

10. BRAZIL

A MODEL TO EVALUATE THE MATURITY OF THE BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION'S EVALUATION SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION: FEDERAL COURT OF ACCOUNTS – BRAZILIAN COURT OF AUDIT

The Federal Court of Accounts – Brazilian Court of Audit is an autonomous, specialized organization that supports the external control conducted by the legislative branch. The court aims to ensure adequate and effective use of public funds by using a range of tools, such as auditing and judgement of the annual rendering of accounts by those responsible for government asset management.

The Brazilian Court of Audit has developed approaches that assess public management tools as evaluation systems, internal control systems, information technology governance systems and risk-assessment tools. These assessments will ensure effective governance and management of public policy and programmes and will contribute to the betterment of public administration.

OBJECTIVE

This paper presents a model that was developed by the Brazilian Court of Audit to characterize the maturity of evaluation systems in Brazilian public administration. Evaluation systems have been disseminated as a key tool to support decision-making processes and organizational learning, to promote transparency in programmes, and to assess policy performance and results. This information is essential to increasing the trust and confidence

of all stakeholders in the policy process, and it contributes to promoting coordination, accountability and more effective governance. Identifying and characterizing the public administration's evaluation systems allows the Brazilian Court of Audit to recognize the gaps and the need for improvement in the systems, and to make recommendations to remedy any deficiencies.

The model was based on the literature of evaluation systems and evaluation capacity building, with a focus on the work of Leeuw and Furubo (2008) on organizational capacities to perform and use evaluation.

The Brazilian Court of Audit has conducted two preliminary surveys to verify the model's adequacy to reach its objectives and goals. The results demonstrated that the model is a strong instrument that characterizes the maturity of ministries' evaluation systems. Therefore, the court approved the extension of the model survey to all Brazilian ministries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

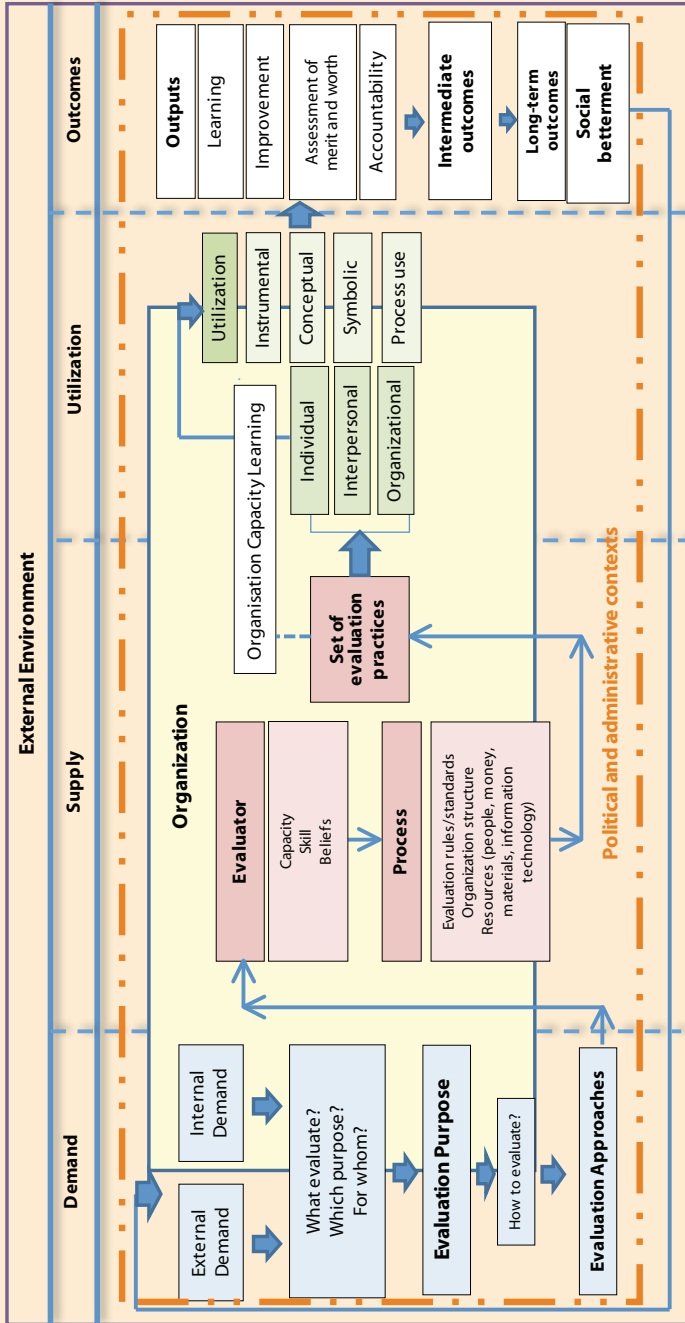
The structure of evaluation systems is related to the institutionalization of evaluation as an instrument to support the functions of planning, control and accountability. For Gray et al. (2002), budgeting and auditing are the main tools used for the exercise of these functions (in addition to the evaluation). Planning, coordination and management of governmental actions are made through the support of budgeting. Evaluation of programmes and policies improves public policies by producing knowledge that subsidizes organizational learning and decision-making to improve public policies. The audit ensures financial control and accountability for the use of public resources.

According to Grau and Bozzi (2008), the growing utilization of M&E systems in the public sector in Latin America creates further transparency and improves the effectiveness of government actions and, in this manner, increases social control capacity and state legitimacy, and facilitates anti-corruption efforts, better use of public resources, and the creation of policies and services that promote social welfare, thus reducing poverty and inequality.

Leeuw and Furubo (2008) applied four criteria in labelling a set of evaluative activities as a system. The first criterion takes a distinctive epistemological perspective; the second criterion is that evaluation activities should be carried out by organizations and institutions and not largely by independent evaluators. The third criterion is the permanence or history in the activities involved; these activities should be part of an organization's initiatives. The fourth criterion focuses on the intended use of evaluation, i.e. information from evaluative activities should be linked to decision and implementation processes.

According to Jannuzzi (2012), M&E systems are articulated parts of a more general system of policy and programme management that supplies customized information and knowledge from formative and summative evaluation. These general systems demand data necessary for decision-making processes from M&E systems. The author states that M&E systems are not independent from the general system once they are developed for the purpose of producing knowledge—because their main reason for existence is to produce knowledge—for the improvement of management, even though an M&E system can also contribute to

FIGURE 1. A MODEL TO EVALUATE THE MATURITY OF THE BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION'S EVALUATION SYSTEMS



transparency of government actions and the judgement of programmes and policies.

The institutionalization of evaluation systems can be characterized by the mechanisms that define a regular and continuous stream of demand for evaluation that directs a set of evaluation practices that are formalized, structured and coordinated to produce knowledge that aims to contribute to decision-making processes and organizational learning.

DIMENSIONS OF ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

Based on this literature review, the proposed model to identify and characterize the maturity of evaluation systems encompasses the following dimensions of analysis (see Figure 1):

- **Demand:** the external and internal contexts in which demand for evaluation is generated. In this dimension, the constructs to be evaluated relate to the external and internal organizational environment (political and administrative), where demand for evaluation is generated, structured and bound by its purpose. Thus, we are interested in examining the adequacy of the planning processes aimed at assuring the consistency of the object to be evaluated, to whom (intended users of evaluation) and for what purpose;
- **Supply (production of knowledge – organizational responsibility):** the structuring of processes and the organization of means to conduct evaluative activities (evaluation capacity). In this dimension, the constructs to be studied are with respect to: the definition and dissemination, within organizations, of the evaluative practices to be used; the organizational support, in terms of education background and training of the professionals responsible for conducting evaluative activities; the formalization of evaluative practices, under the definition of their responsibilities, procedures and instruments; and the allocation of the means required to conduct the activities;
- **Capacity for organization learning:** an organization's attributes and conditions to support learning, with respect to the clarity and support for the organization's mission and vision, the leadership that supports learning, an experimental organizational culture, the ability to transfer knowledge, and teamwork and cooperation; and
- **Use:** the investigation of mechanisms that favour the utilization of knowledge produced by evaluative activities in order to improve programme and policy management.

METHODOLOGY

Two preliminary studies gathered data on the perceptions and opinions of a non-random sample of public managers that are responsible for implementing finalistic programmes and policies. A characterization and evaluation based on the constructs of the model were made regarding how the agencies are structured to attain evaluation knowledge. The studies measured the activities and resources available to support these activities, the purpose of their use and agencies' success in developing an evaluative learning culture.

A questionnaire based on the constructs of interest in the study was developed for a preliminary survey. This questionnaire included four parts: questions about the demand side, the supply side (evaluative production of knowledge), the organizational learning capacity

FIGURE 2. MATURITY PROFILE OF EVALUATION SYSTEMS



and the use of evaluation knowledge. There were 24 questions in total.

Prior to the survey, two Brazilian ministries were invited to take part in the pilot study. Due to the nature and purpose of the study, to evaluate the adequacy of the model and the instrument to measure the maturity of the evaluation systems, it was not disclosed which ministries took part in this preliminary survey. The ministries identified all the decision-making managers in their agencies that are responsible for implementing finalistic programmes and policies (162 in Ministry 1 and 147 in Ministry 2). An electronic survey was sent to all managers; 118 usable responses were received (73 from the first ministry and 45 from second ministry).

Descriptive statistics were prepared using SPSS Statistics12.0. The mean of each construct was adopted to characterize the maturity profile of the two ministries' evaluation systems (see Figure 2).

RESULTS

The results show an intermediate maturity of the evaluation systems in both ministries, with emphasis on the relevance of the knowledge produced for improvement of both programmes and management (as can be seen in the utilization dimension). There are also possible improvements in the dimensions of evaluation demand and knowledge production. In the first case, improvements can be made with respect to the planning of evaluation demand, information sharing and evaluation tools. In the second case, which deals with the development of evaluative capacity, possible improvements deal mostly with personnel

training and allocating necessary resources for the development of activities.

In regard to the organizational environment, the experimental component is highlighted as favourable to the development of an evaluation culture. However, there are opportunities for improvement in the definition of purposes (object and objectives of the evaluation system), as well as in knowledge transfer through information sharing and organizational learning. This reinforces the remarks made about evaluation demand.

The demand of Ministry 1 had been systematized and oriented, mainly by the plurianual plan and the sectorial plans. In Ministry 2, in addition to the pluriannual plan, strategic planning took on an important role in the orientation of evaluation activities.

A heavy competition was observed between internal and external evaluation demand, primarily within the institutions of Control and the Executive Office. This could compromise the evaluative capacity of the ministries, considering the insufficiency of human resources and the gaps in the necessary people skills for completing evaluation activities.

With respect to the flow of information between the suppliers and recipients of the produced evaluation knowledge, it was observed that deficiencies that may compromise the utilization of information still exist (notably in the transfer of produced knowledge).

With regard to the development of evaluation capacity, in Ministry 1 the majority of respondents agreed that the tools used to monitor and evaluate programmes, actions and policies (along with information utilization) are divulged and disseminated in their respective agencies. However, their teams were unable to identify objectives and the tools used, even though they agree that the instruments are formally instituted.

According to the respondents from Ministry 1, the steps for communicating M&E results are not completely formalized, a weakness in the communication system.

Regarding personnel capacity, the majority of respondents in both ministries agreed on the importance of actions that lead to capacity building for the work being developed. However, more than 50 percent of Ministry 1's respondents did not know or disagreed that the ministry provides incentives for employee improvement. More than 50 percent also disagreed that the ministry equitably promotes training for all employees in order to satisfy the needed capacity. In Ministry 2, 45 percent of respondents did not know or disagreed that the ministry provides incentives for the improvement of employees, and 41 percent did not know or disagreed that the ministry promotes equitable training for all employees.

It is relevant to emphasize that both ministries are in the initial stage of supporting the development of leadership skills. There is also space for improving teamwork, because more than a third of respondents did not know or disagreed with this aspect.

It is also worth noting that most respondents of both ministries agreed that the technical knowledge for employees that undertake M&E activities is adequate (although the average of responses did not corroborate this assertion). In contrast, the majority of respondents of both ministries believed that the amount of people to monitor and evaluate programmes is insufficient.

Twenty five percent of respondents of Ministry 1 did not know if an overlap of M&E activities existed between different agencies of the ministry; over 30 percent agreed that such overlap exists. In Ministry 2, almost 70 percent of respondents agreed that some overlap exists.

According to 68 percent of respondents from Ministry 1 and 60 percent from Ministry 2, their respective agencies have the ability to evaluate other studies of M&E of programmes, actions and policies. Furthermore, 58 percent of ministry one's respondents and 61 percent of ministry two's respondents agreed that their agencies have already developed the necessary technical competence to develop these activities.

The main evaluation practices in Ministry 1 are the elaboration of management reports, which obtained the highest percentage of agreement between respondents (82 percent), followed by evaluation planning (80 percent), normative revision of the programme (79 percent), results monitoring (75 percent), and implementation monitoring (74 percent). These practices indicate the nature of the evaluation system in Ministry 1, whose activities are focused on monitoring the implementation and results of programmes and policies. In the respondents' perception, evaluation practices contributed mostly to utilizing the process of programme comprehension, improving management, understanding the importance of these tools, developing abilities and techniques and increasing commitment within the organization.

The main evaluation activities of Ministry 2 are management reports, followed by performance indicators, studies of internal diagnostics and internal meetings. These results make it evident that the structure of the evaluation system is given by performance indicators and the management reports in Ministry 2, which are still segmented by agencies responsible for the implementation of programmes, actions and policies.

With regard to the availability of budgetary and financial resources, more than 50 percent of the respondents in both ministries agreed that their units have access to sufficient resources to fulfil the activities of M&E of programmes, actions and policies; about 44 percent did not know or disagreed in this respect.

It is relevant to highlight that 46 percent of respondents in Ministry 1, and 52 percent in Ministry 2, did not know or disagreed that the tools for evaluation activities (e.g. equipment, software, administrative support) were available in the institution. In addition, 67 percent of respondents in Ministry 1 and 68 percent of respondents in Ministry 2 disagreed or did not know whether the professionals involved in these activities had enough time to reflect on identified successes and failures.

In regard to organizational learning, data analysis showed that Ministry 1 is an institution that favours experimentation and teamwork-based resolution of problems. However, with respect to clarity of purpose, 39 percent of respondents did not know or disagreed that a self-evaluation process exists in relation to the objectives reached by the agency; 34 percent did not know or disagreed that senior managers and their teams shared a common vision of the activities to be developed; and 32 percent did not know or disagreed that all teams shared the ministry's mission and values.

In regard to organizational learning in Ministry 2, according to the respondents, it favours empowerment, a teamwork-based resolution of problems and experimentation. However, with respect to clarity of purpose, as seen in the previous case, almost 60 percent of respondents did not know or disagreed that the ministry's mission identifies values that are shared by all teams. In addition, 33 percent of respondents did not know or disagreed that there exists a shared vision of activities to be developed between senior managers and their teams, and

that there exists a self-evaluation process related to the objectives reached by the agency (27 percent).

With respect to the findings' utilization, it was observed that managers generally have a positive perception of evaluation activities for learning and improving programmes and policies, particularly for promoting change in order to promote the understanding of a programme's function and to identify improvement opportunities.

The proposed model makes it possible to identify the maturity profile of existing evaluation systems and to build a taxonomy specific to Brazilian public administration, enabling more effective control of tools used to aid public policy and programme management.

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