

5 Public communication for better policies and a more open government in Brazil

This chapter examines the opportunities and challenges for the centre of government (CoG) in Brazil to leverage the contribution of public communication in support of better policies and a more open government. It provides an in-depth assessment of the governance of public communication, the use of evidence to drive this function and its role in promoting a more open government. In doing so, the chapter reflects on good practices from OECD and key partner countries to aid Brazil in its transition to a more strategic public communication approach grounded in the open government principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation.

Introduction

Public communication is a central function of government and an important contributor to the open government principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation. At its core, it is the practice of relaying and receiving information by a public institution for the public good, which unlike political communication does not seek to advance a certain interest group agenda (OECD, 2020^[1]). When applied strategically, it can allow governments to ensure that information flows in an optimal manner, key policy issues are publicly debated and the implementation of public policies is properly monitored and evaluated within and beyond government (OECD, 2021^[2]).

Building on the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017^[3]), the OECD identifies three pillars of effective public communication that can help build on and reinforce open government principles. First, governance arrangements are a prerequisite for the effective functioning and institutionalisation of public communication. Such arrangements include legal and administrative structures, as well as the human and financial resources that support integrated, strategic and co-ordinated efforts. Second, professionalising capacities and embedding the needed technical expertise within communication units can promote a two-way dialogue with the public by consolidating the right knowledge and tools in this regard. Third, safeguarding the enabling media environment in which public communication must operate is also essential to promote a wider variety of voices in the policy-making cycle and combat the emerging threats of mis- and disinformation. This framework overall underscores how a public communication approach anchored in open government principles can be an instrument to build trust, raise awareness around key reforms and change behaviours.

Brazil has taken important steps toward establishing a strategic communication approach. Notably, it recently underwent a reorganisation of this function to consolidate more centralised steering of communications across the public administration. This commitment was further enshrined in the government's whole-of-government public communication strategy and plan (*Plano de Comunicação de Governo 2019 and Planejamento Estratégico SECOM 2019-2020*), where the Secretariat for Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic (*Secretaria de Comunicação Social, SECOM*) identified the need to adopt a strategic model that places citizens at the heart of communication efforts. Ensuring the translation of this aspirational vision into action will be all the more important as the spread of mis- and disinformation¹, compounded with socio-economic challenges and low levels of trust in government, threatens the effectiveness of COVID-19 response and recovery measures.

This chapter will examine the opportunities and challenges for the CoG in Brazil to leverage the contribution of public communication in support of a more open government. Based on the OECD's analytical framework, it will provide an in-depth assessment of the governance of public communication, the use of evidence to drive this function and its role in promoting transparency and stakeholder participation. It will also explore how some of these elements can support efforts to leverage this function as an instrument for better policy making, by looking at the case of Brazil's communication on the Business Environment Transformation Policy. As noted during the peer review, these thematic areas respond to the priorities of the government of Brazil to transition toward a more proactive and strategic communication approach. Throughout, the chapter will provide policy advice based on the country's responses to the OECD Survey on Public Communication for CoGs² (hereafter "OECD Survey") and draw on successes from OECD and partner countries to illustrate good practices in this field.

Strengthening the governance and institutionalisation of strategic communications in Brazil

Brazil's institutional structures and communication capabilities can be examined against two models of governance for public communication: tactical and strategic. These frameworks build on existing literature

in the field and are defined by the objectives, position and resources of the government's communications function within government (Table 5.1) (Sanders and Canel, 2013^[4]). On the one side of the spectrum, the tactical model is oriented toward the pursuit of modest short- or medium-term goals through ad hoc tactics, which may include ad hoc posting on social media or issuing press releases as the sole means of engagement. With little internal co-ordination and with no view to serving overarching institutional goals, communication in this model is auxiliary to an organisation's core activities. On the other side, the strategic model is built around insight-driven planning of highly co-ordinated communication across government, promoting core policy objectives over the short, medium and long terms. This implies that communication functions are embedded at the highest levels of decision-making to serve as a key instrument for the attainment of governmental priorities.

Table 5.1. Features of tactical and strategic governance models of public communication

Features range from tactical (left) to strategic (right)

	Tactical	Transitional	Strategic
Public communication structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff covers communication activities irregularly and alongside other functions • Only a press officer is in charge of all communication aspects • Limited authority and/or contact with decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A communication professional manages all activities • Some access and buy-in from decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated unit with specialised and trained personnel • Unit represented at decision-maker's level
Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is conducted in silos, without awareness of activities in other government agencies • There are no common practices or standards • Messages on core subjects vary between departments or are not respected • Overlap in the work of units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some co-ordination from the CoG or another entity, perhaps covering only some areas of communication or specific projects, such as open government • Some key messages are agreed upon and mostly used consistently • Some steps are taken to harmonise the visual identity of the government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is consistent co-ordination from the CoG or another entity, including on other relevant policy priorities or strategies, such as open government • Processes and protocols are clear and abided by, and create efficiencies • There is high message discipline • Time-intensive tasks (e.g. monitoring) are centralised within a dedicated entity
Formalisation of communication approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications follow events without advance planning • Objectives of communication activities or strategies are not agreed upon in writing • Activities and channels of communication are not differentiated by audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some overarching objectives are stated and elaborated into a strategy, but parts of communication activity remain ad hoc and unrelated to them • Some communication follows predefined plans • Simple audience insights • Some communications are tailored to specific audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication priorities are agreed upon in consultation with policy makers and other relevant stakeholders and are driven by organisational objectives • Short-term planning is managed through a forward-planning grid • Strategies informed by audience insights, monitored and evaluated • Implementation of plans
Human resources and competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication staff are appointed by political figures and change with each election or change at the top • Staff lacks specialised background and/or training • No clearly defined job descriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff includes both political appointees and civil servants • Staff receive basic training or have previous relevant experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil servants are in charge of public communication, which is kept separate from political communication • Staff is highly professionalised and regularly trained to stay abreast of innovation

	Tactical	Transitional	Strategic
Financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dedicated budget is available and/or financing for communication staff and activities is volatile • Lack of budget efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget is shared with another function or is ad hoc • A dedicated budget exists but does not match the communication objectives/is insufficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated budget guarantees continued delivery against objectives • Financial transparency and performance accountability to maximise budget efficiency

Source: OECD (2021^[5]), *Citizens' Voice in Jordan: The Role of Public Communication and Media for a More Open Government*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/da85277c-en>.

In practice, public communication governance models range from a mix of tactical and strategic elements, with varying transitions in terms of structures, institutional arrangements, competencies and resources across time. While a tactical model may present fewer complexities and costs in the short term, a transition toward a more strategic approach is ultimately more efficient and effective in fulfilling an organisation's key objectives and transforming the government-citizen relationship. This section will therefore examine potential avenues to support the government of Brazil's ongoing efforts to adopt a more strategic-oriented communication through its recent reorganisation. It will do so through an in-depth assessment of the structures underpinning the overall model of communication, the strategic framework in which public communicators operate and the capabilities needed to professionalise this function.

As the office in charge of whole-of-government communication, SECOM could further institutionalise processes, clarify roles and responsibilities

Formal structures charged with organising public communication arrangements play an important role in conducting strategic public communication. By determining the scope of interactions with various audiences, allocating responsibilities and facilitating co-ordination with internal and external stakeholders, such structures help ensure that communication activities across government are aligned and reach their desired outcomes. At the CoG in Brazil, the responsibility for steering public communication at the highest level lies with SECOM. While it historically benefitted from its close proximity to the Presidency, SECOM was recently transferred from the Secretariat of Government (*Secretaria de Governo* or SEGOV) to the newly established Ministry of Communications (*Ministério das Comunicações*) as part of the reorganisation of this function in June 2020. As per its attributions originally set in Provisional Measure 980 of 10 June 2020, the ministry benefits from high visibility and direct co-ordination with Civil Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic (hereafter "Casa Civil") and the president. It is charged with leading whole-of-government affairs pertaining to:

- National telecommunications policy.
- National broadcasting policy.
- Postal, telecommunication and broadcasting services.
- Public communication policy of the government.
- Relationships between the federal government and the regional, national and international press.
- Convocation of mandatory radio and television networks.
- Public opinion research.
- Brazilian public television system.

Within the newly established Ministry of Communications, SECOM benefits from an explicit mandate to lead whole-of-government communications anchored in the country's broader regulatory framework through Law No. 14.074 (of 14 October 2020).³ The establishment of its attributions and structure within this new regulatory framework not only empowers the institution but also signals the value attribution of this function as a key lever for the government to deliver on its objectives.

In practice, the organisation of the public communication function differs significantly across OECD and partner countries, particularly with respect to the degree to which such units are centralised (OECD, 2021^[2]). For example, public communication in Australia is a shared responsibility across multiple government agencies, whereas in the United Kingdom (UK), this is led by a unit at the CoG. In the case of Brazil, SECOM acts as a central node setting the government's communication strategy, ensuring the dissemination of public information and raising awareness about the rights of and public services available to citizens. The entity leads communication around reforms (i.e. tax, pensions, de-bureaucratisation and modernisation), the economic agenda and other key government priorities defined by the president (i.e. security and accountability). SECOM also conducts communication on behalf of the CoG and provides strategic advice to ministries, public enterprises and other entities of the Federal Executive Branch. As such, it also plays a key role in overseeing government-press relations and national media channels and can play an important role in promoting transparency, participation and accountability.

Regardless of its location, there are common elements that can support the effective functioning of public communication structures at the highest level of government. First, the establishment of a mandate for whole-of-government communication in written form and setting clear roles and responsibilities is an important factor in ensuring the institution's legitimacy (OECD, 2021^[2]). Second, the empowerment of all communicators within the organisation – as a result of clear accountability lines, objectives and the monitoring of performance – is key to ensuring the effectiveness of operations (Luoma-aho and Canel, 2020^[6]). Finally, establishing a set of core values guiding the work of public communicators under a single approach that is detached from political priorities is crucial to ensuring the function can support the open government principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation. These elements, together with adequate human and financial resources, play a key role in providing effective communication structures.

While SECOM's mandate is clear, there is a risk that the new institutional anchorage and reporting arrangements may introduce challenges in distinguishing the public versus political nature of communications. During peer review interviews, stakeholders noted that SECOM defines its government communication policy based on the direct mandate and priorities of the president. The strong top-down line of command governing the design and delivery of public communication activities may increase the risks that messages and content may reflect partisan interests. This can undermine the impartiality of key government messages, resulting in competing narratives and eroding citizen trust in government as a source of information. To this end, countries in which public communication coexists with its political counterpart (i.e. Finland, the Netherlands and Slovenia) make a clear distinction between both concepts and attributions for civil servants (OECD, 2021^[2]). For example, the government of the Netherlands in its *Principles of Government Communication* calls for “a clear separation from party interests [...] through strict agreements between government spokespersons by clearly identifying their relevant responsibilities” (Government of the Netherlands, 2017^[7]).

Moreover, the government has also achieved key progress in the consolidation of a defined and robust structure for SECOM to deliver on its mandate. According to OECD Survey results, SECOM has a full-time staff composed of more than 100 people organised into sub-structures with dedicated teams charged with specific communication competencies. As set out in Decree No. 697 (of 10 September 2020), Decree No. 10.747 (of 13 July 2021) and Law No. 14.074, SECOM is divided into the following sub-structures, including:

- The **Secretariat for Institutional Communication** (*Secretaria de Comunicação Institucional*): Disseminates information about policies, programmes and actions, with an emphasis on marshalling strategic resources and aligning the government's messages across departments.

- **The Publicity and Sponsorship Secretariat** (*Secretaria de Publicidade e Promoção*): Responsible for advertising, sponsorship and public opinion monitoring, including allocating spending limits to members of the Federal Executive Branch during election years, in conjunction with the Department of Management Standards.
- The **Sub-secretariat of Press** (*Subsecretaria de Imprensa*): Manages the coverage of the government's relationship with the press and the management of state media channels.
- The **Sub-secretariat of Management and Standards** (*Subsecretaria de Gestão e Normas*): The entity is responsible for co-ordinating the planning and budgeting of public communication activities led by the ministry. In doing so, it also co-ordinates the development and review of guidance and manuals for the institution.
- The **Sub-secretariat for Articulation** (*Subsecretaria de Articulação*): Responsible for overseeing joint communication strategies within the institution in order to correctly position and align the key messaging of relevant policies, programmes and government actions.

Despite the introduction of changes through the reorganisation, stakeholders during OECD peer review interviews indicated that SECOM enjoyed a relatively smooth transition from SEGOV to the Ministry of Communications. While some adaptation was required, stakeholders suggested there were no significant changes to SECOM's mandate or attributions, allowing it to maintain its transversal work as a unit supporting departments across the government as well as the Federal Executive Branch. Adjustments within the department primarily resulted from the new 2021 decree, which changed the relationship between SECOM and the ministries and attributed it the responsibility to lead intra-governmental co-ordination. It was noted, however, that these institutional arrangements have raised challenges in terms of effectively centralising information, aligning messages and ensuring their rapid dissemination, as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities along the multi-institutional landscape in the Brazilian administration.

At present, ministries are responsible for their individual communication work but co-ordinate with SECOM on an irregular basis to ensure alignment with the CoG and across key sectors. SECOM in turn plays the role of "controlling office", helping ministries establish priorities, narratives and strategic objectives across thematic sectors. While this system is thorough, OECD Survey results reveal that the present complex interplay of actors, processes and reporting lines can result in large amounts of information that are difficult to centralise, leading to inefficiencies and potential duplication. These arrangements may also present burdensome reporting lines and bureaucratic procedures, which may hinder the impact and speed at which messages are deployed, de-incentivise co-ordination and ultimately disengage citizens through unresponsive communication.

Against this backdrop, there is room to strengthen the role of SECOM in establishing a systematic framework of horizontal co-ordination and support for public communication units across government. Given that this function has been recently restructured, intra-governmental co-ordination mechanisms in this regard are relatively new and must operate in a complex environment characteristic of federal countries, with multiple actors and intertwined responsibilities. In fact, OECD survey results indicate that co-ordination on key communication issues occurs on an ad hoc basis. Arrangements between and across government ministries, departments and agencies appear to be primarily informal and include meetings, emails, telephone calls and sourcing quotes for press releases cross-departmentally.

The current institutional arrangements governing public communication in Brazil could thus benefit from the increased provision of technical support by SECOM to key line ministries and the establishment of joint working methods to avoid siloed efforts. OECD Survey results reveal that initial efforts in this regard are taking place through the consolidation of the Government Communication System of the Federal Executive Branch (SICOM) composed of the Special Secretariat for Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic (SECOM) and the administrative units of relevant entities of the federal executive power managing sectoral communication activities.⁴ Its objective is to facilitate information sharing among public institutions and the deployment of joint strategic campaigns led by SECOM. To better leverage this

platform, the SICOM network could be more purposefully and actively used to host regular meetings with the aim of sharing results of key activities, fostering the exchange of good practices between ministries, defining communication priorities, developing technical guidance material and organising capacity-building training.

To this end, SECOM could leverage its role as the central node to further clarify processes, roles and responsibilities to reduce potential duplications, simplify working methods and enable the administration to speak with one voice. The government of Brazil should consider the codification of key public communication processes, clarification of reporting lines and the allocation of concrete roles and responsibilities to specific sectoral actors, for example, through existing dedicated guidelines, manuals or its public communication strategy. SECOM has a repository of guidelines and manuals⁵ which could also be updated to promote a more proactive and co-ordinated communication across government. As will be discussed in the next section, SECOM's public communication strategy could also be a key instrument for such a purpose, by mapping specific attributions for each institution, together with the overarching objectives and steps to effectively deploy planned communication activities.

In addition, SECOM's new position in the Ministry of Communication represents an opportunity to address existing co-ordination gaps with key line ministries while retaining the potential benefits related to its anchorage with the highest level of government. There are examples of governments establishing shared communication planning and co-ordination tools, through digital or collaborative platforms. The UK Government Communication Service (GCS), for example, sets out a formal framework to align communication planning and makes use of a grid tool to co-ordinate the implementation of major government campaigns (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1. Enabling institutions to speak with one voice in the UK

The UK Government Communication Service OASIS Model

The UK GCS has developed the OASIS Campaign Guide to aid government communicators to deliver world-class government communications. For rigorous and systematic campaign development, GCS staff follow the OASIS campaigns framework and make selective use of other GCS campaign planning tools where required.

The guide outlines five steps or elements to creating a successful campaign:

- Objective setting.
- Audience/Insight.
- Strategy/Ideas.
- Implementation.
- Scoring/Evaluation.

The UK GCS Grid as a cross-government co-ordination tool

The central government grid is the strategic scheduling tool that co-ordinates all of the announcements across government. It is a single-page-per-week document that sets out everything the government is doing and anything else likely to require government response or interest.

This process allows the government to set out its agenda in a systematic way and helps to shape the government narrative which looks to manage the 24/7 news cycle. It does so through several steps:

- **Step 1:** Government objective (policy or service) is set. Communications teams work with the policy team to develop the communications plan including objectives and key messaging.

- **Step 2:** Each ministry/department completes a one–two-week grid based on forthcoming activities. This information is sent to the central grid co-ordinator. All departments submit their information by 12 p.m. each Tuesday.
- **Step 3:** This information is placed on a draft central grid ahead of a meeting chaired by the central co-ordinator on Wednesday at 12 p.m. This is to discuss the key items and handling plans.
- **Step 4:** On Thursday afternoon, all departments are informed of the days they are allowed to make announcements. The finalised grid is shared with the prime minister and ministers.

Source: Own work based on GCS (2020^[8]), *A Guide to Campaign Planning*, <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/marketing/delivering-government-campaigns/guide-to-campaign-planning-oasis/>.

Towards a robust strategic planning process for public communications in Brazil

A public communication strategy can unify efforts, optimise the operations of communication departments and establish coherent and relevant messaging (OECD, 2020^[1]). It can help bring citizens closer to the government through instilling consistency across short-, medium- and long-term goals, as well as horizontally across an institution. Ultimately, by supporting interactions between individuals and governments that are relevant and coherent, such efforts can help establish more positive and trustful relationships. Particularly within the public sector, where it is important to distinguish between public communication and political messages, a strategy is a key guiding instrument in this regard (Gelders and Ihlen, 2010^[9]). For example, the government of Finland underlines the importance of public and political communication within its strategy and official manual but calls on entities to clarify the distinction explicitly and build on the former to promote a culture of openness (Government of Finland, 2016^[10]).

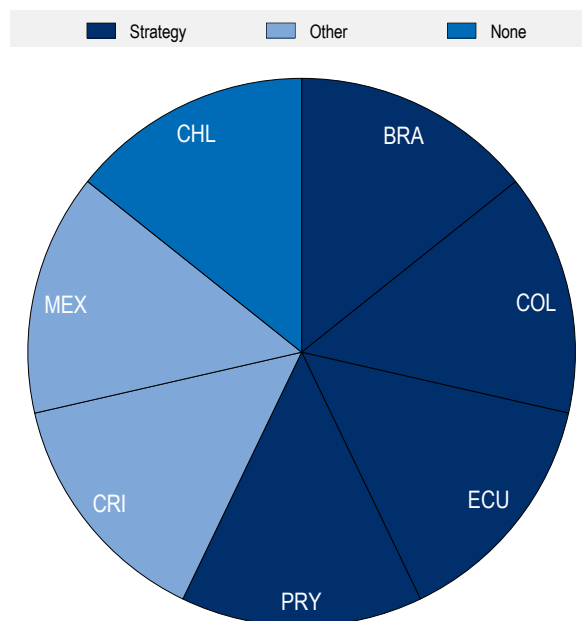
The OECD defines a communication strategy as a written document adopted for the medium to long terms that outlines key elements such as “who carries out specific activities”, “for which audiences”, “through what messages”, “for what reason” and “towards which organisational goals” (OECD, 2020^[1]). It provides a forward-looking vision of the entire communication cycle, from the early stages of planning, co-ordination, implementation, to those of their evaluation. While a communication strategy is a guiding document for an entire organisation’s outreach, a plan lays out the specific timelines, tactics and resource arrangements to convey a specific message or policy to their audience. The two documents are mutually reinforcing, as communications strategies are of little use without plans to see them through, and communication plans risk being unfocused or arbitrary without a guiding whole-of-government vision.

The institutionalisation of public communication through dedicated strategic documents is a widely adopted practice in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region (OECD, 2021^[2]). In fact, out of seven LAC countries surveyed by the OECD, four declared to have a dedicated communication strategy and/or plan, one a communication policy and another thematic plans (Figure 5.1). Acknowledging strategies as important instruments to support the strategic foresight that communication requires to be effective, evidence suggests that CoGs in the LAC region have focused on designing implementation mechanisms to strengthen the attainment of the objectives set therein.

Brazil is no exception, where the government has made important progress in consolidating a whole-of-government strategy for public communication. With SECOM and Casa Civil working together to ensure the right information is communicated to the public at the right time, through the right channels and with the right measurement mechanisms in place to evaluate success, Brazil has undertaken initial efforts to establish a robust planning framework. The strategic elements of this regime were laid out in 2019 in a communication strategy (*Plano de Comunicação de Governo*) and devolved plan (*Planejamento Estratégico SECOM 2019-2020*). The documents articulate the way forward for the implementation of the government’s overarching vision for public communication and set sectoral priorities for key line ministries.

In addition to these, SECOM develops stand-alone communication plans to address specific themes, programmes, reforms, policies and accomplishments.

Figure 5.1. Availability of public communication strategies in the LAC Region



Source: OECD (2020^[1]), “OECD Centre of Government Survey: Understanding public communication”, OECD, Paris.

The *Plano de Comunicação de Governo* outlines the government’s commitment to public communication in support of a “prosperous, fair and secure Brazil”. The document underlines the importance of transparent, up-to-date and relevant communication on key government actions as a precursor to “stimulate the participation of society in the debate, formulation and monitoring of public policies”. The plan underlines how a unified communication strategy will help the government of Brazil accomplish its goals and sets a key message that the Brazilian government is committed to “taking its place among the great nations of the world” by rooting out bureaucracy and corruption and committing to economic development. To achieve this, SECOM is tasked with implementing a communication strategy focused on direct communication with citizens that are integrated across government, based on effective and efficient methods to communicate on issues of social interest.

While the *Plano de Comunicação de Governo* outlines the broad strokes of the Brazilian government’s communication vision and its key objectives, the *Planejamento Estratégico SECOM 2019-2020* addresses the execution of the plan in much finer detail. The strategic plan begins by “diagnosing” Brazilian citizens’ current view of government to identify the most important areas for improvement. It then identifies some of the key challenges for communication in the first year of the plan, including integrating communications across the government, improving press access, incorporating new technologies and combating dis- and misinformation, among others. The strategic plan lists 11 key objectives for government communication and key themes for each ministry within the government. Finally, the document lays out strategic campaigns to be carried out by the central team and detailed proposals to achieve them.

While these documents benefit from an extensive mapping informing their development, further efforts could help ensure that communication priorities better respond to the needs of government stakeholders to better distinguish political from public communication. While SECOM has gone to great lengths to tailor messages and priorities for relevant ministries, this process could be improved by involving these actors

directly in SECOM's planning process. Involvement of this sort could help ensure separation between political and public communication, by ensuring that SECOM and key line ministries retain control over the key messages and activities in response to broader sectoral needs. As discussed in the other chapters, it could also help in better articulating with the Undersecretariat for Articulation and Monitoring (SAM), the delivery unit, to frame communication around key policies and services to the public, as well as the strategic priorities of the government as a whole. Further involvement of the ministries and individuals responsible for delivery could promote buy-in for implementation and help maintain the focus of communications on neutral, policy-centric messages aimed at raising awareness, changing behaviours and providing new spaces for citizens to partake in public life.

In addition to the prioritisation process, several challenges were also raised in regard to the implementation of strategic plans. In fact, "implementing government-wide communication plans" was the most pressing challenge selected by SECOM for the OECD Survey. In particular, human resources (HR), co-ordination and perception of low added value were cited as the main difficulties in implementing the objectives and milestones set out therein. With respect to HR, survey respondents identified difficulties in ensuring the appropriate skills to design, monitor and implement adjustments. In regards to co-ordination, responses indicated the process was ad hoc rather than systemic and primarily done only for high priority cases or in response to emergencies. The perception that the communication strategy had a low added value has developed as a consequence of shifting priorities and competition between government entities. Notably, 26 out of 38 CoGs in OECD and partner countries, including all 6 respondents from the LAC region, identified producing and/or implementing communication strategies and/or plans as part of the top 3 challenges within their institution. Some countries' government, such as Ecuador, have strengthened their support for the development and evaluation of ministerial communication plans with the creation of a review committee overseeing the content of plans and monitoring their evaluation at the end of the year (Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Review committee for ministerial communication plans in Ecuador

The General Secretariat of Communications in Ecuador, located under the Prime Minister's Office, is in charge of whole-of-government communication. In its capacity, the secretariat is responsible for the review and approval of all ministerial communication plans to ensure that activities are in line with its overarching whole-of-government strategy.

To translate the strategy into action, the secretariat created an internal Communication Plan Review Committee (*Comité de Revisión de Planes de Comunicación*) to review, analyse and approve ministry-specific directives. In this respect, the committee has reviewed a total of 110 documents, of which 65 communication plans were approved and 17 communication investment projects endorsed.

Source: OECD (2021^[2]), *OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/22f8031c-en>.

To ensure the translation of the strategic vision into action, the government could also consider the direct involvement of public communication representatives from key line ministries in the current strategic planning and prioritisation process. Such a multi-stakeholder approach would not only enrich the quality of its content but also allow for a better articulation of policy priorities, with entities such as SAM to differentiate political from public communication. The government of Turkey, for example, directly involved government staff, in addition to the political leadership, in the development of its 2019 communication strategy for such purpose (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3. Internal consultations for the 2019 government communication strategy in Turkey

In 2019, the government of Turkey created the Committee for Strategic Planning, comprising senior officials within the institution as well as staff from the Department of Communications (DoC). As part of the strategic planning process, the committee organised weekly meetings in which studies conducted by thematic sub-committees of the Strategic Development Department were evaluated. These studies compiled a series of needs, comments and input on strategic priorities from external and internal stakeholders collected through surveys.

To complement this approach, the government launched a training programme to increase the understanding of the activities within the strategy at all levels of the DoC and beyond to gain feedback on the actions and policies implemented, exchange information and encourage two-way communication. In addition, satisfaction surveys and group interviews were conducted with the staff to measure their views, attitudes and perceptions and identify satisfaction levels. Based on these meetings and initiatives, the 2019 government communication strategy was drafted and finalised drawing on the feedback, recommendations and ideas received from all government staff.

Source: OECD (2021^[2]), Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward.

Professionalising capabilities for the strategic application of public communication

The professionalisation of the public communication function is essential in an environment characterised by rapid technology development and increasingly multi-faceted challenges. In fact, the skillsets commonly used within the public sector are said to be no longer keeping up with the fast pace of change in the societies they aim to support and improve (OECD, 2019^[11]). Thus, investments in the professional capabilities of individuals carrying out the day-to-day work of public communication can bolster the government's ability to respond to the pressing challenges of the 21st century.

Strategic HR management is an effective tool to improve the efficiency, quality and responsiveness of a range of government services, from which communication is no exception. In this regard, the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability (2019^[11]) defines three core pillars ensuring the public service is fit for purpose, namely a values-driven culture and leadership, investing in skilled and effective public servants and responsive employment systems (OECD, 2019^[12]). In doing so, governments have a key role to play from the start of the workforce planning stage, throughout training and the development of talent from performance management (Visser and Van der Togt, 2016^[13]). A systemic approach to people management can provide concrete ways to achieve a more productive, responsive and accountable public service. This includes assessing the skills needed and available in relation to strategic priorities and requirements, defining new posts accordingly, ensuring policies to attract and retain in-demand skillsets, designing capacity-building measures in line with skills and capacity needs, and assessing and rewarding performance, talent and innovation.

As previously described, the government of Brazil has a relatively well-established body of public communicators within SECOM. With a full-time staff of over 100 people dedicated to specific competencies, the public communication team is highly specialised. These teams conduct communication on behalf of the CoG and provide strategic advice to ministries, public enterprises and other entities of the Federal Executive Branch. The institution's dedicated teams focus on areas such as: the development of communication strategies; communication campaigns; insight gathering; media relations and digital communications; crisis communication; internal communication; evaluation; and countering disinformation. While most members of staff are civil servants, the political appointment of senior roles may present risks in regards to differentiating political from public communication priorities framing the work of these teams.

Similar to most OECD countries, strategic HR management was nonetheless underlined by SECOM as one of the primary challenges to implementing communication competencies. Despite how well resourced this function is, officials listed implementing communication plans, communicating during a crisis and evaluating public communication as specific areas requiring additional assistance from the perspective of HR management. Survey results revealed that these challenges centre on the lack of technical capabilities of staff to ensure the delivery of highly specialised tasks, rather than the availability of HR. This is due to the fact that HR management units are often overburdened with administrative tasks and have limited resources and capabilities for more strategic people management (OECD, forthcoming).

As the arm of government providing communication support to ministries, further efforts are needed to advance the professionalisation of staff within SECOM and beyond. At present, OECD Survey results revealed that there is no formal training system in place. Indeed, this particular function is the only one out of 11 core communication competencies for which SECOM does not have a dedicated team, as it is externally contracted on an ad hoc basis. Moreover, within existing frameworks, there are no consistently defined skills required of public communicators and public servants more broadly as prerequisites for employment or to be acquired through on-the-job training (OECD, 2019^[12]). Instead, hiring practices follow the market standards for educational attainment and communication skills are not distinguished from other fields of knowledge such as social science, politics or international relations. Once on board, members of staff are trained to carry out SECOM's work on an ad hoc basis, by internal or external trainers, upon request or as available. Moreover, the available training focuses on technical capabilities, use of specific software or carrying out specific job functions, such as media relations or social media use, rather than larger theoretical or strategic understandings of the discipline.

In line with recommendations from the OECD review *Innovation Skills and Leadership in Brazil's Public Sector* (2019^[12]), governments have developed a comprehensive training programme focused on key strategic functions to strengthen the public communication profession. Training curricula for public communicators can help to promote the reach, relevance and sustainability of professional development opportunities (Box 5.4). Such efforts support the professionalisation of strategic communication capabilities, such as open government, audience segmentation, storytelling, data science and impact evaluation.

Box 5.4. The Netherland's public sector academy curricula for public communicators

The Academy for Government Communications assists the central government in supporting the professionalisation and training of civil servants in the communication function, and is the knowledge and expertise centre of the Public and Communication Service of the Ministry of General Affairs. Its main role is to help communication staff build professional knowledge, keep them updated on respective trends within their fields, develop learning pathways as well as create inter-ministerial networks.

All training courses are bundled in a coherent training programme, called the Learning Line. The goal is to create a more uniform training of communication staff, government-wide employability and networking. The courses are only available to civil servants. The academy offers a wide range of courses and training that include: an introductory course on communication at the national government; professional training for experienced editors, press officers and speech writers; modules on behaviour and visual communication; strategic advice and connecting leadership; and podcasts and content creation.

Moreover, the academy organises meetings to stimulate knowledge sharing through webinars on current subject themes, annual conferences for government communication, as well as learning networks around specific themes (such as inclusion or Instagram) in which colleagues share knowledge through online meetings and record them for further dissemination. In addition to training courses,

learning networks and knowledge webinars, the academy offers an online platform, *Ons CommunicatieRijk*, in which communication professionals can share knowledge, ask questions and learn from colleagues.

A special service carried out by the academy worth noting is the management of the Communication Pool, a group of 40 strategic communication advisers and press secretaries, mainly self-employed, who have signed a framework agreement with the central government. These advisers can be hired by ministries whenever they are short on staff, or for specific strategic jobs or projects.

Source: OECD (2021^[2]), *OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/22f8031c-en>.

Developing standards for civil servants responsible for communication and defining a core capability framework for the job posts could also solidify gains achieved thus far in terms of the establishment of a robust structure for public communications in Brazil. In this regard, SECOM should closely co-ordinate with Casa Civil and the Ministry of Economy to develop a competency framework for the public communication profession. This could define different competency levels according to the job level. Furthermore, SECOM could work towards clearly defining job responsibilities for communication professionals and outlining a framework for career development which promotes mobility opportunities and professional development. This is a practice championed by countries such as Canada, France and the UK, which allow defining clear job entry points, openings for vertical and horizontal career progression and opportunities for professional development in terms of training and skills (Box 5.5).

Box 5.5. Public communication competency frameworks in OECD countries

Canada

In Canada, communication experts' responsibilities are defined as developing and implementing communication and information strategies, analysing advertising needs and developing plans, publicising activities and events as well as maintaining media relations. Moreover, specific tasks include gathering, researching and preparing internal and external communications material, evaluating communications strategies and arranging interviews and news conferences. Communication professionals should also act as a spokesperson for the organisation, and conduct public opinion and behavioural surveys to identify the interests and concerns of key groups concerned by their organisation.

France

The directory of public communication professions in France defines specific knowledge and skills required, including developing and steering the institution's overall communication strategy and overseeing implementation, co-ordination and evaluation. In particular, communication managers are responsible for co-ordinating internal and external networks, communicating in crisis situations, designing and implementing global communication campaigns, managing the budget and setting up a system for evaluating communication actions.

United Kingdom

The UK Government Communication Service (GCS) Career Framework aims to guide public officials who are looking to progress their careers in the field of public communication. The framework breaks down job roles at different levels, enabling civil servants to identify competencies and better understand what is expected of each role. In doing so, the career framework defines roles across several

communication disciplines, including external affairs, marketing, internal communication, media and strategic communication and elaborates the roles and grades available within each discipline. Moreover, it specifies different routes for vertical and horizontal advancement in the profession, which include internal movement, direct mainstream recruitment and accelerated development programmes. The framework further describes the key elements in assessing candidates: experience, strengths, ability, technical and behaviours.

The career framework also presents the GCS development offer, comprised of a wide range of opportunities to build skills and expand knowledge, including courses, training, networking and mentoring opportunities. Finally, career profiles in the form of case studies are included to exemplify opportunities available across the GCS.

Source: OECD (2021^[2]), *OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/22f8031c-en>.

Promoting the use of insights and evaluation for evidence-driven communication

Evidence-driven communication is essential to face the complex challenges of the 21st century. Such an approach builds on a strong understanding of the factors shaping the media and information ecosystem, audiences' awareness levels, attitudes and habits, as well as the short-, medium- and long-term effects of communication activities (OECD, 2020^[14]). Through the collection, analysis and use of data, governments can build strategic foresight capabilities and build knowledge to improve the quality of decision-making processes. An evidence-driven communication is also at the core of promoting a data-driven public sector, which seeks to “generate public value through the reuse of data in planning, delivering and monitoring public policies” (OECD, 2020^[15]).

Against this backdrop, data has become a key asset for the design of strategic-oriented communication in CoGs across OECD key partner countries, including Brazil (OECD, 2021^[2]). Evidence from the OECD Survey indicates that 30 out of 38 CoGs utilise data to inform the design of communication initiatives. Its application is notably allowing CoGs to steer a whole-of-government vision, plan campaigns, target and share messages and accurately evaluate their effectiveness (GCS, 2018^[16]). While the use of insights has become embedded in the profession, evidence suggests that governments have yet to exploit its strategic value for the delivery of more transparent and responsive communications. As in the case of Brazil, a large share of CoGs primarily relies on social media impression analytics, with a limited capability to collect data associated with the delivery of public services and their impact evaluation (Figure 5.2).

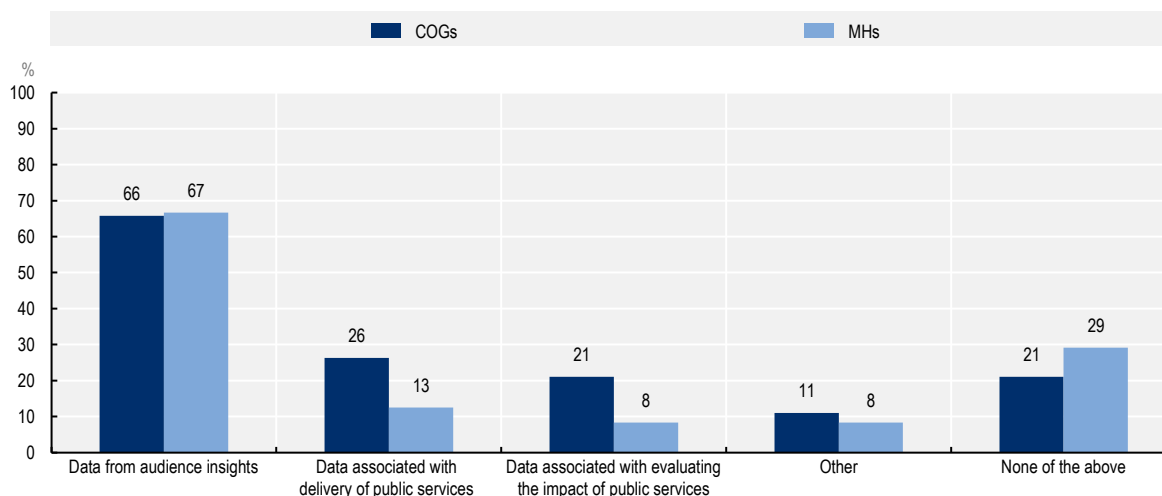
This section will therefore explore the challenges and opportunities for the government of Brazil to leverage a more evidence-driven approach to communicating with citizens. It will begin by examining the use of audience insights within SECOM to effectively segment and tailor messages and channels to the needs of different population groups – in particular, those traditionally underrepresented in policy making. The section will then explore the role of evaluation as an instrument to not only assess the effectiveness of communication but also to better showcase its direct contribution to key policy objectives.

Leveraging audience insights in support of a citizen-centric communication

The role of communication is about more than informing and raising awareness: it is an instrument of change. It can address people's emotions, values or perceptions of social norms to in turn design policies and reforms that are acceptable or even compelling to citizens in line with their needs. Besides the simple provision of information, the use of audience insights to inform communication can aid in the delivery of

personalised messaging to raise awareness of key reforms, expand reach to all segments of society as well as support the development and adoption of key public policies and services.

Figure 5.2. Types of data used by CoGs to inform digital communication activities



Note: MHs: Ministries of Health. Austria did not provide information for this question. Other options referred to social media statistics.
Source: OECD (2020), Centre of Government Survey: “Understanding Public Communication”.

In this regard, insight gathering is defined as “the conducting of research into different segments of the population to gain a deeper understanding of their motivations, impeding factors, fears, media consumption habits and levels of understanding on a particular subject” (OECD, 2020^[1]). Notably, it implies an ongoing process to understand the effects of activities throughout the communication cycle – from the *ex ante* research phase to the evaluation of its impact.

The gathering of audience insights to inform communication is an established practice in the work of SECOM. According to OECD Survey results, SECOM collects audience insights on behalf of the federal government to inform its communication planning at the design stage of each campaign, primarily through surveys, focus groups and online social media monitoring. In this capacity, SECOM has developed a dedicated manual (*Manual do Monitoramento*) to ensure the consistent monitoring of the effect of public communication in the media and online landscape (Box 5.6).

Box 5.6. The SECOM Social Media Monitoring Manual

The manual developed by SECOM outlines the monitoring process on social media carried on behalf of the federal government. Through the BrandWatch tool, SECOM utilises intelligent machine learning processes to conduct sentiment analysis, monitor the effects of messages and identify new opportunities for producing and disseminating content. As part of its objectives, the guideline also underlines measuring the performance of social media against the communication strategy. The data is complemented with insights from the Parliamentarians’ Dashboard (or *Dashboard de Parlamentares*), which centralises information on key policy discussions through the display of sentiment analysis, mentions and published reports.

Source: Own work, based on Brazil’s responses to OECD (2020^[1]), “OECD Centre of Government Survey: Understanding public communication”, OECD, Paris.

While SECOM has developed capabilities to collect and monitor data on audiences' perceptions, interests, needs and habits, evidence indicates a need to strengthen the strategic application of these insights in practice. While it identified the “segmentation of audiences to personalise communications” and the “tailoring of communication channels” as primary objectives for the use of audience analytics, OECD Survey results revealed that such insights are not considered one of the top criteria to determine communication channels. In line with these findings, stakeholders during peer review interviews indicated that challenges persist in leveraging collected insights to effectively segment audiences, personalise communications and reach previously untapped publics.

In line with SECOM's objectives, there is an opportunity to expand present audience insight capabilities to ensure the relevance and reach of communications to vulnerable segments. At present, OECD Survey results suggest that the work of SECOM does not specifically target stakeholders such as youth, the elderly, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) groups. Tackling present communication inequalities will be fundamental to addressing information gaps and providing meaningful engagement opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups in policy making. In the context of COVID-19, the use of plain language and the customisation of communication material by CoGs has proven to be critical in sharing complex information with different marginalised segments (OECD, 2020^[17]).

Efforts to strengthen capabilities in this regard will be fundamental, as governments like Brazil must contend with capturing citizens' attention in a crowded media ecosystem suffering from information overload and the proliferation of mis- and disinformation. Grounding communication in evidence will be central to depoliticise key messages, providing reliable, clear and trusted information as well as playing a constructive role in strengthening the media and information ecosystem more broadly. To this end, SECOM could consider investing in training for staff to exploit the full potential of natural language processing and intelligent segmentation techniques that could benefit from present tools used for social media monitoring. In its capacity as a central intelligence node, SECOM should also reflect on the possibility to collaborate with the Undersecretariat for Articulation and Monitoring (SAM) and Casa Civil to develop a dashboard (potentially the *Governa* platform described in Chapter 4) and share audience data collected with the public communicators across government. This would allow key sectors to access valuable information in real time, to align the strategic direction of communication within government, as done in the UK (Box 5.7).

Box 5.7. The UK GCS Insights Dashboard for public communicators

The UK GCS is promoting the deployment of data and insight-driven messages through daily insights and evaluation dashboard for public communicators. This platform is informed by daily polling and pulse surveys collecting information on public mood, social conversation around the topic and the state of public opinion on government measures. UK GCS also conducts 3 to 4 weekly focus groups to gather qualitative insights and in turn directly share this information across government to inform the direction of their COVID-19 communication strategy and campaigns.

Evaluating the contribution of public communication to key policy objectives

Evaluation is a key building block of evidence-driven communication. As described in Chapter 4, it is defined by the OECD as “the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results...to determine the relevance and achievement of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability” (OECD, 2020^[18]). Different from the practice of monitoring – understood as the systemic collection of data to measure progress – evaluation provides policy makers with information regarding the relevance and impact of initiatives, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned to improve the quality of decision-making processes.

Evaluation mechanisms and their systematic application are indispensable for governments to ensure that public communication priorities respond to citizens' growing needs and expectations. First, this practice can support more effective communication processes, by examining whether initiatives reached their target audiences and achieved their intended goals. In doing so, evaluation can provide timely insights on challenges or unintended consequences to adjust a given course of action. Second, evaluation can promote learning by building evidence on what works and what does not to inform the design of future communications (OECD, 2020^[18]). When applied consistently, it can provide insights into the links between policies, their communication and the impact of specific messages. Last, evaluation can reinforce the functioning of accountability mechanisms by providing performance data on whether certain efforts are delivering against their resources allocated (Macnamara, 2020^[19]).

However, OECD evidence reveals that the practice of evaluation in the context of public communication remains underutilised in most countries, including Brazil (OECD, 2021^[21]). In fact, a large proportion of surveyed CoGs (14 out of 38) consider evaluation as 1 of the 3 most challenging competencies within their mandate, due to insufficient skilled staff, a lack of co-ordination between departments and limited budgets. Beyond these institutional challenges, findings also suggest the lack of formal frameworks, the focus on output measurement and the missing link with organisational and policy objectives as inhibitors constraining its application. These difficulties are no exception in Brazil, where evaluation was also considered the third most challenging competency and perceived to be of low added value.

Despite the recent efforts to develop a culture of evaluation in Brazil, as detailed in Chapter 4, the lack of an institutional methodology for evaluating public communication has inhibited SECOM from fully leveraging its potential. Whereas the recognition of evaluation in its communication strategy is an important step forward, it does not include concrete processes or build on *de jure* (i.e. regulation, formal procedures, official mandates) or *de facto* (i.e. frameworks, guidelines and procedures) mechanisms for its institutionalisation across entities.⁶ According to OECD Survey results, this lack of institutionalisation has devolved into the ad hoc application of practices, exacerbating the confusion between the concepts of “monitoring” and “evaluation”. To this end, efforts are needed to establish a systematic framework articulated with SAM and Casa Civil to clarify processes, align siloed evaluation efforts and improve the comparability and consistency of data collected over time. For example, the government of New South Wales (NSW) developed a framework for the evaluation of inputs, outcomes and impact to ensure coherence throughout government institutions (Box 5.8).

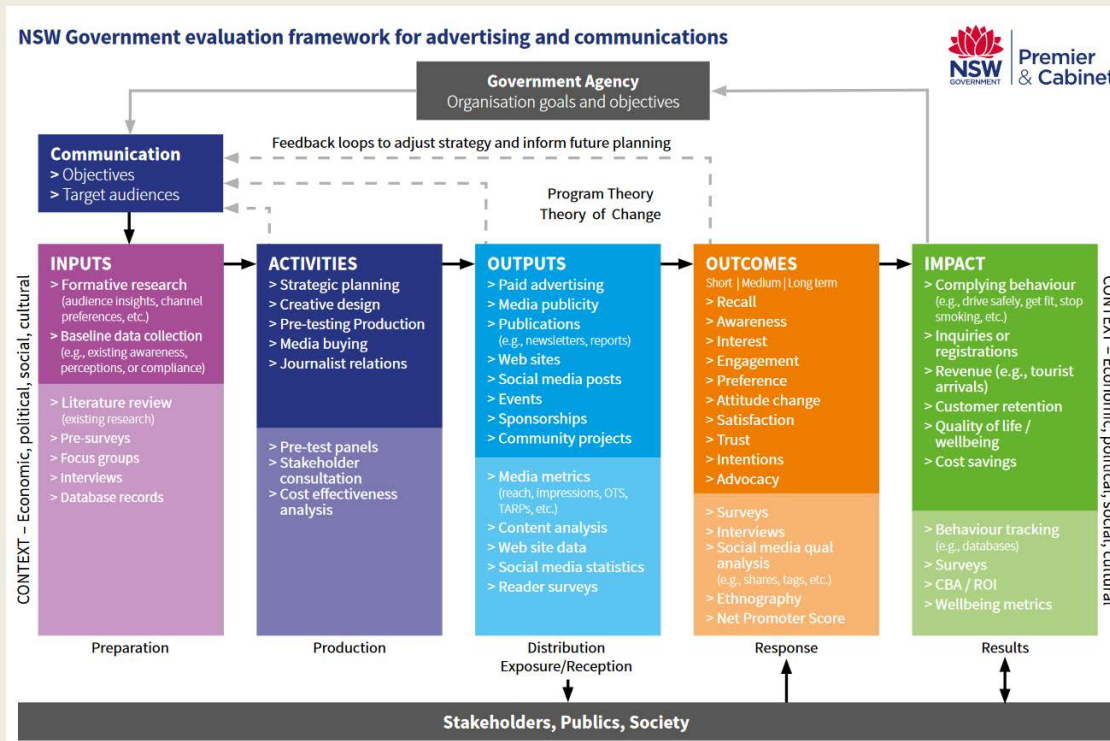
Box 5.8. Institutionalising evaluations in New South Wales, Australia

The evaluation framework of the government of NSW seeks to ensure the delivery of effective public communication by clarifying objectives, identifying different audiences and measuring the impact of activities through an institutional approach. The framework sets out the following guiding principles:

1. Set specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-bound (SMART) communication objectives that are aligned with key government goals.
2. Adopt a “programme logic” approach by identifying inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.
3. Incorporate feedback loops throughout the project to refine the strategy and adjust tactics.
4. Consider the needs of stakeholders when setting communication objectives.
5. Take into account the overarching economic, social, cultural and political context.

The framework is complemented by a set of guidelines to ensure its effective implementation. The guiding document outlines 20 steps from the identification of objectives to the selection of the evaluation methodology and the final stages of communicating and evaluating results.

Figure 5.3. The NSW evaluation framework for advertising and communications



Source: Authors own work based on Government of New South Wales (n.d.), *NSW Evaluation Framework Implementation Matrix*, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Evaluation%20Framework%20Implementation%20Matrix.pdf>.

In terms of what is evaluated, OECD evidence identified a prominent focus on the assessment of outputs rather than outcomes and impact, which can limit the relevance of results. Evaluations led by SECOM primarily focus on the performance of digital communication through artificial intelligence (AI) tools, together with the application of *ex post* surveys to identify the reach and audience impressions on campaigns. During OECD peer interviews, the example of the social security reform was shared, which illustrated the capacity of SECOM to collect insights through social media channels. While this information is crucial to evaluate the immediacy and reach of initiatives, social media performance on its own is not sufficient to effectively inform policy and measure the impact of public communication. Beyond these metrics, evaluating the effects of communication through changes in stakeholder participation levels, behaviour change and uptake of public services could be an important step in this regard. The government of NSW developed a roadmap for evaluating impact metrics – such as complying behaviour, quality of life, cost savings and policy approval – together with proposed data collection methods for its consistent application across institutions (Box 5.9).

Box 5.9. Evaluating the impact of public communication in NSW, Australia

An evaluation implementation matrix complements the guidelines of the government of NSW, providing further detail under each stage of the framework. These include brief descriptions or definitions, key steps, examples, metrics and milestones, and methods for generating evaluation data.

The matrix emphasises the importance of a whole-of-society approach in considering stakeholders and other audiences throughout the full communication process. Indeed, when identifying communication activities and outputs, evaluation is necessary to quantify the extent to which a two-way dialogue is supporting stakeholders, notably in terms of advertising, media publicity and website information. It acknowledges the importance of identifying the needs, concerns, experiences and responses of stakeholders and citizens, in relation to specific programmes and their messages. Moreover, it stresses the inclusion of economic, social, cultural and political factors when setting objectives and conducting evaluations, in order to consistently readjust and revise goals.

Table 5.2. Evaluation indicators as part of the NSW implementation matrix

Stages in strategic communication	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES Short-term → Long-term		IMPACT
Brief description	What is needed to plan and prepare effective communication	What is done to produce and implement communication	What is put out or done that reaches and engages the target audience/s	What the target audience/s take out of communication and initial responses	What sustainable effects the communication has on target audiences	What results are caused, in full or in part, by the communication
KEY STEPS	Planning & preparation	Production Distribution	Exposure Reception	Attention Awareness Understanding Learning Interest Engagement Consideration	Attitude change Satisfaction Trust Preference Intention Commitment Advocacy	Target audience action/behaviour change in line with objectives Organisation ROI Social/political change Organisation change (See examples below)
EXAMPLES	Formative research Baseline data collection Budgeting Resource allocation (e.g., staff, agencies)	Creative design- novelty, affect, relevance Advertising campaign development Writing (e.g., news releases, brochures) Media relations Web site development Social media site development (e.g., blogs, Facebook pages) Publication development Event management Sponsorships	Advertising placement Web content posted Publicity volume Brochures Newsletters Videos Events staged Social media posts (e.g., in blogs, Facebook) E-mail/e-marketing Community engagement projects	Web visits Page views Video views Social media discussion, sharing, etc. Comments posted Registrations Subscriptions Inquiries	Brand equity Social media discussion Positive feedback Positive reviews Satisfaction levels Trust levels Trialling Joining Strategic relationships Partnerships	Revenue Cost savings Compliance (e.g., reduced drink driving) Customer retention/loyalty Staff retention Social benefits (e.g., public health improvement, quality of life/well-being increases)
METRICS & MILESTONES that can apply	Baselines / benchmarks (e.g., existing awareness, attitudes, compliance rates) Audience needs, concerns, etc. Channel preferences	Successful media buying Web sites/pages posted Publications, events, etc. on time on budget	Reach (e.g. audited circulation, ratings) Impressions Share of voice Tone/sentiment score Event attendance Click throughs (CTR) Unique visitors Views Cost per click (CPC) Cost per view (CPV) Cost per impression	Recall rates Likes Follows Shares Retweets, reblogs Awareness levels Registrations Subscribers Inquiry rates Positive comments	Customer satisfaction ratings Employee satisfaction ratings Trust ratings Reputation score/rating Reduced criticism Endorsements Sign-ups	Targets met (e.g., revenue, donations, reduced road toll) Cost savings (e.g., reduced health costs, staff turnover, etc.) Customer retention rates Employee retention Positive public opinion Policy approval Public support
METHODS that can be used	Literature review Market and/or social research (e.g., surveys, focus groups, interviews) Database statistics Case study analysis (e.g., previous campaigns, best practice)	Pre-testing Stakeholder consultation Expert/peer review Cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) (e.g., to compare methods and channels) Activity reports Distribution statistics Creative awards	Media metrics (e.g., circulation, TV ratings) Web statistics (e.g., views, downloads, etc.) Advertising TARP Media monitoring Media content analysis (quantitative) Social media analysis (quantitative)	Social media analysis (qualitative) Media content analysis (qualitative) Surveys (e.g., recall, awareness) Database statistics (e.g., inquiries, registrations) Trend data over periods	Social media analysis (qualitative) Polls Surveys Interviews Focus groups Ethnography Netnography Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Database records (e.g., road toll, cancer screening rates, etc.) CRM data HR data Staff surveys Cost benefit analysis Return on investment (ROI) Quality of life / well-being measures (e.g., DALYs)

Source: Authors own work based on Government of New South Wales (n.d.), *NSW Evaluation Framework Implementation Matrix*, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Evaluation%20Framework%20Implementation%20Matrix.pdf>.

Beyond the evaluation of single initiatives, SECOM should further articulate the contribution of public communication to broader policy goals aimed at the public good through the evaluation of its communication strategy. While the strategy and plan underline the importance of their annual evaluation, survey results indicate that metrics are created on an ad hoc basis for each communication activity. Attributing concrete key performance indicators and baselines to each objective therein would support the link between public communication and value creation, as well as the ability to build historic and comparable data. Establishing such a holistic approach could also increase the relevance of results and promote their uptake to inform future communication planning, beyond serving as awareness-raising tools for the political leadership.

Communicating to promote a more open government

Public communication plays a critical role in safeguarding an open interface between the state and its citizens. Within the government, internal communication efforts can sensitise public officials on the importance of participation and open government reforms more broadly, while disseminating proper guidelines, standards, and procedures to incentivise the uptake and effectiveness of these policies (OECD, 2021^[2]). Externally, the role of public communication plays an essential role in ensuring that stakeholders can engage with their government on issues that matter most to them. Utilising the public communication function in this way not only strengthens greater buy-in around key reforms but also allows public institutions to reach different segments of the population – beyond those traditionally in possession of access and influence – to improve the quality of policy outcomes and strengthen trust.

Public communication can enable the effective functioning of the three levels of stakeholder participation – from informing to consulting and engaging the public (OECD, 2017^[20]). The initial stage refers to the government's capacity to share up-to-date, relevant and clear information, which can help increase accountability, combat corruption and restore trust in government. Concretely, promoting transparency enables citizens to exercise their voice in policy making, monitor government action and debate public decision-making processes. Access to information (ATI) laws are the legal framework that allows for this to happen as they set the rules for both proactive and reactive disclosure of information. However, the capacity to share information is necessary, albeit insufficient on its own. Consulting and engaging stakeholders through two-way dialogue mechanisms is therefore critical to promoting a wider diversity of voices beyond those traditionally in possession of access and influence, to avoid policy capture and to increase the relevance of policy outcomes (OECD, 2017^[3]). As such, effective communication is that which seeks to promote two-way dialogue mechanisms at all stages of the policy-making cycle by, among other mechanisms (OECD, 2021^[2]):

- Informing the public about the existence of participation opportunities and digital platforms for dialogue and exchange on key policy issues.
- Mobilising stakeholders to partake in consultations and innovative citizen participation initiatives.
- Equipping stakeholders with the right information to meaningfully contribute to public decision-making processes.
- Establishing dedicated opportunities for civil society, the private sector and the media to express their voice.
- Communicating how insights from consultations and broader participatory processes (i.e. citizen assemblies) were integrated into final policy decisions.

This section seeks to discuss ways in which public communication can be used in pursuit of more transparent, inclusive and participatory public sector reforms in Brazil. It will do so by analysing current communication practices and identifying potential avenues for the SECOM to strengthen the use of

two-way dialogue mechanisms and mainstream stakeholder participation to reach all segments of society, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.

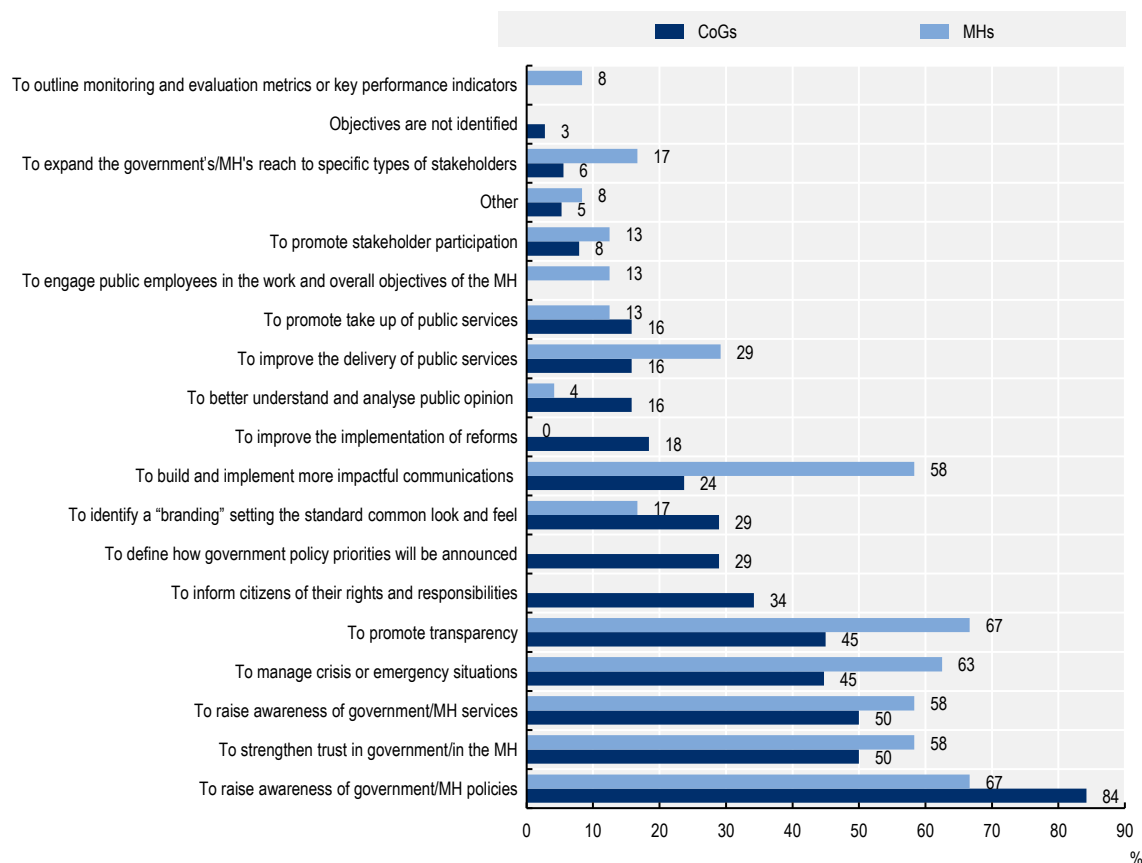
SECOM could adopt two-way communication mechanisms to promote meaningful and open dialogue with the public

Public communication can bridge the divide between governments and citizens by strengthening the interplay between these actors in the design of policies and services. Beyond its role in sharing information, it can help establish a two-way dialogue with the public, raise awareness of reforms and change behaviours. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017^[3]) recognises that effective communication can promote transparency and encourage the participation of stakeholders, making it a core pillar of successful open government reforms (OECD, 2017^[20]).

Despite the potential for public communication to serve as a lever of open government, OECD Survey results reveal that, in practice, a unilateral information-sharing focus predominates over the use of two-way engagement mechanisms in OECD and partner countries (OECD, 2021^[21]). In fact, 35 out of 38 CoGs, including Brazil, do not consider promoting stakeholder participation as a priority objective of public communication activities (Figure 5.4). Nevertheless, an approach that is grounded in the principle of participation is a precursor for promoting trust in government, which is the second most important communication objective selected by CoGs according to the OECD Survey.

Similar to 42% of CoGs in OECD and partner countries, Brazil considers promoting transparency as one of the top 5 most important objectives of its communication work. The reflection of its importance can be traced to the government's transparency framework, the presence of which can serve as a precursor for promoting the participation of stakeholders in public life. Notably, the Law on Access to Information (*Lei de Acesso à Informação*, ATI) No. 12,527 (of 18 November 2011) provides the main legal framework for proactive and reactive disclosure for all levels and branches of government in Brazil.⁷ Further obligations for disclosing information at the federal level are defined by Decree No. 7.724 (of 16 May 2012), with provisions specifying what and how information should be published.⁸ In addition, the open data policy (Decree No. 8.777 of 11 May 2016) provides for the development of Open Data Plans in federal bodies.⁹ According to data from the Office of the Comptroller General (CGU), since 2012, the federal government has received 1 041 823 requests for information. In addition, following the adoption of the Open Data Policy in 2016, more than 10 393 databases have been published on the open data portal.¹⁰

Figure 5.4. Priority communication objectives of CoGs and MHs



Note: N= 38 CoGs and 24 MHs. The CoG of Austria did not provide a response to this question.

Source: OECD (2020^[1]), "OECD Centre of Government Survey: Understanding public communication", OECD, Paris.

The continued implementation of the ATI law and the availability of open data sets can be powerful levers to promote more strategic communication and a pathway to establish a meaningful two-way dialogue with the public. In this regard, the CGU, as the main oversight body for this legal framework, has developed a series of mechanisms and tools to promote the right to ATI, such as guides, manuals and guidelines for public officials, as well as awareness-raising videos for citizens. The CGU has also supported the organisation of awareness-raising events to promote the use of open data through contests, hackathons, datathons, meetups, data expeditions, media training and public organisations' training on ATI. In addition, the government has utilised digital communication tools, such as the Participa + Brasil platform¹¹ and the institutional open government website,¹² to facilitate access to information and data, as well as to serve as a channel for citizens to submit feedback on the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of policies and services.¹³ Some of these tools include portals centralising information and data, such as the transparency portal,¹⁴ Fala.BR¹⁵ and the open data portal,¹⁶ complemented by ministerial portals on key thematic areas. While this is a useful framework to link public communication and policy priorities linked to transparency, stronger co-ordination between the CGU, Secretariat of Government (SEGOV) and SECOM could help strengthen the implementation of this right, in particular given the present mandate of SECOM does not explicitly extend support for the ATI agenda.

Moreover, the government of Brazil has taken initial steps to gear communications for accountability but more could be done to open channels for feedback and align communication priorities with citizens' needs. At present, the focus of SECOM's communication has expanded from raising awareness around the

means of policy to communicating concrete government achievements and accountability measures. In fact, every 100 days, the government deploys a campaign to share information on the key milestones attained over the period. While raising awareness is a precondition for participation, stakeholders during interviews revealed that communications follow a top-down information-sharing model, with limited opportunities for citizen dialogue and feedback. This may be partially explained by previous findings on SECOM's prioritisation process which is based on the direct mandate of the president.

Such an approach is consistent with the way the government of Brazil communicates through digital means. According to OECD Survey results, SECOM makes use of social media as a primary channel for its communication, building on the country's rich online and information landscape. Nevertheless, OECD Survey results reveal that communication in this regard focuses on one-way awareness-raising initiatives through video and visual material sharing key information on policies and their outcomes. While the use of online communication has allowed SECOM to disseminate key messages in more direct, rapid and cost-efficient ways, the use of these tools to promote engagement and available participation opportunities is neither prioritised nor part of the government's communication strategy.

This process to consolidate the government's robust social media presence has taken place in parallel to the emergence of diverse types of accounts on these platforms – from those of personal civil servants to political figures themselves. The often-unchecked management of different types of social media accounts, beyond those of public institutions, may increase the risk of amplifying contradictory narratives, generating disagreement between other parts of government and blurring the boundaries between political and public communication (Murphy, 2019^[21]). As such, setting clear attributions in existing guidelines is critical in light of the growing visibility of civil servants and political figures in Brazil as “communication ambassadors of the government”. At the same time, this is all the more important considering that individual communications from high-level political leaders themselves may be prone to information disorders and may be used to amplify the spread of mis- and disinformation.

With over 88% of the population actively present on social media, the government of Brazil could benefit from utilising these platforms in a more strategic way, namely in pursuit of leveraging its interactivity and networking features. SECOM could build on its robust framework governing social media use by government entities, which includes general principles to produce content, interact with users and manage reputational risks (Box 5.10). Efforts in this regard could focus on updating and expanding the principles for personal, institutional and political social media accounts to support a more coherent presence across these platforms. Such clarity could in turn help government agencies engage more constructively with the public and make a clear distinction between the public and political nature of social media communication. However, in light of the moderate Internet penetration rate and uneven digital literacy levels across regions,¹⁷ multichannel two-way engagement mechanisms should also be considered to counter the growing digital divide (OECD, 2018^[22]).

To this end, the government of Brazil should engage in efforts to mainstream participation in the way it plans and deploys its communication on a regular basis. On the one hand, SECOM could communicate more explicitly about participation opportunities and co-ordinate with public entities leading national consultations or fora to better understand citizens' needs and concerns, to in turn define priorities for future campaigns. On the other, SECOM should promote online spaces for policy debate and feedback through social media and existing participation platforms such as *Participa + Brasil*¹⁸ and *Fala.BR*. To this end, closer co-ordination with the responsible entities in charge of these platforms, including the Office of the Comptroller General (*Controladoria-Geral da União*) leading the federal open government agenda, could help SECOM in this regard. This would be particularly relevant given the government's social media governance framework, available social listening capabilities through AI technologies and formal online infrastructure to conduct consultations. Establishing open and direct communication with citizens will support SECOM in reaching its priority objectives outlined in the OECD Survey, including to “build trust between government and citizens”, “promote take up of public services” and “improve the delivery of public services”.

Box 5.10. Brazil's Guidance Manual for participation in social media networks, 2013

Brazil's Guidance Manual aims to establish good practices and guide public officials in the use of social networks, with a view to generating more compelling content, interacting with users and efficiently handling crises. The manual is divided into six main categories, covering definitions and basic concepts, language and visual guidelines, methodologies, monitoring, an internal code of conduct for employees and collaborations, and crisis management.

Among others, the guidance manual emphasises the importance of enhancing citizen participation and engagement. To this end, the guide recommends the use of infographics as a first step, since they have a lower cost of production than videos and awaken a greater impulse of engagement than simple texts among users. It also includes a section with five principles to engage with users, in particular when citizens would like to express discontent with a particular service. Through the principle of participation, the guidelines also include a series of good practices in terms of moderating content online with the aim of establishing two-way communication with the general public.

Source: Own work, based on Government of Brazil/IDB (2013^[23]) (2013), *Manual de orientación para participar en redes sociales*, <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Manual-de-orientaci%C3%B3n-para-participar-en-redes-sociales.pdf>

SECOM could strengthen the communication of participatory mechanisms for more inclusive policies

Stakeholder participation is entrenched in the democratic culture of Brazil. Through its federal governance system, the country benefits from spaces for policy debate at both the national and local levels. Notably, the stakeholder participation model is partially institutionalised through the constitution and subnational multi-stakeholder bodies (councils and conferences)¹⁹ charged with following key policy processes. At the CoG level, the Secretariat of Government (SEGOV) co-ordinates the relationship between the federal administration and over 800 000 civil society organisations as per Decree No. 9.982 of 20 August 2019. However, the primary responsibility for the functioning of local councils lies within state authorities, which, as in most OECD countries, often lack resources and capabilities resulting in uneven practices across regions.

These spaces for participation in Brazil, however, have recently faced a series of limitations inhibiting the ability of stakeholders to engage in the debate on key policy initiatives. Following the establishment of Decree No. 9.759 of 2019,²⁰ an initial wave of 50 councils and conferences were disbanded, limiting the existence of these bodies to only those mandated by a specific decree (Participedia, 2019^[24]). The decree also repealed the National Social Participation Policy (Decree No. 8243 of 2014),²¹ introducing additional restrictions to the functioning of these bodies.

In addition to the curtailing of spaces for stakeholder participation, interviews with non-governmental actors revealed a series of challenges facing councils and government entities themselves stemming from the ad hoc nature of communications. First, the lack of consistent information sharing on the policy in question was noted to hinder the ability of council members to participate and contribute meaningfully to the overall process. Second, interviews indicated that information is sub-optimally shared between state authorities, ministries and SECOM resulting in delayed and misaligned communications. Third, the need to better communicate information pre- and post-consultations was also stressed, in particular to show how contributions were incorporated into public decision-making. To this end, interviewees noted these challenges as potential risks that may contribute to a lower appetite for participation in Brazil and growing distrust between the government and citizens.

Communicating around councils, their work and other formal participatory mechanisms is part of the larger need to open spaces for dialogue across all phases of the policy cycle and the institutional fabric in Brazil. In this regard, SECOM has a key role to play in its capacity as a central expertise node to advise and equip the secretariat and subnational authorities with the right tools and skills to communicate across the stages of the policy-making cycle – from the design of communications around participation opportunities to the dissemination of results and impact. This could in turn help strengthen the articulation between the CoG, ministries and subnational authorities to communicate with one voice. Future efforts to promote such a co-ordinated approach could build on the recent experience of cross-ministry campaigns (i.e. *Semana do Brasil*, *Brazil by Brasil* and others) to establish a set of guidelines and a “participation communication package” for national, state and council actors. A communication charter for local, national and external actors could also be envisioned to set guiding principles and improve the professionalism of communications for participation (Box 5.11).

Box 5.11. MENA-OECD Regional Charter: Public Communication for a more Open Government

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Charter was developed with the aim of defining standards and rules to enhance the professionalism of public communication and its connection to the principles of open government. The charter’s objectives include defining key values and principles, sharing insights and best practices, pooling resources and developing strategic communications. The structure of the charter underlines the main objectives, guiding principles for public communicators and a list of the actions that adherents should undertake. To do so, it covers overarching goals of improved transparency, professionalism, collaboration, networking and peer support. Ultimately, the charter aims to strengthen the two-way dialogue between governments and citizens and contribute to a more open government.

To this end, there is also an opportunity to link existing efforts with those from the federal open government agenda led by the Office of the Comptroller General to enhance the connection between communication and participation fora. For example, Finland recognises public communication as a central pillar of its whole-of-government communication strategy as well as its dedicated open government partnership plan to convey a holistic vision (Box 5.12). Such an approach could aid the government of Brazil in reframing communication around openness and promoting stakeholder participation opportunities in the framework of its open government agenda more broadly. Communicating explicitly on the open government agenda could support a narrative shift toward the conception of open government beyond an anti-corruption mechanism to that of a “culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation” (OECD, 2017^[3]).

Box 5.12. Finland's 4th Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan, 2019-23

The 4th OGP National Action Plan of Finland acknowledges public communication as one of its eight core pillars to effectively implement the country's open government agenda and as a key lever of government more broadly. It highlights the importance of strengthening internal communication to better co-ordinate and align its key messages, as well as its external communication to establish a two-way dialogue with the public. It also underlines the need to ensure that government texts, services and reforms are clear and easily understandable to citizens. This builds on the country's Central Communication Guidelines, which define openness as one of the core values governing communications in Finland.

As part of the commitments therein, the plan includes concrete activities to strengthen communication between levels of government, share good practices on effective communication and open digital feedback channels for the preparation of Finland's Open Government Strategy.

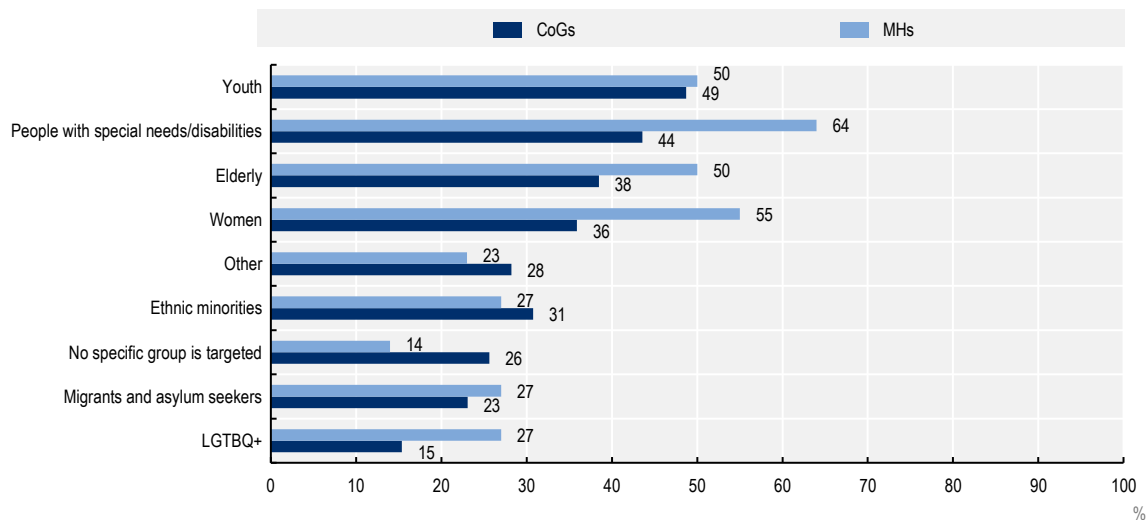
Source: Own work, based on Government of Finland (2019^[25]), *Open Government Partnership National Action Plan (2019-2023)*, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/finland/> (accessed on 1 April 2021).

Tailoring key communication messages, channels and tools to promote more accessible and inclusive communication for all segments of society

Public communication can help expand the reach of policies and services to a wider group of actors beyond the “usual suspects” to engage with and give a voice to traditionally underrepresented groups in public life (OECD, 2021^[21]). Doing so implies framing communication channels, messages and activities around different population needs with the aim of addressing delivery gaps, promoting access to public information and enabling the participation of stakeholders in policy-making processes. From a supply perspective, such a user-centric approach can “redefine how communication is conceived, delivered, and amplified by allowing more direct collaboration with civil society, private sector and influencers” (OECD, 2021^[21]). From a demand perspective, governments should reflect on the content, channels and interfaces used to address communication inequalities, open spaces for two-way dialogue and promote the accessibility of key information for all segments of society, in particular vulnerable groups.

In practice, OECD evidence suggests there is room to diversify public communication efforts and target underrepresented societal groups more explicitly across the work of CoGs in OECD and partner countries, including Brazil (OECD, 2021^[21]). Data suggests that close to 26% of CoGs have yet to target key groups as part of their communication work (Figure 5.5). From those that do, a moderate share of CoGs seeks to target primarily youth (49%), individuals with disabilities (44%), the elderly (38%) and women (36%). However, a comparatively lower percentage tailor efforts for groups such as ethnic minorities (31%), migrants (23%) and LGBTQ+ individuals (15%).

Figure 5.5. Specific groups targeted in the communication work of CoGs and MHs



Note: n CoG = 39; n MH = 22. The MHs of Greece and Japan did not respond to this question. The elderly group was defined as individuals aged 65 years and over and the youth group was defined as individuals aged 15 to 29 years.

Source: OECD (2020_[11]), "OECD Centre of Government Survey: Understanding public communication", OECD, Paris.

With a demographically diverse population of more than 214 million inhabitants across 26 states, tailoring communication messages, tools and channels to the needs of different segments of society will be critical to enhance accessibility and inclusiveness. SECOM's survey responses noted that its communication work does not specifically seek to target groups such as women, youth, ethnic minorities or Indigenous communities. This is consistent with the finding that channel segmentation does not use demographic and perception data from different audiences as one of its main criteria for selection. Thus, communication efforts could better reflect Brazil's diverse population, where 16% of the citizenry is aged 15-24 years and where large marginalised afro-descendent and Indigenous communities exist, represented by more than 305 ethnic groups speaking an estimated 274 languages (Index Mundi, 2020_[26]; Minority Rights, 2020_[27]; Kemp, 2021_[28]). Similarly, SECOM must take care to ensure that vulnerable groups can access information on digital communication channels. This consideration is particularly urgent given the importance of digital communication tools, rapid and constant technological changes and that Internet penetration and digital literacy levels vary significantly across geographic and socio-economic divides in the country.

In addition to ensuring more inclusive efforts, promoting a whole-of-society public communication approach could help mobilise and engage a wider group of actors in more meaningful and relevant ways. At present, OECD Survey results reveal that SECOM does not collaborate with social media influencers, civil society, private sector actors and academia for communication purposes. Leveraging trusted voices that can relay information to harder to reach population groups can be a critical means to address communication inequalities, particularly across Brazil's diverse population. At the same time, enabling participatory mechanisms to enhance dialogue such as fora, multi-stakeholder task forces and direct partnerships with relevant stakeholders can support the design of effective COVID-19 response and recovery strategies, which according to the 2021 OECD CoG survey have been missing since the onset of the crisis (OECD, 2021_[29]). Such participatory approaches are fundamental to address the "rapidly evolving and multi-disciplinary challenges in deploying effective crisis communication" (OECD, 2021_[30]). The government of Finland, for example, collaborated with influencers to amplify the reach of reliable information, improve its immediacy and ensure its relevance for different population groups (Box 5.13).

Box 5.13. Partnerships with social media influencers in Finland

The Prime Minister's Office of Finland, in collaboration with the National Emergency Supply Agency and the private sector (PING Helsinki and Mediapool) collaborated with social media influencers to provide clear and reliable information for younger audiences that can be harder to reach through traditional channels. Following a thorough influencer mapping, over 1 800 Finnish influencers helped the government share reliable information on health measures to empower and engage citizens in the fight against COVID-19. The results of this initiative had a positive impact and played an important part in preventing the spread of disinformation, with 94% of respondents to a follow-up survey of the initiative feeling they got enough information and 97% considering the information shared to be reliable.

Source: OECD (2020^[31]), "Building resilience to the Covid-19 pandemic: The role of centres of government", <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/building-resilience-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-the-role-of-centres-of-government-883d2961/>.

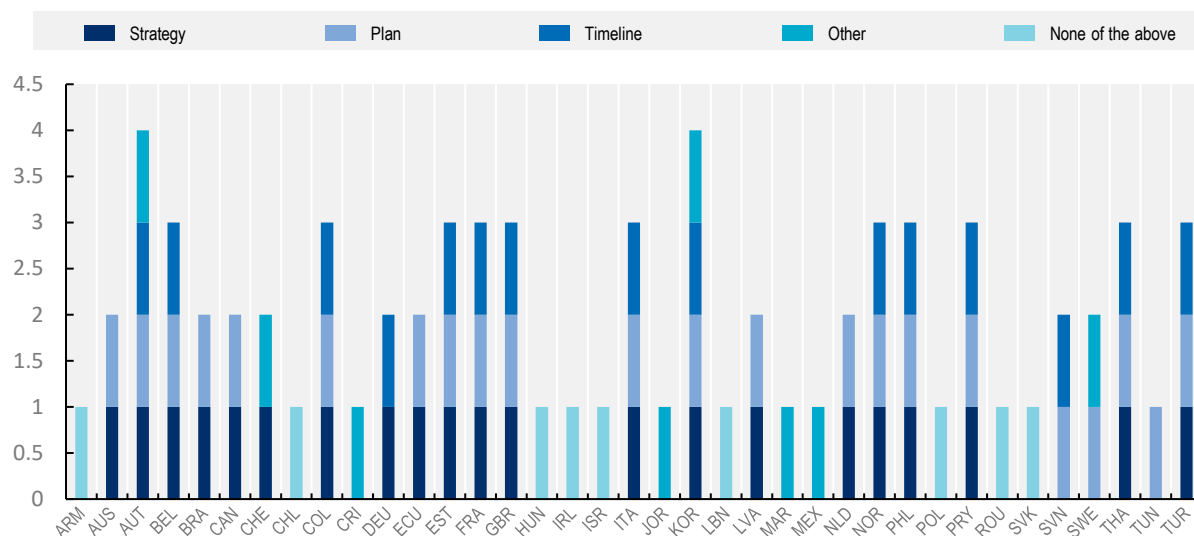
Case study on business environment reform in Brazil

The government of Brazil has recognised the importance of strategically and effectively communicating about its business environment reform programme. In doing so, it has recognised the important role of this function not only in disseminating public information but also as an instrument for the delivery of key private sector policies to strengthen the Brazilian economy, such as the simplification of business operations and the attraction of foreign investment. The following section explores how some of the elements discussed throughout this chapter can support the Special Secretariat for State Modernization (*Secretaria Especial de Modernização do Estado*, SEME) within the CoG in its efforts to communicate effectively on the reform.

The high priority, cross-cutting and complex policy objectives of the reform call for the elaboration of a comprehensive communication strategy to facilitate the dissemination of key information – both to internal and external audiences – in an effective, consistent and institutional manner. At present, stakeholders during peer interviews revealed that low financial resources, insufficient skilled staff and ad hoc planning have impeded the development of a dedicated strategy in this regard. The lack of such a guiding document has in turn inhibited the deployment and co-ordination of communication efforts within the SEME and across the multiple institutions involved. By identifying clear objectives, evaluation indicators, responsibilities, target audiences and key messages, such a strategy would facilitate the co-ordination of communication activities between the SEME and the various institutions involved in this reform (OECD, 2021^[2]). In fact, OECD survey results reveal that over half of CoGs make use of strategies (57%), plans (59%) or timelines (41%) to promote a proactive over a reactive communication approach (Figure 5.6).

Such a strategy would allow the SEME to ensure that communication activities go beyond ad hoc efforts to increase their reach and impact, while at the same time providing key insights into audience needs, perceptions and habits to policy teams charged with the delivery of the reform. The use of public communication strategies is a practice that has been adopted by SECOM, which could be a useful ally in providing guidance for the development of the SEME's own strategy and ensuring its alignment with the whole-of-government communication vision. In this regard, setting clear roles and responsibilities for the delivery of communication activities will be fundamental given the involvement of multiple institutions across government, including the Central Bank as well as the Ministries of Justice, Economy, Infrastructure and Commerce Development among others. The adoption of a strategic approach could also help the SEME transition from a reactive to a proactive communication on the reform's results to scale the impact of these efforts, raise awareness at the highest political levels and attract foreign investment.

Figure 5.6. Use of communication strategies, plans and timelines across centres of government



Note: n CoG= 37. The Czech Republic and Lithuania did not provide data for this question.

Source: OECD (2020^[11]), "OECD Centre of Government Survey: Understanding public communication", OECD, Paris.

The tailoring of communication messages to relevant stakeholders and the selection of appropriate channels based on audience insights will be central in the design of the SEME communication strategy, given the diverse business environment in Brazil. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised just how critical understanding rapid shifts in public perceptions, demands for information and information voids faced by certain groups can be to ensure communication efforts reach their intended objectives. As such, understanding the needs, perceptions, awareness levels and media consumption habits of key actors that make up the private sector fabric in Brazil, including harder to reach groups like small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and informal businesses, will be crucial to designing relevant communications and informing activities of the business environment reform programme. This could be done in close co-ordination with SECOM, which conducts audience insights analysis regularly and centralises a repository of perception data and social media activity that could inform efforts for the reform programme. Across OECD and partner countries, evidence suggests that nearly two-thirds of CoGs use audience insights on a quarterly (27%) or ad hoc basis (41%) to inform communication planning (OECD, 2021^[21]).

An evidence-driven strategy would also benefit from including a clear evaluation framework to understand how communication activities are contributing to key policy objectives. As mentioned in Chapter 4, allocating impact indicators to activities within the strategy could help assess effectiveness, promote institutional learning and align communication results with the strategic objectives of the reform (OECD, 2021^[21]). Such an approach would be consistent with the SEME's drive to draw on data, including international indicators, to inform the implementation of the reform and disseminate key achievements to citizens. OECD countries, including the UK, for example, make ample use of evaluations to demonstrate the short- and long-term impact of their communication campaigns – such as promoting trade, increasing tourism and strengthening quality education – which is proving useful in ensuring the visibility of results with political leaders and securing investments to further professionalise this function (Box 5.14).

Partnering with third-party messengers can also provide meaningful ways for the SEME to communicate technical policy information to a wider audience in more effective and accessible ways. With close to half of Brazilian economic activity in the informal sector (ILO, 2021^[32]), working with community leaders, civil society and small businesses can be a key means to amplify messages, improve their immediacy, provide a sense of familiarity and simplify technical policy issues. The involvement of trusted voices can also help

amplify the government's message and address the risk averseness of certain institutions to communicate around the reform, as mentioned during the OECD peer review.

Box 5.14. The GREAT Britain Government Campaign

The GREAT Britain Campaign is a ten-year flagship international marketing effort of the UK to promote growth and support economic activity in key policy sectors, such as tourism, education and trade. The campaign developed by the Government Communication Service provides a unified platform for international communication efforts from multiple government actors, such as the Department for International Trade, Visit Britain, the British Council and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A sophisticated methodology was designed to evaluate the economic results and impact of the communication campaign using a three-tier model. With an analysis of internal return on investment from evaluation teams within each involved department, the GREAT team aggregated this data and conducted an overall appraisal and assessment of the business effects to improve policies for the private sector, which were reviewed by the National Audit Office.

The campaign showed incremental economic returns of GBP 2.7 billion, with GBP 1.77 billion from international and domestic tourism, GBP 720 million from trade and foreign direct investment, and GBP 228 million from international education. In particular, the Food is GREAT campaign led by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has helped boost British trade in food and drink exports from GBP 20.1 billion in 2016 to more than GBP 22 billion in 2017-18.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2021^[2]), *OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/22f8031c-en>.

Across OECD members and partners, CoGs are collaborating with external actors (62%), such as the media (12 out of 24), civil society (12 out of 24) or businesses (7 out of 24), for communication purposes (OECD, 2021^[2]). Tapping into private sector expertise, its data and sophisticated communication methods could be a valuable means for the SEME to expand the reach of its efforts and fill existing gaps in the design, planning and execution of its communication strategy for the reform. Examples of this type of collaboration in Australia, Portugal and Singapore demonstrate the potential to increase the impact, reach and credibility of key government messages (Box 5.15).

Box 5.15. Collaborations with influencers and businesses in Australia, Portugal and Singapore

Partnerships with local businesses and influencers can help increase the reach and credibility of public communication efforts. In Singapore, for example, the international branding campaign “Passion Made Possible” developed by the Singapore Tourism Board alongside the Economic Development Board, placed small businesses, artists and citizens at the centre to highlight the best the city has to offer. Its main objective was for foreign audiences to feel a personal connection to Singaporeans and increase the level of tourism as a result. This campaign was launched in the Philippines, supported by Filipino citizens with deep ties to Singaporeans, and resulted in 700 000 locals travelling to Singapore – a record of arrivals in the country. The campaign was awarded a prize at the 16th Philippine Quill Awards, which is an annual competition recognising excellence in communication led by the Communication Management Division.

In Portugal, the government partnered with Missão Continente, a supermarket brand committed to sustainability, for the communication campaign “Portugal Chama. Por Si. Por Todos”. The private enterprise was involved to discuss the best strategy to communicate sustainability issues, for example by sharing knowledge and resources to educate the public surrounding forest fires and ways to prevent these. The campaign reached close to 7 million Portuguese citizens through television advertisements.

Source: Author’s own work based on OECD (forthcoming^[33]), “Public communication” after COVID-19: Emerging trends and practices from across the OECD for more effective public communication in Southeast Asia”, OECD, Paris; Missão Continente (n.d.^[34]), *Portugal Chama. A Missão Continente está lá*; Sonae (2019^[35]), *Missão Continente associa-se a “Portugal chama. Por si. Por todos”*.

Areas of opportunity for the business environment reform

In support of a more strategic approach for the communication of the reform, the SEME could focus in the short term on elaborating a dedicated strategy encompassing its main objectives, activities, key messages, target audiences, channels for dissemination, timeline, roles and responsibilities, and key performance indicators. Such a strategy would benefit from making use of audience insights to identify the most successful means for communication efforts to reach its intended target groups. Establishing a clear evaluation framework would also support the SEME in assessing the effects of communication and link its impact to key policy objectives of the reform.

The SEME could explore opportunities to partner with influencers, community leaders and businesses for the delivery of communication efforts concerning the reform to enhance their impact, reach and credibility.

Recommendations

The government of Brazil recently embarked on a reorganisation of the public communication function to consolidate a whole-of-government expertise node and promote the professionalisation of related structures and processes. In doing so, Brazil is taking important steps toward the establishment of more strategic public communication, which will be central as the country faces economic and socio-political pressures exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this transition, the government of Brazil should focus on reinforcing the role of public communication as a lever of government, an enabler of the open government principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation, and an instrument for strengthening democracy (OECD, 2021^[2]).

OECD analysis suggests, however, that public communication remains underutilised as an instrument for policy making and open government reforms. As it transitions from a tactical to a strategic communication approach, the government should continue efforts to institutionalise key processes, enhance multi-level co-ordination and professionalise core capabilities in this regard. In doing so, the government must pursue an evidence-driven communication approach as part of its whole-of-government strategy to better respond to the needs of different audiences and show its contribution and impact on broader policy objectives. Building on existing formal participatory mechanisms at the federal and local levels, communicating around participation opportunities will also be needed to establish an open and meaningful dialogue with the public across the different stages of the policy-making process, in particular vulnerable groups.

To this end, the government of Brazil could consider the following recommendations:

Recommendations

- Clarify public communication processes, roles and responsibilities to reduce potential duplications, streamline working methods and align internal and external messaging.
 - Codify key public communication processes through a manual, guidelines or decrees to ensure consistency in the role and mandate of public communicators over time. These guidelines should also include concrete information regarding roles and responsibilities. The institutionalisation and alignment of communication processes may in turn support efforts to depoliticise this function and help address existing co-ordination gaps.
 - Make use of SECOM's whole-of-government communication strategy to map specific attributions for each institution and link tasks with the objectives therein.
- Establish a formal framework for vertical and horizontal collaboration among public communicators in key line ministries led by SECOM to address existing co-ordination gaps.
 - Formalise and professionalise the existing Government Communication System of the Federal Executive Branch (SICOM) network of public communication professionals in public authorities setting its overall mandate and vision. Expand its activities to host regular meetings with the aim of sharing results of key activities, fostering the exchange of good practices, defining communication priorities, developing technical guidance material and organising capacity-building training.
 - Engage in a consultation exercise with members of the network to identify and establish joint working methods, a calendar of activities and digital tools and channels to promote greater engagement between peers.
- Establish a formal prioritisation process to define key communication objectives for SECOM's forthcoming whole-of-government strategy and plan.
 - Conduct a mapping of internal needs through an open consultation process with representatives from key line ministries to improve the overall quality of the strategy and plan and promote buy-in around its implementation. A more inclusive prioritisation process will be key in depoliticising communication priorities across levels of government.
 - Strengthen the articulation with the Undersecretariat for Articulation and Monitoring (SAM) in the definition of key policy priorities within SECOM's whole-of-government communication strategy and plan.
- Reinforce the support and advisory role of SECOM in the development, design and evaluation of ministry or initiative specific communication plans through dedicated guidelines and templates. SECOM could also consider establishing an official strategy committee charged with reviewing the content of ministry or sector-specific communication plans, overseeing their evaluation and providing guidance in subsequent planning periods based on lessons learnt.
- Develop a comprehensive training programme to help professionalise the strategic application of core communication competencies.
- Conduct a mapping of skill gaps within and beyond SECOM to request relevant training according to the needs of different institutions.
- Formalise communication training curricula in collaboration with the Brazilian National School of Public Administration to enhance their relevance, reach and sustainability.

- Involve SECOM, the Ministry of Economy and Casa Civil in the development of a dedicated competency framework for the public communication profession. Such a framework could define the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to perform this function. SECOM could also work towards outlining a framework for career development which promotes mobility opportunities and professional development.
- Promote more inclusive and responsive communication through the strategic application of audience insights to effectively segment publics, personalise messages and channels, as well as ensuring accessibility for harder to reach and marginalised groups.
 - Provide technical training for staff in public communication units to exploit the full potential of natural language processing and intelligent segmentation techniques.
 - Consider the creation of an insights dashboard for key sectors to access relevant and timely audience data, including perceptions, social media analytics and information from past surveys and focus groups. The dashboard may be developed by SECOM in close collaboration with SAM and Casa Civil to expand its utility to other internal publics.
 - Develop a specific engagement plan tailored to the needs of vulnerable segments of the population to address potential communication inequalities.
- Develop a framework for evaluating public communication activities with guidance on potential methods, indicators and processes to ensure its consistent application.
 - Define specific output, outcome and impact metrics as part of this overarching framework, including indicators such as changes in behaviours, levels of stakeholder participation or take-up of public services.
 - Attribute concrete key performance indicators and baselines to each objective in SECOM's whole-of-government communication strategy and other relevant sectoral plans to strengthen the articulation between results and their contribution to policy priorities.
- Strengthen communication on participation opportunities and the use of two-way engagement mechanisms to promote open and meaningful dialogue with citizens.
 - Communicate regularly about available consultation and other participation opportunities, building on existing mechanisms such as activities ran by councils and Participa + Brasil.
 - Beyond social media, make use of available digital platforms, such as Participa + Brasil, to crowdsource relevant contributions from the public and establish online spaces for dialogue on key policy issues.
 - Strengthen the articulation between SEGOV, SECOM and the Office of the Comptroller General to link future communication activities with those within the open government agenda. Such an agenda could create a narrative for open government reforms focused on a positive relationship between government and citizens based on information, two-way dialogue and participation.
- SECOM should advise and equip the General Secretariat and subnational authorities with the right tools to effectively communicate around participation and support the activities of councils.
 - Develop dedicated guidelines or a participation outreach package for national and state actors with concrete processes, templates and communication material.
 - Consider the establishment of a national communication charter for local, national and external stakeholders setting general guiding principles that build on the rich diversity of practices and needs across different regions.

- More effectively tailor messages, tools and channels to the specific needs and consumption habits of specific segments of society to address existing communication inequalities and connect with and give a voice to vulnerable groups. To this end, SECOM should lead an initial mapping of audiences to understand the opportunities to engage with youth, women, the elderly, ethnic and indigenous groups, LGBTQ+ individuals as well as other marginalised communities through its communication work.
- Establish mechanisms, such as multi-stakeholder task forces, for SECOM to collaborate with external experts in the design and deployment of key communication activities that are grounded in evidence and trusted sources of information. These mechanisms could also include partnerships with influencers, civil society and businesses with the aim of expanding the reach of key information to vulnerable groups, promoting democratic engagement and transparent public interest-driven communications.

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Notes

¹ Misinformation is defined as false information that is shared without the intention of causing harm, whereas disinformation is false information knowingly shared to cause harm (Matasick, Alfonsi and Bellantoni, 2020^[36]).

² The OECD Survey on Public Communication (2020^[1]) collected evidence on the underexplored role of public communication and identified various trends, practices and challenges across CoGs and ministries of health (MHs) in the OECD membership and beyond. The data collection period took place from 2 February to 7 June 2020 and was followed by a robust validation process with all countries. The OECD received a total of 39 responses from CoGs and 24 from MHs, which form the basis for the *OECD Report on Public Communication* (2021^[2]).

³ Law No. 14.074 (of 14 October 2020), <https://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/lei-n-14.074-de-14-de-outubro-de-2020-282699172>.

⁴ Decree No. 6.555 of 8 September 2008 established the Government Communication System of the Federal Executive Branch (SICOM) and clarified its core attributions. More information can be accessed at http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2008/Decreto/D6555.htm.

⁵ Existing SECOM guidelines and manuals include: guidelines for the use of the government's brand (*Orientações para o uso da marca do Governo Federal*, <http://antigo.secom.gov.br/atuacao/publicidade/orientacoes-para-uso-da-marca-do-governo-federal>), guidelines for the use of visual identity (*Identidade visual*, <https://www.gov.br/sudene/pt-br/canais-de-atendimento/imprensa/identidade-visual>), a public communication directives manual (*Manual de Diretrizes: Identidade Padrão de Comunicação Digital do Poder Executivo Federal*, <http://antigo.secom.gov.br/aceso-a-informacao/manuais/arquivos/manual-de-diretrizes.pdf/view>), among others.

⁶ Institutionalisation is understood as “the establishment of evaluation practices within government entities in a systematic way for their regular and consistent application” (OECD, 2021^[2]). It can take different forms, from the use of *de jure* mechanisms, from regulation, formal procedures, official mandates, to *de facto* instruments, including practical frameworks, principles and guidelines.

⁷ Law on Access to Information (*Lei de acesso a informação pública*) No. 12.527 (of 18 November 2011), http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2011/lei/112527.htm.

⁸ Decree No. 7.724 (of 16 May 2012), http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2012/decreto/d7724.htm.

⁹ Open data policy (Decree No. 8.777 of 11 May 2016), http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2016/decreto/d8777.htm.

¹⁰ The government of Brazil makes data available for public oversight at: <http://paineis.cgu.gov.br/lai>.

¹¹ Participa + Brasil portal, <https://www.gov.br/participamaisbrasil/pagina-inicial>.

¹² Open Government website managed by the CGU, <https://www.gov.br/cgu/pt-br/governo-aberto>.

¹³ All public organisations are required to publish ongoing participation processes on their institutional websites, in accordance to the Proactive Transparency Guide (<https://www.gov.br/acessoinformacao/pt-br/lai-para-sic/guias-e-orientacoes/gta-6a-versao-2019.pdf/view>). Data on institutional compliance with this requirement is available at: <http://paineis.cgu.gov.br/lai>.

¹⁴ Transparency Portal, <http://www.portaldatransparencia.gov.br/> (accessed on 14 April 2021).

¹⁵ Fala.BR portal, <https://falabr.cgu.gov.br/> (accessed on 14 April 2021).

¹⁶ Open Data Portal, <https://dados.gov.br/> (accessed on 14 April 2021).

¹⁷ The Internet penetration rate in Brazil amounted to 65% in 2019.

¹⁸ Participa + Brasil, <https://www.gov.br/participamaisbrasil/pagina-inicial>.

¹⁹ Councils and conferences are composed of civil society, academia, unions and private sector actors.

²⁰ Decree No. 9.759 of 11 April 2019, <https://legislacao.presidencia.gov.br/atos/?tipo=DEC&numero=9759&ano=2019&ato=279oXW65keZpWT12c>.

²¹ Decree No. 8.243 of 23 May 2014 instituting the National Policy for Social Participation and the National System for Social Participation, <http://bit.ly/1mwQCgG>.



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