterized as an evaluation system. This is an exploratory research, conducted through analysis of documents and administrative records, interviews and surveys with federal government bodies. This work was conducted by Audit Survey as per TC-032.287/2010-0, reviewed in the Plenary Session of October 19, 2011, where Judgment No. 2781/2011 was rendered, reported by Minister Valmir Campelo.

It is observed that although the evaluation practices have been disseminated in government bodies, few studies have been devoted to investigate to what extent these practices constitute evaluation systems. Indeed, this is what Leeuw and Furubo (2008) observe. They suggest a set of criteria to characterize the assessment

systems and, based on work done by other authors, identify a typology of systems, pointing out some issues that should be further investigated to better understand the role these systems play in modern societies.

The institutionalization of these instruments should facilitate the integration of governmental decision-making processes, through the systematization of mechanisms of interaction of various practices associated with planning functions, control and accountability. In this sense, there are budgetary systems, audit systems and evaluation systems. Budget and audit systems are traditionally better developed and structured than the systems for evaluating programs and policies, even though, in the last three decades, assessment practices have been increasingly widespread and disseminated in public administration.

According to Grau and Bozzi (2008), the increasing use in Latin America of systems for monitoring and evaluation of results in the public sector is a way to advance in the search for greater transparency and effectiveness of government action and, therefore, increase the capacity to exercise collective control, resulting in the increasing of State legitimacy, the fight against corruption, the best use of public money and the creation of policies and services that promote social welfare, reducing poverty and tackling inequality.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To develop this work and in order to form the concepts to be used in the analysis, it is important to define institutions.

Institutions are understood as the 'rules of the game' (NORTH, 1990), formal and informal, that guide and limit the relationships between people and/or organizations; expressing, based on a set of shared values, both the mechanisms for implementation of rules, such as the behavior expected from individuals and organizations on a reality, a real world phenomenon (NORTH et al., 2009, p. 15), in order to impose some order and reduce uncertainty in the interactions among the actors involved (MARCH; OLSEN, 1984).

Therefore, it can be inferred that the institutionalization of evaluation systems concerns the definition of formal and informal rules that guide and constrain the evaluation practices and the relationship between the actors involved, in order to reduce the risks, so the expected results can be achieved.

For Williams and Imam (2007), when one thinks in terms of [evaluation] systems, one must understand its limits, what characterizes them, what is part of what is being investigated and what is not, this also helps to understand that systems can exist only in relation to other systems and their limits.

Based on these assumptions, Leeuw and Furubo (2008) defined four criteria to characterize an evaluation system. The first criterion concerns the existence of a distinct epistemological perspective, the second deals with the arrangements, i.e., for the assessment activities to be considered a system, they must be performed by evaluators within organizational structures and institutions, and not just (or largely) by independent evaluators, external to the organization. The third criterion is the continuity, indicating the permanence of these activities over time, and finally, the fourth criterion refers to planning the use of evaluation results.

Thus, for evaluation activities to be characterized as a system, they must be acknowledged as such, based on the shared understanding of the peculiarities, rules and procedures that differentiate them from other activities. According to March (1994), the activities within organizations are defined from a set of skills, responsibilities and rules (formal and informal) that give them identity and allow them to be coordinated and controlled.

When individuals and organizations share the same identity, they follow rules or procedures that they perceive as appropriate to the situations in which they are involved (MARCH, 1994). Thus, the identity of an evaluation system is intrinsically related to the activities and the type of knowledge that are developed and produced within those systems.

To Jannuzzi (2012), monitoring and evaluation systems are part of more general systems of policies and programs management, which are articulated, getting from them demands of data needed to the process and feeding then back with 'customized' information and knowledge, from the diagnosis to the evaluation of a more summative nature. According to the same author,

these systems have no independent life, as the main reason for their existence is to provide structure and improve management, even though it can also help to ensure greater transparency of government action, merit evaluation and continuity of policies and programs.

Hence, one can infer that the institutionalization of evaluation systems depends on the existence of demands of information for the improvement of policies and programs management, to whose care it produces knowledge through systematic practices of information management, with the purpose of using it in political and administrative decision-making processes.

Accordingly, evaluation systems have characteristics and purposes that distinguish them from other systems that integrate the cycle of government policies and programs management.

Thus, the institutionalization of evaluation systems can be characterized from the mechanisms that define a steady and continuous stream of demands that drive a set of, formalized, structured and coordinated evaluation practices to produce knowledge, with the aim of supporting the decision making and learning processes to improve the management and implementation of programs and public policies (SERPA; CALMON, 2012).

Leeuw and Furubo (2008), based on the International Atlas of Evaluation (FURUBO et al., 2002) and Roots of Evaluation (ALKIN, 2004), identified - mainly in western countries - the following types of evaluation systems:

- i. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (SM&A),
- ii. System of Performance Monitoring,

- iii. System of Performance, Inspection and Monitoring Audit,
- iv. Quasi-experimental Evaluation System and evidence-based policy;
- v. System of evaluation and accreditation.

One can infer that evaluation systems with different purposes meet different needs. Therefore, their respective structures and features are developed and shaped to meet the purposes for which they were created, based on the epistemological assumptions that guide the form and development of systematic processes for the production of knowledge, as well as the relationships between the actors involved.

On the other hand, Grau and Bozzi (2008) in their work on survey of monitoring and evaluation systems in Latin America, given the lack of conceptual delimitation and consensus on what is generically called national system of monitoring and evaluation, established the criteria listed in Table 1 to identify these systems, or the set of instruments that could be converted into system. These criteria are closely correlated with those suggested by Leeuw and Furubo (2008), as shown in Table 1.

Thus, based on the theoretical foundations presented, the model proposed to identify and characterize the evaluation systems includes the following dimensions of analysis:

 external and internal contexts in which demands for evaluation are formulated - in this dimension the variables to be identified relate to the external and internal organizational context (political and administrative), where the demands for evaluation arise, are structured and delimit the purposes of the evaluation system, through the definition of what should be evaluated (object),

- why it should be evaluated (objectives) and to whom (those interested in evaluations),
- ii. arrangements structuring of process and organization of means to perform the evaluation activities, which can be deduced as evaluation capacity. In this dimension, the variables to be investigated concern the definition and dissemination within the organization, evaluation practices established, the organizational support in terms of education and training for professionals responsible for implementing evaluation activities; formalization of evaluation practices, by defining responsibilities, routines and tools, as well as the allocation of resources needed to implement the activities,
- iii. organizational learning capacity attributes and conditions to support organizational learning and relate to clarity of purpose and vision of organizations, leadership, an organizational culture that fosters learning, knowledge transfer, cooperation and teamwork,
- iv. use it concerns the investigation of the mechanisms that promote the use of information produced by evaluation activities, so that the knowledge needed is effectively generated and decisions are taken to improve management, programs and public policies.

3. METHODOLOGY

Whereas the criteria defined by Leeuw and Furubo (2008) summarize those established by Grau and Bozzi (2008), and based on them, evaluation practices existing in bodies responsible for finalistic programs of the federal government, in particular of

Table 1:
Comparison of the criteria
established by Leeuw
and Furubo (2008) and
Grau and Bozzi (2008)
to characterize the
evaluation systems.

Leeuw and Furubo (2008) - Criteria	Grau and Bozzi (2008) - Criteria				
Distinct epistemological perspective	formal institutionalization, with coordinating unit and name				
	operation of the system by an entity with role and authority over all public administration, but with specialized roles				
	conducting monitoring and evaluation activities;				
	global coverage intention				
Arrangements	explicit articulation of users and system functions				
	location of the system in the executive branch				
	regulation of the system within the public administration				
	minimum instrumental density				
Continuity	regularity of activities				
Use	use of resulting information and monitoring and evaluation activities				

Source: the authors

program evaluations and monitoring mechanisms, were initially identified from the data contained in the Monitoring and Evaluation System of Multi-Year Plan - SMA, considering that it is a system established by law (Law 11.653/2008), nationwide and under the coordination and responsibility of the central executive branch planning body.

It should be noted that such a strategy is supported by the work coordinated by Grau and Bozzi (2008), whose orientation to identify monitoring and evaluation systems was to locate a coordinating unit clearly defined and institutionalized, with the authority to establish procedures for collecting data to conduct monitoring and evaluation - M&A and send processed information to potential users. From the identification of the activities of this unit, it would be possible to delimit the scope of the system, the components and tools used, as well as its relationship to other M&A practices within the government, which would help to build the map of other existing systems.

Based on the analysis of the database of programs annual evaluations carried out through the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the PPA (SIGPlan), for the period of 2005 to 2009, the number of programs evaluations carried out under sectoral bodies was quantified. These were responsible for implementing programs and policies (Table 2), as well as for evaluation practices related to the monitoring of physical targets of the programs (Graph 1).

This information allowed us to identify clusters of evaluation practices with the potential to be characterized as an evaluation system. Such evaluation practices were examined by means of documentary analysis and interviews with relevant bodies and experts, based on the theoretical framework mentioned.

With this information and based on normative rules established by the legislation then in force, a survey of 31 Monitoring and Evaluation Units (UMA) took place, all linked to the Ministries of the Executive

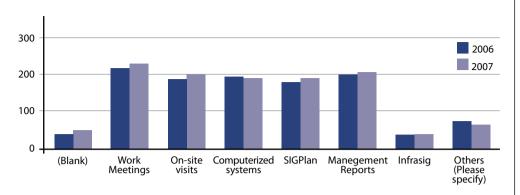
Table 2:Number of Program
Evaluations Total/
Year and Body

MINISTRIES	YEAR					EVALUATIONS
MINISTRIES	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Health	11	12	12	5	4	44
MMA (Ministry of Environment)	15	7	8	3	9	42
Agriculture	12	7	9	4	9	41
Justice	8	4	9	3	7	31
MME (Ministry of Mines and Energy)	3	4	3	8	13	31
MDS (Ministry of Social Development)	9	4	4	4	5	26
Defense	6	5	5	6	4	26
Work	6	3	4	5	7	25
MDIC (Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade)	5	3	3	6	5	22
MCT (Ministry of Science and Technology)	5	6	1	1	7	20
MPOG (Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management)	5	2	7	2	3	19
Culture	6	2	2	3	5	18
Education	3	2	4	3	3	15
Sports	3	4	3	2	3	15
SEDH (Special Secretariat for Human Rights)	3	2	2	0	8	15
Transport	2	3	5	0	5	15
Cities	2	1	1	4	6	14
Finance	3	2	4	3	1	13
Integration	3	1	4	0	5	13
MRE (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	3	0	3	4	2	12
MDA (Ministry of Agriculture Development)	2	2	2	1	4	11
Communications	3	2	1	2	2	10
PR	1	2	1	1	2	7
Tourism	2	1	0	1	2	6
Social Security	0	0	0	3	3	6
SEAP (Department of Public Administration)	1	0	1	1	1	4
SEPPIR (Department of Policies to Promote Racial Equality)	1	1	0	1	1	4
Women	0	0	0	0	2	2
GabPR	0	0	1	0	0	1
MPU (Brazilian Federal Attorney General's Office)	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	123	82	99	76	129	509

Note. Source: Adapted from BRASIL, 2011.

Graph 1:Monitoring mechanisms in relation to the quantitative of government programs (years 2006 and 2007)

Source: PPA Annual Evaluation Questionnaire 2006 and 2007 -SIGPlan, BRASIL (2011).



Branch, and the collection of data in eight of these units (Ministries Health, Education, Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, Agriculture, Labor, Tourism, National Integration and Cities) was through a structured interview and in the other by electronic submission of questionnaire. The percentage of response obtained was 81% (25 bodies). The research aimed to identify the extent to which these units fulfilled the role of articulating evaluation systems of sectors with the central monitoring and evaluation system in order to enable the construction of the map of the evaluation systems for the public federal administration.

4. RESULTS

Preliminarily, it is worth noting that at the time of preparation of this paper, the PPA Monitoring and Evaluation System, , was undergoing a restructuring process, in face of the new premises of the PPA 2012- 2015. The data used in this study were extracted from the system in force in the period from 2005-2010 (BRASIL, 2011).

The Monitoring and Evaluation System of the Multi-Year Plan, for the period of 2004-2011, corresponding to the Multi-Year Plan 2004-2007 and 2008-2011, does not have characteristics that allow us to classify it in this category, according to the classification defined by Leeuw and Furubo (2008). Analysis from the data collected indicate that the central monitoring and evaluation system of the federal administration is similar to a system of performance monitoring of normative character, considering that its

main purpose is to comply with the legal provisions established in laws that approved the respective multi-year plans. The knowledge produced through the System does not properly subsidize the decision making and learning processes to improve sector management, nor is able to contribute to improving the implementation of programs and public policies.

5. MONITORING

From the analysis of the questionnaire for annual evaluation of the PPA programs, answered by managers of sectoral programs, for the years 2006 and 2007 it was found that monitoring of physical targets is performed in 96% of programs, as shown in Table 3:

It was found that the mechanisms for monitoring the performance of physical targets are consistent with the sources of information used for the monitoring of sectoral goals, i.e., in addition to data from SIGPlan, Management Reports and Work Meetings, the use of other computerized systems by program managers also stood out, as shown in Graph 2.

Despite the widespread use of computerized systems by sectoral bodies to monitor the programs, it was observed that these systems are not integrated into sectoral systems and monitoring and evaluation center, as shown by the evidence presented below.

According to the survey, 49% of bodies do not use other result indicators, besides those of the PPA, to monitor their programs and or actions (Graph 3). This evidence is relevant considering the flaws shown in other studies that have been dedicated to evaluate

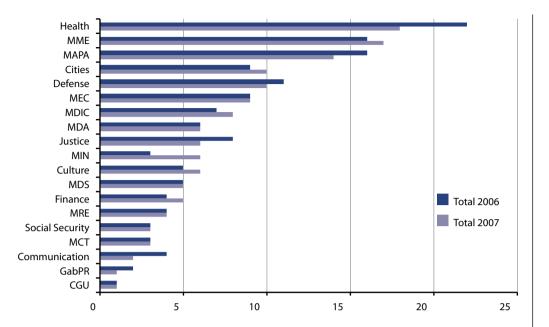
Table 3:Quantitative of Programs that have monitoring mechanisms

Physical targets monitoring?	2006	%	2007	%
No	14	4	15	4
Yes	325	96	329	96
Total	339	100	344	100

Source: BRASIL, 2011.



Source: BRASIL, 2011.



the consistency and adequacy of the PPA indicators to measure the achievement of program objectives (BRAZIL, 2009).

6. SECTORAL MONITORING SYSTEMS

With regard to monitoring systems, taking into account those formally established, with the structure and tools to ensure its continuity and its use, initiatives that meet these criteria were identified, especially in the interviews conducted in the units responsible for UMAs. MEC, for example, has a system for monitoring the actions of the Ministry called Painel de Controle (Control Panel), and the module for the monitoring and evaluation of the PPA, both available through SIMEC.

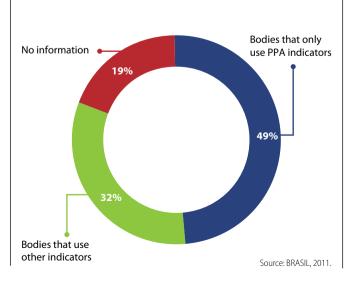
In the Ministry of Health, the *Sala de Situação em Saúde* (Health Conditions Room) was identified, which provides a range of information on programs run by the Ministry, and the Strategic Agenda called *Mais Saúde* (More Health), which is a strategic plan of the Ministry, organized into 4 pillars, 8 axes of intervention and 21 strategic objectives, monitored by 244 indicators.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, has a specific department for the development of monitoring and evaluation actions, SAGI, Department of Evaluation and Information Management, which has in its structure a Monitoring Board, responsible for the creation and measurement of indicators for the strategic programs of the Ministry.

The Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism also have strategic plans, respectively, MAPA Strategic Management and National Tourism Plan, with targets and indicators set, in addition to those established for the PPA and their own monitoring systems, SIPLAN and SIGTur, respectively.

In UMAs survey responses, it was found that in addition to these Ministries, other bodies also use indicators correlated to their respective strategic plans, such as AGU (Federal Attorney's Office), CGU (Office of the Comptroller General), MCT (Ministry of Science

Graph 3:Nature of the indicators used for monitoring programs.



and Technology), Justice and Transportation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also uses other indicators to monitor activities performed by their units.

As monitoring is an associated activity, which requires prior definition of results to be obtained and, considering that the management model of the PPA programs was not adequate to the needs of sectoral bodies, the existence of other planning initiatives, such as national plans and strategic plans, demonstrate alternatives tailored to sectoral policies management, as well as the identification of the goals to be achieved, the means necessary for its implementation and the mechanisms and instruments for measuring results.

Thus, the monitoring systematic outlined within these planning tools are more efficient, effective and useful for performance measurement.

7. PROGRAMS EVALUATIONS

Based on the data from the questionnaire of programs annual evaluation, specifically regarding the inquiry about the existence of another assessment, besides the PPA evaluation, it was observed that bodies associated to the executive branch, in the period between 2005 and 2009 were informed by their managers of the existence of 509 evaluations, as already shown in Table 2.

Analyzing the answers to this question, it was found that not all records regarded evaluation. In 112 of them (22%) there was no information to indicate the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluated aspects of the program, the evaluating institution or any other information that would allow inferring the nature of the evaluation practice. On the other hand, 161 records

(32%) evidenced other evaluation practices, which, by analysis of the content of the comments, were not characterized as program evaluations, in the sense of examining a given aspect of the program or policy, based on criteria and according to a methodology. Thus, only 236 records (46%) were considered for analysis in this research.

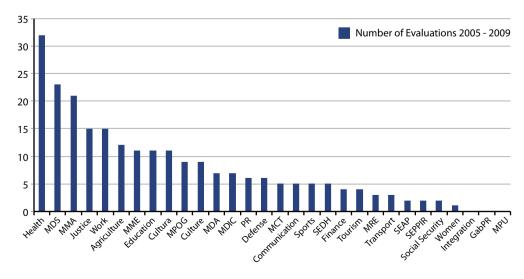
To clarify the details of the questionnaire and try to confirm them, UMAs were asked to relate program evaluations conducted over the past three years, indicating the evaluating institution, evaluated aspects of the program, the dates of beginning and end of the work and the amounts paid, if applicable.

As a result, it was found that UMAs have little knowledge on the monitoring and evaluation initiatives undertaken within the sectoral bodies, and 11 bodies reported that no further evaluations were made in addition to PPA, despite having been registered in the questionnaire. 8 other bodies did not answer this question and mentioned that it was not applicable, and only 3 identified the work done.

From the analysis of information on evaluations concluded, it was found that those that present commonly accepted criteria for defining evaluation may be considered as program evaluations, i.e., object, goal, method and evaluating institution. Figure 5 shows the final result of this analysis, indicating, by body, the number of evaluations carried out during 2005-2009. Thus, although there is no regular production under the bodies of program evaluations direct administration, some ministries have significant volume of evaluation, which may prove to set up an evaluation system.

It is also important to notice that although there is a significant volume of program evaluations, as stated,

Graph 4:Total number of program evaluations conducted by body from 2005-2009.



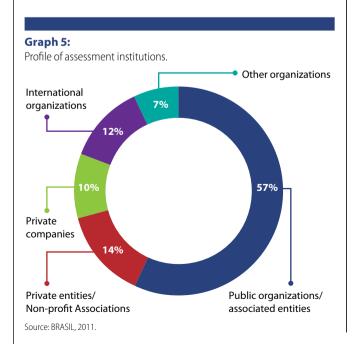
Source: BRASIL, 2011.

one cannot infer, based on the collected data that the development of evaluation capacity in sectoral bodies existed to the same extent. This finding can be deduced from the nature of the institutions listed as performers of evaluations, which although they are mostly associated to the public sector (57%), they are not part of the court structure of claiming sectoral bodies (Figure 6).

In order to draw a profile of evaluating institutions, based on information contained in the annual self-assessment questionnaires of PPA programs, it appears that the evaluations carried out under the government programs are mainly implemented by higher education institutions and entities associated to them, with IPEA (Brazilian Institute of Applied Economic Research), CGU and TCU (Federal Court of Accounts) standing out, in addition to internal evaluations of such bodies and those conducted by MPOG (Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management) (Graph 5).

8. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of data and information collected, it can be said that a significant part of the sectoral bodies, 49%, has not yet implemented their own evaluation systems, being dependant on planning and management instruments provided by the planning and budgeting central body, as well as methodologies and information system (SIGPlan) for the monitoring and evaluation of their programs.



This finding is relevant to the extent that several works about the consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of the government planning model, as well as the management and evaluation model demonstrate numerous weak points that may compromise the results of the programs and goals to be achieved (MATSUDA et al. 2006; BRASIL, 2009).

The PPA Monitoring and Evaluation System was not able to comply with the duties assigned to it, despite its standardization and structuring at all levels.

In relation to other evaluations carried out under sectoral bodies, except for the MDS (Ministry of Social Development), it was found that they occur in a piecemeal fashion, without properly monitoring the nature of services: what was performed, how it was performed, with what purpose and how their results were used. On the other hand, UMAs have little knowledge on these initiatives, unless they are informed of the PPA annual evaluation when program managers fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire.

MDS is the only body in direct federal administration that has a formal monitoring and evaluation policy and a department prepared to carry out these activities, even though the strategy adopted by the body to perform such evaluations is hiring these services.

Other initiatives implemented in some bodies of the Direct Administration are also noteworthy, particularly regarding the implementation of monitoring systems organized in the framework of models for planning and management of the relevant ministries, such as InfraSigs (MEC, MS, MAP, and MTur MCT) and monitoring systems Painel de Controle (Control Panel) (MEC), Sala de Situação em Saúde (Health Conditions Room) and Mais Saúde (More Health) (MS).

In short, it can be concluded that the systems for monitoring and evaluation of programs under the Direct Administration of the Federal Executive Branch, are not yet fully established, structured and implemented. This finding cannot be generalized, whereas in some bodies, such as MDS, MEC and MS at different levels and formats, their systems were organized in order to monitor and/or evaluate government actions, in addition to the single model established by the MPOG for all public bodies.

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