

# **TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES: MAKING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Transparency in public accounts is an issue that has been discussed all over the world for many years. Brazil has passed legislations that recognize and protect the right to access information held by public bodies. This paper consists of showing how Minas Gerais Court of Auditors-TCEMG- has used the technology resource to achieve its goal to become a transparent entity, always giving a quality service to society and fulfilling with its legal obligation. Using a system entitled SIAFI and its data warehouse, along with transparency portals, TCEMG is becoming an open, transparent and accountable institution. The contribution of technology is essential to reach transparency in public accounts. Always looking toward new technologies, systems and tools, TCEMG along with Information Technology is building a transparent and accountable institution.

**Keywords:** Transparency, Public resources, TCEMG, Information Technology, Accountability, SIAFI, Data Warehouse.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

Nearly 100 years later, the judge Louis Brandeis said “the sun light is the best of the disinfectant”, referring to the cloudy financial system of the United States. According to the magistrate, the bankers never felt the financial crises because the problem used to fall against society. So, for over a century, transparency is a dream.

Transparency is introduced as a means of holding public officials accountable and fighting corruption. When government actions are open to public, when budgets and financial statements may be reviewed by anyone, when laws, rules and decisions are open to discussion, they are seen transparent and there is less opportunity for the authorities to abuse the system in their own interest.<sup>(1)</sup>

Government that works for its citizens must be open and accountable, use public resources fairly and efficiently, apply the rule of law and provide the public with information and opportunities for participation. Governments who abuse their power for private gain, waste public resources and lose the trust of those they are meant to serve.<sup>(2)</sup>

Many countries have passed legislation that recognizes and protects the right to access information held by public bodies. This is an important component in any effort to fight corruption, but the mere existence of legal instruments is not enough. Habits and cultures on both sides of the information demand and supply relationship must be changed. While public bodies change their attitudes of secrecy to a climate of openness to prevent potentially corrupt situations, citizens also need to capture the spirit of demanding information.<sup>(3)</sup>

The stimulation of public transparency is one of the essential objectives of the modern Public

Administration. The increase of opening public actions to citizens reinforces democracy and develops the citizenship.<sup>(4)</sup>

## **BRAZIL X TRANSPARENCY**

In Brazil as in other Latin America countries, the reform of the state and its relations with the market occurred along with the insertion of the country in the global economy and the democratization of political institutions. So, the fiscal goal of reducing government spending joined to the promises of more efficiency in the use of public resources and better quality of services rendered to population new practices of transparency and greater accountability of governments.<sup>(5)</sup>

The Brazilian Government believes that the transparency is the best antidote against corruption since it is a way to make public managers act with responsibility and allow society to collaborate with the control of the actions of its governing, in order to check if the public resources are being used as they should be.<sup>(6)</sup>

With the edition, in May of 2000, of the Complementary Law nº101/00 - entitled Law of Fiscal Responsibility (101/00 LRF)<sup>(7)</sup> - Brazil started to try a new regimen of administration of the public resources, called of Responsible Fiscal Management, that is seated in three pillars: the planning, the transparency and the control of the public accounts.

In 27/05/2009, the president of Brazil signed the Complementary Law 131/2009<sup>(8)</sup>, known as “Capiberibe Law”. According to this law all public agencies have to publish, in real time, all public accounts (revenue and expenditures) in detailed way in the Internet. It makes possible to anyone to have access, by internet, to all public accounts, all revenue and expenditures about any government agencies.

## **MINAS GERAIS COURT OF AUDITORS**

Minas Gerais Court of Auditors is agency of external control that manages public resources of Minas Gerais State. It has the role of auditing the accounts of public agencies as well as a wide range of other public bodies in Minas Gerais state. Its mission is to make this control with efficiency and responsibility. Its goal is to give assurance over many aspects of

public revenue and expenditure such as the truth and fairness of public financial statements; the regularity of the expenditure and the fair use of public resource towards society benefit.

Minas Gerais Court of Auditors is responsible for analyzing and controlling the revenue and expenditure of 853 city councils. In total, TCEMG has the obligation to monitor and examine 2.292 public agencies, totalizing the amount of 68 billions of reais; approximately 34 billions of dollars. Looking forward working according to Brazilian’s Law and always concerning about transparency issue, TCEMG use the information technology resources to fulfilling its legal obligation and also put available to society information regarding to how public agencies are managing public resources and how TCEMG itself manages its own resource.

Business intelligence and information management technology can be an enabler for greater government openness and clarity in communication with citizens. Instead of just dumping an agency’s raw data on a web site, the information can be organized and tools provided so that external constituents can more easily analyze it.<sup>(9)</sup>

Each day, Brazilian citizen earns more tools to oversee spending in different public spheres. It will be impossible to reach this goal without information technology support and technological knowledge. The internet and all its benefits associated to new systems and computer programs allow that information hold by public agencies is available to everyone.

As a public agency from Minas Gerais State, TCEMG is proud to have available to society information related to its own revenue and expenditure at Minas Gerais Transparency Portal. As an entity that exists to assure that public resource has been use towards society benefit, TCEMG role in transparency issue gains a greater importance since transparency and accountability are fundamental democratic values.

## **SIAFI – INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

SIAFI: Integrated System of Financial Administration of Minas Gerais State is an information system that integrates, in a single

process, all systems about the elaboration and execution of the budget and financial status of the Minas Gerais state and its bodies . Its purpose is having the electronic processing of activities and the execution of revenue and public expenditure, including all agencies and entities of the executive, legislative and judiciary<sup>(10)</sup>.

The Integrated System of Financial Administration of the State of Minas Gerais (Siafi/MG) has 6.110 users registered in 1.345 units' executors. They are 3.000 points of access and about 180 million transactions per year.

### Data Warehouse – SIAFI

The data warehouse – SIAFI put together the data generated from the system in a single database, allowing the crossing of information and the immediate recovery of the data.

The data warehouse is the central point of the information processing architecture. It was built from a revolutionary way, step by step, organizing and storing the data for analysis and analytical processing. The information enclosed in the data warehouse is made from official data, published and available from government bodies.

The data warehouse stores, in database and in a consolidated form, all data from all the units from Minas Gerais State. It suits the analyze of it in an easy and understanding form using reports, graphs, tables and maps that are available at Minas Gerais Transparency Portal.

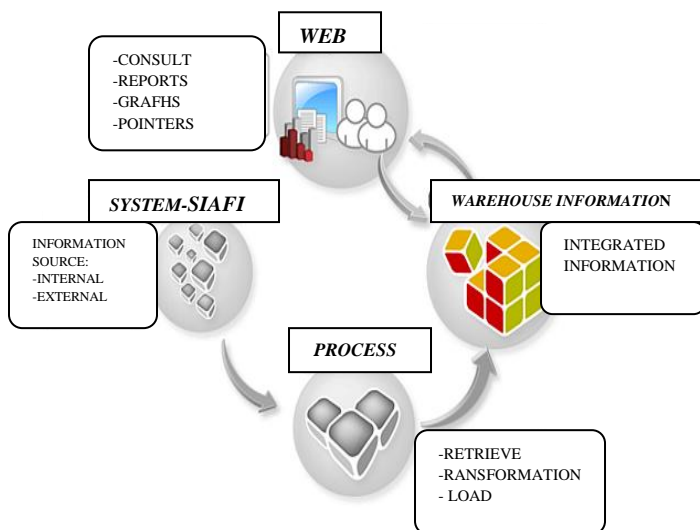


Figure 1: data warehouse

As many scholars of the transparency defend, the information has to be available in an organized form and tools provided to an easily understanding. So, SIAFI system and its Data Warehouse are important contribution that allows public agencies become transparent and accountable.

The advantage of the Data Warehouse is to allow that decisions are taken based in facts. In the truth, it searches and puts available to the organization the great volume of data that had been and are being stored in operational databases spread by all the company<sup>(11)</sup>.

### MINAS GERAIS TRANSPARENCY PORTAL

The portals of transparency maintained by municipalities, state governments and federal agencies make available to the public revenue data and how its money has been spending. It is possible to cross data and numbers to point out any irregularities in the use of public resource. So, the electronic tool enables citizens to demand more from the authorities.

The Minas Gerais Transparency Portal allows citizens to follow the budgetary execution of programs and actions of government, being an inspector of the correct application of the public resources.

As a governmental unit, all information related to Minas Gerais Court of Auditors expense is available at Minas Gerais Transparency Portal in a clear and easy format which is possible only because of SIAFI system.



Figure 2: Minas Gerais Transparency Portal

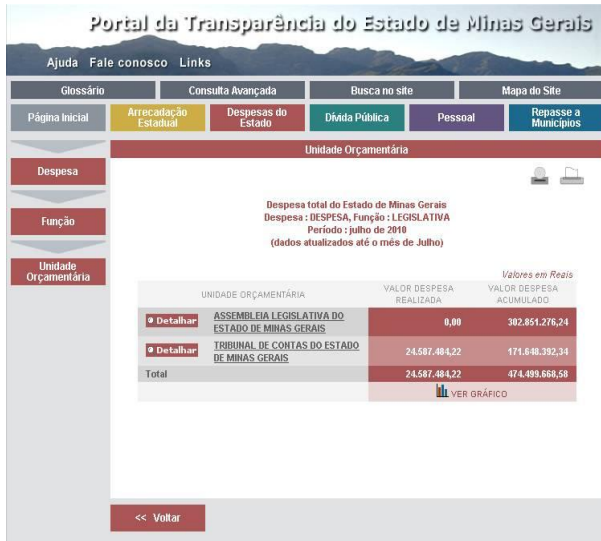


Figure 3: TCEMG expense

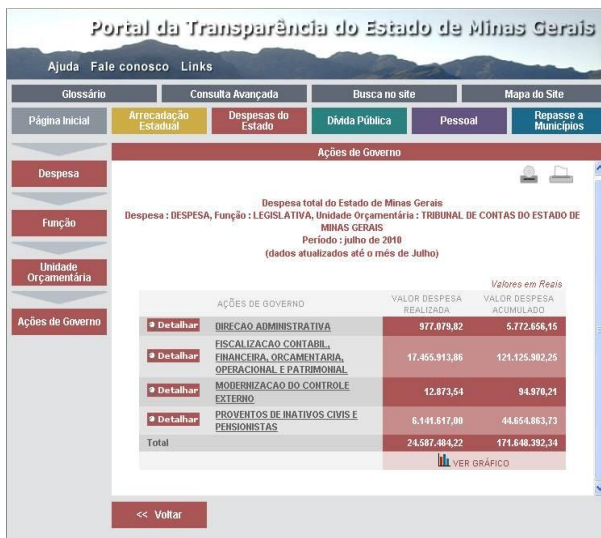


Figure 4: TCEMG expense by sector

## CONCLUSION

The encouragement of public transparency is an essential objective of modern public administration. The expansion of disclosure of government actions to millions of Brazilians, besides contributing to the strengthening of democracy, prestige and develop the notions of citizenship.

Following the transparency idea and believing that citizens has the right to have access to information about how public resource are applied, Minas Gerais Court of Auditors is an institution that seeks to meet new times, working efficiently and dynamically to bring public managers close to citizens. Its control activity together to its transparency nature, bring more efficiency and transparency to public

administration. TCEMG believes that the proper application of public resources will converge in benefits for society and for improving citizenship.

The use of technological resources and the application of new systems and technological knowledge are essential for dealing with such important subject. The internet and all its possibilities together with the development of systems such as SIAFI make real and concrete the transparency dream.

With this in mind, the global vision of the functioning of the many areas that compose a public administration allows to the manager a better planning, a rationalization of the resources and a transparent management. As a result, society has a fair use of public resource towards its benefit.

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