OPEN DATA IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

According to the definition of the Open Knowledge Foundation – OKF, "Open knowledge is any content, information or data that people are free to use, re-use and redistribute — without any legal, technological or social restriction". The Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) highlight several benefits of data opening initiatives: improvement of public services and more comprehension of government activities; management of public resources that is more efficient; increased responsibility and accountability; increase of public integrity; creation of safer communities; and greater citizen participation in public management.

In addition to the benefits provided, with the enactment of the Access to Information Act (Law 12.527/2011), guarantees foreseen in the Federal Constitution were regulated, making it a citizen's right to receive information of particular interest or of collective or general interest; access to administrative records and acts of the government and the consulting of government management information.

Objective of the survey

This audit, carried out between March and July of 2014, under the modality of Survey, was aimed at knowing the main open data initiatives in the Federal Public Administration (Administração Pública Federal - APF), presenting an outline of an open data policy scenario at national and international levels, as well as presenting international examples which constitute potentialities not yet internally explored.

Key findings of the TCU

International Comparison

Today dozens of countries have adopted as a public policy the opening of data to citizens and entrepreneurs. The index created by the Open Data Barometer considers fourteen areas whose information is the most relevant for the success of the implementation of open data. As shown in the table below, Brazil has been classified as advanced in two areas (detailed census and detailed public expenditure data) and rudimentary in eight (complete official mapping, real estate property at the national level, detailed public budget data, business registration, legislation, public transportation schedules, health and crime statistics performance).

	Brazil	South Africa	Argentina	Chile	China	Columbia	USA	India	UK	Russia
Maps	15	15	45	50	15	76	90	5	100	5
Real estate property	5	15	5	5	15	5	90	0	100	45
Census	75	15	75	0	15	15	80	65	95	60
Public Budget	15	15	15	80	15	15	95	65	95	65
Public Expenditure	80	15	15	80	5	50	80	15	95	75
Business Registration	5	5	5	15	15	15	0	15	100	15
Legislation	15	15	15	80	15	15	95	15	90	15
Public Transportation	0	75	5	15	15	0	75	15	90	15
Internacional commerce	60	15	70	75	15	55	95	65	90	65
Health (performance)	5	15	45	45	15	75	95	65	95	65
Education (performance)	60	0	65	75	15	45	85	65	95	50
Crime statistics	5	15	5	15	5	0	85	15	95	65
Environmental statistics	60	0	60	5	15	45	100	65	95	15
Election results	65	75	95	15	0	15	95	15	95	15

Obs.: The values obtained for each item evaluated were colored in the blue/white/red scale, in which the blue tones reflect the best rates and the red, the worst.

This same data enables the use by companies, nongovernmental organizations, researchers and other interested parties that may create their own visualizations and applications, something that governmental organizations may not have the necessary resources or interest to develop.

One of the most powerful tools gaining momentum is the so-called big data. It is a computational technique to process, analyze and correlate enormous masses of data, from various sources, even if they have different computational structures or are unstructured. Such techniques are already widely used by financial institutions and large companies to predict behavior and drive investment to the most favorable public. It was found that its use by the Federal Public Administration was still small, a result boosted by weaknesses in the opening of data to public organizations. Consequently, the use of public data by the private sector is also reduced.

Brazilian Initiatives

The research on open data initiatives in the federal sphere showed heterogeneity of the level of openness among agencies and entities of the APF.

The Brazilian Open Data Portal (www.dados.gov.br) contains a catalogue of open data produced or held in custody by public administration entities, including technical guidance on the topic, aimed at the internal public as well as at society, especially the application developers.

Another site related to the topic is the Transparency Portal (www.portaltransparencia.gov.br), administered by the Comptroller General of the Union to increase transparency of public administration and public oversight. The site provides multiple sets of data in an open format, allowing the user to obtain spreadsheets with the data presented in the portal (public revenue and expenditures, details of agreements and public servants).

Among the Brazilian entities providing data and information, there are the initiatives of the Institute of Applied Economic Research (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada - Ipea), which allow access to data from statistical series generated by it or in its custody (IpeaData - http://www.ipeadata.gov.br/). The information covers economic, financial, demographic, geographic and social indicators data, and can be consulted by themes, data sources and other filters. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in turn, provides information from official data from research carried out by it and other government sources.

TCU's Deliberations

The recommendation to the Department of External Control of Information Technology (Secretaria de Fiscalização de Tecnologia da Informação - Sefti) was that, in attention to the possible actions identified in the survey, it examine the feasibility of including in future audit plans, oversight actions aimed at verifying the implementation of the policy of data opening in the APF units. There was also a recommendation to carry out actions to promote those units' awareness of concepts, objectives, legislation, indicators, risks and governing structures related to the topic of open data.

Expected benefits

The main benefit resulting from the audit consists of bringing to the knowledge of APF and of society a framework of possibilities of actions involving the opening of data and its potential benefits, as well as the eventual losses in its omission.

Judgment

Judgment: 2.569/2014-TCU-Plenary

Date of session: 1/10/2014

Rapporteur: Minister Benjamin Zymler

TC: 005.003/2014-8

Technical Unit responsible: Department of External Control of Information Technology (Secretaria de Fiscalização de Tecnologia da Informação - Sefti)