

Executive Summary

The *Centre of Government Review of Brazil* assesses the capacity of Brazil's centre of government (CoG) to manage the design of integrated strategic priorities as well as its to lead whole-of-government co-ordination to implement cross-cutting priorities. Recent governance and administrative reform programmes in Brazil have resulted in significant institutional changes in key public governance functions, including public policy steering, government co-ordination, budgeting, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and public communications. The review focuses on the capacity of the CoG to perform these crucial functions. Brazil's CoG is usually understood to encompass the Presidency of the Republic – including the Personal Cabinet of the President, General Secretariat; the Institutional Security Cabinet, the Civil Cabinet of the Presidency (*Casa Civil*), the Special Secretariat for Strategic Affairs, the Secretariat of Government; and Office of the Attorney-General – as well as the Ministry of Economy, the Special Secretariat for Social Communication in the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Office of the Comptroller-General (CGU).

The CoG's ability to co-ordinate and steer the machinery of government towards common objectives is hindered by two main factors in Brazil. First, in the absence of a clear set of shared priority goals, government action tends to be disjointed and less efficient. The CoG in Brazil would benefit from a limited and well-communicated number of shared goals to effectively mobilise and challenge the public administration. Second, institutional fragmentation and frequent institutional changes have generated overlaps among different entities' functions, limiting the CoG's performance as a manager of government action. The CoG in Brazil could mitigate the effects of this fragmentation by carrying out functional reviews and taking measures to promote continuity through change, including reducing staff turnover.

Mandate overlaps have also hindered the CoG's ability to fulfil its strategic planning function. Over decades, Brazil has developed a well-entrenched planning system and highly trained and skilled staff for planning. However, the planning function has become fragmented across government, which has led to some gaps and overlaps in mandates and activities. This fragmentation is compounded by low levels of institutional collaboration in some areas, which hinders the government's ability to identify clear policy priorities, address multidimensional challenges and achieve its strategic objectives. Moreover, the planning system in Brazil is characterised by a focus on the process, sometimes at the expense of the outcomes. For instance, while the pluriannual plan (PPA) is a well-developed planning instrument outlining objectives and goals for the country over a period of four years, it is often used as reporting tool and does not shape working routines and decision-making processes at the CoG. The CoG could nevertheless bridge that gap between intent and outcomes in two ways. First, the planning process would benefit from prioritisation mechanisms to make sure the government is acting on the most important issues, in a coherent manner and armed with the most relevant evidence. The CoG's ability to foster outcome-oriented strategic planning could also be improved through better alignment and integration of the different planning systems across government.

The ability of the CoG to align the federal budget with planning instruments has proven difficult. The contribution by the planning secretariat at the CoG is largely limited to the preparation of the PPA once every four years; furthermore, there are other long-term plans that are disconnected from budgetary

processes. The legislated allocation of expenditure can be a barrier to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the budget. The Brazilian government could benefit from the Budget Execution Board bringing the outputs of the planning function into the strategic phase of the budget and from designing and implementing a spending review framework to assess the performance of existing expenditure against the relevant policy objectives. The rate of capital investment expenditure by the federal government in Brazil is low relative to the OECD average. The government should ensure that the fiscal risk management framework and reporting regime is available to the Budget Execution Board to inform the decision-making process. Finally, the government has made some progress in enhancing its medium-term expenditure framework. Initiatives in this area should continue in order to support budgetary institutions, such as the fiscal expenditure rule, and the predictability of budget expenditure.

As is the case for co-ordination and strategic planning, the monitoring function of the CoG in Brazil also appears fragmented across several institutional actors, whose skills and capacities for monitoring and evaluation are heterogeneous. In addition, the existing system to track the results of public policies and programmes is primarily used as a reporting system linked to the PPA but is not systematically and effectively fed back into the decision-making process at the CoG. Furthermore, the complexity of the planning and prioritisation system has led to overlapping monitoring units. Beyond the PPA, the data and information being tracked are also subject to weaker assurance mechanisms and barriers to their interoperability. Although monitoring reports are created and published, the publication format does not support its use by policy makers. Developing and harmonising monitoring tools and working routines within Casa Civil, aimed at the implementation of cross-cutting government priorities, will be pivotal to addressing these issues. The creation of the Public Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Council (CMAP) represents a step forward in the creation of an evaluation system. However, there is no clarity on when and how CoG bodies can systematically use the evaluation information generated by CMAP. Developing explicit quality assurance and control mechanisms and promoting the use of evaluation results through a communication strategy can enhance the robustness of the evaluation system.

Finally, the CoG in Brazil has taken important steps toward establishing a strategic communication approach. Notably, it recently reorganised this function to establish 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 under the leadership of the Special Secretariat for Social Communication. As it transitions towards a more strategic communication approach, the government should continue to institutionalise key processes, enhance multi-level co-ordination and professionalise core capabilities. In doing so, the government should 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. It will also be important to communicate participation opportunities to establish an open and meaningful dialogue with the public across the distinct stages of the policy-making process, in particular with vulnerable groups.



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