
EGOV OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE BRAZILIAN PROSECUTING COUNSEL: CONTEXT AND POSSIBILITIES

OPORTUNIDADES E DESAFIOS EM EGOV PARA O MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO BRASILEIRO: CONTEXTO E POSSIBILIDADES.

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Abstract: Any functioning society is based on an efficient and effective legislative, executive, and judicial branch of government. In Brazil, the Prosecuting Counsel – or the “Ministério Público” – is an integral part of the country’s Justice System, not only responsible for playing the traditional role in crime prosecution but also working judicially and extra-judicially in a wide range of civil issues such as the environment, health, education, consumer rights defence, cultural heritage, and minority rights. Globally, justice systems are rarely seen as innovative front-runners but are often seen as bureaucratic, complex, non-transparent, and costly.

Brazil is no exception. Thus, a well-functioning justice system must proactively solve pain points, including its governance model, legal and regulatory framework, processes, services, and organizational setup. Governance may be optimised by the use of innovative application of information technology, often referred to as e-Governance (EGOV). EGOV initiatives presents both opportunities and unique challenges for a national justice system, the prosecuting counsel, and other actors. Based on IT initiatives applied to the core functions of the prosecuting counsel, considered as EGOV initiatives, this article outlines and discusses the opportunities and challenges emerging for the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel institutions. The analysis finds that these institutions perform better in EGOV objectives, such as improving service delivery, strengthen their relationship with citizens, and increasing efficiency. However, the application of Information Technology tools still fails to increase their accountability.

Keywords: e-Governance; EGOV; EGOV strategies; EGOV opportunities; EGOV challenges.

Resumo: Qualquer sociedade funcional baseia-se nos Poderes Legislativo, Executivo e Judiciário eficientes e eficazes. No Brasil, o Ministério Público é parte integrante do Sistema de Justiça do país, responsável tanto por desempenhar o papel tradicional na persecução criminal como também por atuar judicial e extrajudicialmente em uma ampla gama de questões civis, como o ambiente, a saúde, a educação, a defesa dos direitos do consumidor, o patrimônio cultural e os direitos das minorias. Globalmente, os sistemas judiciais raramente são vistos como líderes inovadores, mas são frequentemente vistos como burocráticos, complexos, pouco transparentes e dispendiosos. O Brasil não é exceção. Assim, um sistema judicial que funcione bem deve resolver proativamente pontos problemáticos como o seu modelo de governança, o quadro regulamentar, seus processos, serviços e estrutura organizacional. A governança pode ser otimizada através da aplicação inovadora da tecnologia de informação, normalmente designada por e-Governança (EGOV). Na verdade, as iniciativas EGOV são uma oportunidade, mas podem trazer

desafios únicos para o Sistema de Justiça, para o Ministério Público e para outros atores do sistema. Com base em iniciativas que envolvem TI aplicadas às funções centrais do Ministério Público, consideradas iniciativas do EGOV, este artigo discute as oportunidades e desafios que emergem para as instituições do Ministério Público brasileiro. O estudo conclui que o Ministério Público tem melhor desempenho nos objetivos do EGOV, tais como melhorar a prestação de serviços, melhorar o seu relacionamento com os cidadãos e aumentar a eficiência. Contudo, a aplicação de ferramentas de tecnologia da informação ainda não consegue aprimorar a sua responsabilização.

Palavras-chave: e-Governança; EGOV; Estratégias de EGOV; Oportunidades em EGOV; Desafios em EGOV.

Summary: Introduction. 1 E-Government versus E-Governance (EGOV). 2 Public Policies. 3 The role of Strategies in the Public Sector. 4 EGOV Strategies. 5 Reaching EGOV objectives: the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel performance. 6 Data Analysis and Results. 7 Conclusion: Opportunities and Challenges. Acknowledgments. References.

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INTRODUCTION

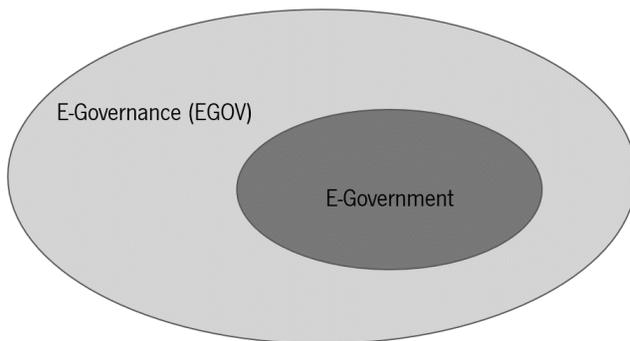
In the past two decades, there has been a widespread trend of adding the letter “e” in front of words such as government, democracy, justice, commerce, business, education, etc. Regarding e-government its roots lie in the late 20th century, and since then, new information technologies have been swiftly applied to all levels of government (Acharya et al., 2008; Rabaiah; Vandijck, 2009).

The application of Information Technology (IT) at “all levels of government” created a range of similar terms such as e-government, electronic government, e-governance, electronic governance, and EGOV, with all of them being used interchangeably. Digital government and digital governance are also common terms, with the word “digital” playing the same role as “electronic”, with rare exceptions.

In this article the acronym EGOV is used to refer to e-Governance, the public sector’s use of IT to improve information and service delivery, encourage citizen participation in the decision-making process, and make governments more accountable, transparent, and effective (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019). Here, the term government isn’t as broad as usual but reduced for the institutions that are part of the judicial system, namely the prosecuting counsel or the Brazilian “Ministério Público.”

E-Governance (EGOV) is a comprehensive concept that encompasses, but goes beyond, what is often named “e-government” (Bannister; Connolly, 2012), which is focused on the use of IT to deliver government services more effectively and efficiently to citizens and businesses (United Nations, 2019). Figure 1 represents EGOV as a broader concept than e-government.

Figure 1: E-Governance (EGOV): a broader concept than e-government (Bannister; Connolly, 2012).



The association of IT with government and governance is no simple task. The complexity of promoting accountable, effective, inclusive, transparent, and trustworthy public services that deliver people-centric outcomes is growing (United Nations, 2018). The modern world has brought new opportunities and challenges to many personal and business areas; for the government or the justice system institutions, it is no different. It is unclear how the core government functions, such as public services and infrastructure providing or formulating and implementing public policies, should be performed in the physical and digital worlds (Janowski, 2015).

A strategic approach seems necessary, which reminds us of the traditional strategic alignment between IT and correspondent organisational business (Henderson; Venkatraman, 1999). Indeed, “if IT is heavily involved in reform, it too must be planned strategically (Heeks, 2006a)”, paying attention to the fact that the growing contribution of EGOV to public sector

reform processes represents a strategic change. Investments in information technology by the public sector should be aligned with the expectations of government authorities and citizens. This subject has been discussed under the governance of information technology studies for a while. According to Campbell, McDonald and Sethibe (2009), it is “valuable to understand the extent to which IT is aligned with the objectives of different government agencies” once it collaborates to e-governance initiative success, especially in promoting long-term solutions and supporting its effectiveness (Luciano; Macadar; Wiedenhoft, 2016).

A discussion involving EGOV is impossible to separate from IT. However, it is not an IT-technical article, a review of definitions and concepts that lay down the conceptual basis should be done. Fundamental concepts like e-Government and e-Governance (EGOV), as the concepts of Government and Governance, should be clearly stated.

1 E-GOVERNMENT VERSUS E-GOVERNANCE (EGOV)

E-Government and e-Governance (EGOV) are easily understood, and their potential come across after comprehending the functions and processes involved in the concepts of government and governance. The functions refer to all legal, political, and administrative organisations and stakeholders that control a State (Sandoval-Almazán et al., 2017) and comprise the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary branches in typical democracies.

The President leads the Executive branch, while the Legislative branch is composed of the members of the parliament, and the Judiciary is formed not only by judges, prosecutors, but also other professionals who play different roles in the justice system. This list of government actors may alter, depending on the country's organization. Government is a dynamic mix of goals, structures, and functions to maintain many government functions, for instance, collective security, the administration of justice, the provision of the institutional infrastructure of the economy and society, and ensuring maintenance or improvements in health, education, and communities lives (Center For Technology in Government; University at Albany, 1999).

The concept of government usually goes along with another important term: governance. Governance encompasses decision-making and how decisions are implemented, involving stakeholders and organisations, formal and informal, to accomplish the decisions. If the governance process runs without complications, it is usually referred to as “good governance”, having significant characteristics of being participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and inclusive, and following the rule of law (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2000). The concept of governance can be separated into two components: structural and normative.

Structural governance “encompasses things such as processes, structures, lines of authority, laws, regulations, stakeholders, forms

of communication and responsibilities – the mechanisms by which power is exercised, decisions made, a policy is created or changed, and its implementation achieved (Bannister; Connolly, 2012)”. It is about how the government executes its functions and public policies. Normative governance consists of “the set of value-related features of structural governance including transparency, accountability, integrity, honesty, impartiality, efficiency (p.7)”.

Institutions and academic authors have proposed many definitions for e-Government and e-Governance (EGOV). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines it as using information and communications technologies, particularly the Internet, to achieve better government (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2003). The World Bank defines e-government as government agencies’ use of information technologies, such as wide area networks, the Internet, and mobile computing, that can transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government (World Bank, 2016). These broad definitions allow only the conclusion that e-government is about applying Information Technology within the government. The United Nations takes it further; according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – UNDESA, e-government is the use and application of information technologies in public administration to streamline and integrate workflows and processes, manage data and information effectively, enhance public service delivery, as well as expand communication channels for engagement and

empowerment of people (United Nations, 2014). This definition is ample and includes aspects of the governance process, namely e-Governance (EGOV).

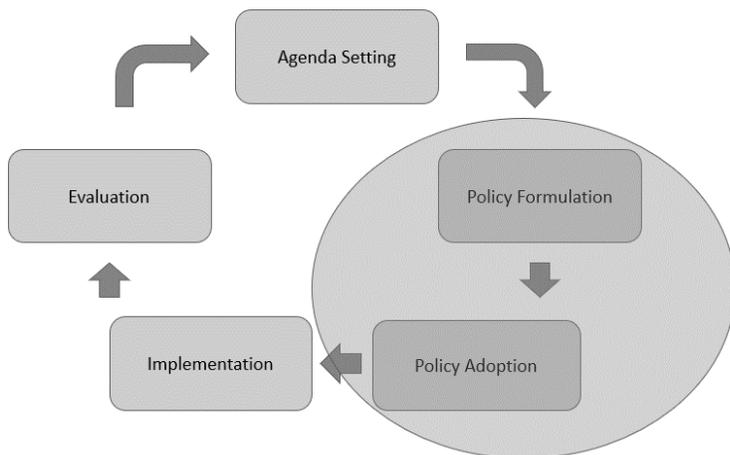
EGOV is “the use of IT to support the execution of States’ multiple governance activities in its different aspects – Politics, Administration and Society (Alarabiat et al., 2018)”, including the use of IT to support public services, government administration, democratic processes, and relationships among citizens, civil society, the private sector, and the state (Dawes, 2008). It is the application of technology by the government to transform itself and its interactions with customers to create an impact on society (Estevez; Janowski, 2013). EGOV objectives, therefore, can be considered the application of IT to: a) make the government more efficient; b) improve public service delivery; c) make the government more accountable; and d) improve the relationship between citizens and businesses within the public sector. (Alarabiat et al., 2018; Mkude; Wimmer, 2013; Ojo; Janowski, 2011; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019).

The list of EGOV objectives is in line with values of good governance, which qualify the structural governance, that is, how the government executes its functions and public policies. In this context, there is worth in analysing how public policies and EGOV are connected.

2 PUBLIC POLICIES

As governments have adopted information technology as a facilitator for reform, transformation and modernization of governance activity (Carvalho; Soares, 2018), it is reasonable to link them to the policy lifecycle (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019). The policy lifecycle is a particular sequence that government stakeholders can use to comprehend and implement the policy task (Bridgman; Davis, 2003). Its goal is to simplify the complexity of public policy-making by identifying both its fundamental processual and cyclical nature (Howlett, 2018).

As illustrated in Figure 2, the first stage in policy-making refers to identifying a public problem, which requires the state to intervene. Those public problems chosen by the decision-makers constitute the policy agenda. The second stage of the policy cycle, policy formulation, deals with elaborating action alternatives. This involves defining, discussing, accepting, or rejecting feasible courses of action for dealing with policy problems. The third phase is policy adoption, which refers to the formal assumption of a policy (Knill; Tosun, 2008). Generally, policy formulation is strongly related to policy adoption, and a clear-cut distinction between them is often impossible.

Figure 2: The policy cycle. Adapted from (Knill; Tosun, 2008)

The implementation stage consists in converting public policy into practice through strategies, programs, and projects. Without proper implementation, the policy has neither substance nor significance; thus, policy success depends on how well administrative structures implement government decisions. After a policy has been implemented, it becomes the subject of evaluation, providing a feedback loop that enables decision-makers to draw lessons from each policy. Strategies are essential to the government's actions (Johanson, 2019).

Even when a public policy is proposed in the form of programs and projects, it is common to have a plan for its implementation. If this plan is devised with typical strategy components, such as a diagnosis, clear objectives, and a vision, it can be considered a

strategy. Indeed, strategic management is an interesting crossing point between politics and public administration (Johanson, 2019).

Real EGOV cases have already passed all phases, from agenda setting and problem definition to policy preparation, policy-making, policy implementation, and evaluation (Janssen; Rothier; Snijkers, 2018). The correlation between EGOV and the public policy cycle is not new. There are success stories about the relationship between EGOV and policy agenda setting, as well as good examples of practices and alternatives from supporting policy formulation to offering comparative data to support policy evaluation, improving future policy-making (Alarabiat et al., 2018). EGOV initiatives seek policy goals such as the search for efficiency and savings, benefiting the government; for effectiveness and quality services, benefiting the constituents; and for good governance, contributing to generating benefits for society (De Angelis; Polzonetti; Tapanelli, 2010).

Implementing a public policy through the formulation of a strategy is a common practice, and public policies related to the EGOV are a reality in the government, making necessary to study how strategic management occurs in the public sector scenario.

3 THE ROLE OF STRATEGIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

A strategy is a clear plan developed consciously and purposefully, made before the specific decisions it applies to (Mintzberg, 1978). This plan is also characterised by analytical, formal, and logical processes through which organisations scan the

internal and external environment and develop policy options that differ from the status quo (Andrews et al., 2009). Two concepts are involved in this definition: strategy process and strategy content, concepts that are different but complementary. While the strategy process reflects how alternatives and actions are selected (Hart, 1992), strategy content is the outcome of this process (Johanson, 2019).

Strategic planning, part of strategic management, has become an increasingly widespread reality in governments and public agencies (Janowski, 2015). Developing strategies to convert public policies into action is expected in any country. The challenges of defining clear, uniform goals or accurate performance metrics for government activities are complex (Johanson, 2019) and generally demand specialised skills in strategic management by politicians and public officials. It is a practice of making strategies, thinking about prospects, combining available resources in a novel fashion, and establishing links to others in the external environment (Bryson; Edwards, 2017).

These authors systematised the features that characterise the public-sector strategic planning. The list of features is presented in the following points:

- Pay attention to the context, including the decision-making environment.
- Analyse the requirements, purposes, and goals related to political, legal, administrative, ethical, and environmental scenarios.

- Focus on a broad agenda, moving to specific themes afterwards.
- Use a systematic observation to understand the dynamics of the overall scenario to be planned.
- Listen to as many government stakeholders as possible, including elected, appointed, and public officials.
- Involve multiple sectors of society in the process of strategy formulation.
- Focus on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, competitive and collaborative capabilities, and advantages.
- Analyse how the impact of strategies will influence the future.
- Pay attention to the challenges that may occur in the strategy implementation.

These guidelines contain suggestions related to the formulation phase of strategic management. However, the list also contains implications about strategy implementation, a distinct phase of strategic management. Indeed, there is no strategy without its implementation or execution, in which the plan is implemented to achieve the specified aims most efficiently (Olivier; Schwella, 2018).

Just like the public policies, a phase is dedicated to evaluating the strategy execution. By understanding progress, or the lack of it, through proper evaluation, it is possible to appropriately respond and learn from successes and failures (Olivier; Schwella, 2018). It is a fact that something that cannot be measured cannot

be managed and improved (Walrad; Moss, 1993). Measurements and benchmarking are essential to indicate advances in public policies and strategy execution.

Strategic management comprises different and complementary phases, formulation and implementation (Bryson; Edwards; Van Slyke, 2018). These processes differ in scope, with the differentiation being important to define the scope of a method related to strategic management. Typically, each phase has different methods and frameworks, which also apply to EGOV strategies.

4 EGOV STRATEGIES

The broad scope of the EGOV concept suggests that transforming the related public policies into practice is not a simple task. It reflects the traditional pressures governments face, but are widened by the digital world context. In this scenario, the “landscape is continuously changing to reflect how governments are trying to find innovative digital solutions to social, economic, political and other pressures” (Janowski, 2015). Governments develop strategies to face the challenge (Nilsen, 2020; Rabaiah; Vandijck, 2009, Boyne; Walker, 2004).

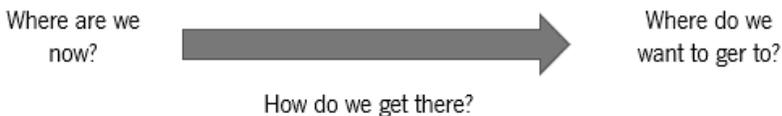
The construction of these strategies is a reality for both developed and developing countries since they embarked on e-government initiatives in their modernisation activities (Mkude; Wimmer, 2013). International institutions seem to encourage the strategic approach, as occurred in the World Summit on the Information Society, an event promoted by the United Nations,

which motivated governments to develop national digital strategies (Sandoval- Almazán et al., 2017). Today, 151 of the 193 United Nations Member States have a digital strategy (United Nations Department Of Economic And Social Affairs, 2020).

EGOV strategies are plans for government systems and their supporting infrastructure, which maximises the ability of management to achieve organisational objectives (Heeks, 2006b). It is a top-level document that addresses strategic directions, goals, components, principles, and implementation guidelines (Rabaiah; Vandijck, 2009). The content of a strategy may change, but several components are common, such as a vision, programs, projects, and an evaluation process (Mkude; Wimmer, 2013). Although these authors use the term “E-Government” to refer to the strategies, their scope to refer to e-Government agrees with the concept of EGOV used in this study.

An EGOV strategy can be formulated guided by questions such as “Where are we now?”, “Where do we want to get to?” and “How do we get there?” (Heeks, 2006a), as Figure 3 illustrates.

Figure 3: Questions that guide the formulation of an EGOV strategy (HEEKS, 2006a).



To answer these questions, the EGOV strategists should consider the country context and the previously stated EGOV objectives.

5 REACHING EGOV OBJECTIVES: THE BRAZILIAN PROSECUTING COUNSEL PERFORMANCE.

The Brazilian Prosecution Counsel is a unique institution. Not only plays the traditional role in crime prosecution, it also works judicially and extra-judicially in various civil issues such as the environment, health, education, consumer rights defence, cultural heritage, and minority rights (Rodrigues, 2016). Brazil is structured with national and subnational governments. Three prosecuting counsels work independently at the national level: the Ministério Público Federal, Ministério Público do Trabalho, and Ministério Público Militar. Other 27 work at the subnational level in each of the 27 Brazilian States. There are 30 prosecuting counsels in Brazil in total.

On December 30, 2004, the Conselho Nacional do Ministério Público (CNMP) was created by the constitutional amendment 45/2004 to “control administrative and financial activities.” Since then, CNMP has exercised the “control” in different ways, including promoting good administrative practices through national awards. In this context, in May 2013, Resolution No. 94 created the CNMP Award to identify, award and spread well-succeed programs and projects executed at the Brazilian prosecuting counsel, aligned with the national strategy, which contributed to the institutional efficiency and the provision of public services for the society. For

this article, all programs, projects and good practices catalogued by the CNMP, will be referred to as “initiative”.

The initiatives are categorized into areas such as Investigation and Intelligence; Civil and Criminal Prosecution; Integration and Articulation; Transversality of Fundamental Rights; Supervision of Public Policies and Resources; Dialogue with Society; Governance and Management; Sustainability; and a called “Special Category” according to the decision of the steering commission.

Following Resolution 94/2013, CNMP maintains a database of the initiatives called “Banco Nacional de Proyectos (BNP)”. In August 2023, 3,263 initiatives from 2012 to 2021 were catalogued. The BNP database has been used in multiple screening processes to investigate the opportunities and challenges for the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel, including unveiling the current context and possibilities.

In the first screening step, all initiatives were analysed for a better understanding of the context. As the most relevant initiatives were awarded, this was set as the first filter, resulting in 2,410 initiatives for analysis. Considering this number still represented a large number of initiatives, mainly because of the long 10-years span and the multiplicity of categories along with that period, the filtering procedure must continue. As EGOV initiatives are naturally innovative and therefore sensitive about how much time has passed since their launch, initiatives included in the BNP over the last 3 years were chosen. This resulted in 53 initiatives that were carefully analysed with the main question, “Does the initiative contribute to achieving any of EGOV’s objectives?”.

The analysis included checking all data available at BNP, including the initiative's description, impacted group of citizens, and results. Four subsequent questions drove the subsequent analysis. These questions, presented below, were related to the EGOV objectives according to the literature presented in this article, adapted to the prosecuting counsel context.

A primary and first question was set to determine if the initiative could be considered an EGOV initiative. To reach this purpose, the question "Does the initiative mainly use an IT tool to reach its objective?" was applied to 53 initiatives. After this first filter, the following questions conducted the study across them to identify the main EGOV goal associated with each one of their objectives:

- a) Has the initiative made the prosecuting counsel more efficient?
- b) Has the initiative improved the prosecuting counsel service delivery?
- c) Has the initiative made the prosecuting counsel more accountable?
- d) Has the initiative improved the relationship between citizens within the prosecuting counsel?

6 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The investigation results are presented below, supported by the data in Tables 1, 2, and 3. The data was collected from the catalogued initiatives archived in 2019, 2020, and 2021 at the Banco Nacional de Projetos (BNP). Initiatives were recovered

using the BNP's built-in search engine, selecting those years and selecting the "Awarded Only" checkbox. Table 1 shows the recovered data according to these parameters.

Table 1: (Awarded) Initiatives catalogued by CNMP from 2019-2021.

Awarded-Initiatives at Banco Nacional de Projetos (BNP): 2019-2021						
Year(s) of Publication	EGOV Initiatives		Not-EGOV Initiatives		Total	
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
2019	5	31%	11	69%	16	100%
2020	8	50%	8	50%	16	100%
2021	12	57%	9	43%	21	100%
2019-2021	25	47%	28	53%	53	100%

The analysis shows that 25 (47%) initiatives catalogued from 2019 to 2021 that could be considered EGOV initiatives, i.e., mainly use or apply information technology to support their aims. Results show that the rate of EGOV compared to not-EGOV initiatives rises along with the years, starting at 31% (5 of a total of 16) in 2019, passing by 50% (8 of 16) in 2020, achieving 57% (12 of 9 initiatives) in 2021. It shows a clear trend from not-EGOV towards EGOV-initiative in the set of awarded ones catalogued at the CNMP's BNP, and a constantly and sustainably increase in the application of IT for the core functions of the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel.

A non-exhaustive set of examples (16 of 25 initiatives) of those initiatives are presented in TABLE 2. It should be noted that the initiatives are not exclusively of a particular institution but from many prosecuting counsels, with examples of EGOV initiatives from institutions located at multiple regions, something relevant for a continental country like Brazil. Brazil is divided into five regions, 27 states (Federal District included), and more than 5,000 municipalities grouped in these states.

Table 2: Example of EGOV initiatives (awarded only; 2019-2021). Source: CNMP/Banco Nacional de Projetos (BNP)

Year	Examples of EGOV initiatives at Banco Nacional de Projetos (BNP)	Prosecuting Counsel
2019	Alcatraz: combate às facções criminosas	MP.RN
	Aplicativo Mapa do Racismo e da Intolerância Religiosa	MP.BA
	Aplicativo SOS Mulher	MP.AC
	Observatório das Políticas Públicas Infantojuvenis do Estado do RJ e dos seus 92 municípios.	MP.RJ
2020	De Olho no Remédio!	MP.PR
	Robô da Ficha Limpa	MP.MS
	De Olho no Transporte Legal!	MP.AL
	Laboratório de Ciência de Dados	MP.RN

Year	Examples of EGOV initiatives at Banco Nacional de Projetos (BNP)	Prosecuting Counsel
2021	Aplicativo Projeto Luz	MP.MT
	Projeto Memória e Ação	MPF1
	Sistema de Inteligência Artificial – AppCrim	MP.PA
	MPCE: Uso de IA para combate à Violência Doméstica	MP.CE

¹MPF is the National Prosecuting Counsel, acting at the “Federal” Level.

Each of the 25 selected initiatives was further analysed to identify the main contribution to one EGOV objective. Even if the initiative aimed to achieve more EGOV objectives, only a match representing the main contribution was counted. Questions 1 to 4, previously presented in the literature sections, were used to proceed.

The analysis results are shown in Table 3. Most of the initiatives – 13 in total – contribute to improving service delivery. Service delivery typically relates to front-office activities that citizens easily perceive, which is a remarkable strength for the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel. Moreover, the results also show that eight initiatives make the prosecuting counsel more efficient. Although there is a clear impact on front-office activities, when efficiency is assessed, the evaluation typically involves back-office activities, for example, shared services that promote better use of resources that impact the results of the whole Institution. Bannister and Connolly (2012) remember that it is part of structural governance, encompassing processes and structures, regulations, stakeholders, and forms of communication and responsibilities.

Table 3: Initiative contribution to (one of the) EGOV objectives.

#	EGOV Objective	Number of initiatives
1	Make the prosecuting counsel more efficient.	8
2	Improve the prosecuting counsel service delivery.	13
3	Make the prosecuting counsel more accountable.	0
4	Improved the relationship between citizens within the prosecuting counsel.	4
	Total	25

Lastly, four initiatives improve the relationship between citizens and the prosecuting counsel. It is what the WORLD BANK (2016) refers to as “transforming” the relationship between citizens and the government arms (WORLD BANK, 2016). Unfortunately, no initiative was focused on making the prosecuting counsel more accountable. Again, it is important to recover the set of value-related features of governance that can be improved by this EGOV objective, such as transparency, integrity, and impartiality (Bannister; Connolly, 2012).

7 CONCLUSIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

This article intended to contribute to the strength of the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel – or the “Ministério Público” – in EGOV initiatives. Based on the selection of awards initiatives collected from the Conselho Nacional do Ministério Público – CNMP, named those catalogued on the Banco Nacional de Projetos

(BNP), the study tried to identify a range of practices that contribute to EGOV objectives according to the research framework: a) making the government more efficient, b) improving the public service delivery, c) making the government more accountable, and d) improving the relationship between citizens, and businesses, within the public sector.

Four key questions associated with these objectives were set to screen the data available at BNP, unveiling that the Brazilian “Ministério Público” performs better in EGOV objectives, such as improving service delivery, improving its relationship with citizens, and increasing efficiency, but still fails to increase its accountability through the application of information technology tools. As the results highlight a strengthening in service delivery and efficiency, it also shows a weakness and an opportunity for future projects to promote the Institution’s accountability.

The result can be interpreted as presenting both opportunities and challenges. Justice systems are rarely seen as innovative front-runners but are often perceived as bureaucratic, complex, in-transparent, and costly. EGOV initiatives can contribute to a well-functioning justice system by optimising governance through innovative application of information technology. Therefore, if the Brazilian Prosecuting Counsel seize these opportunities while facing the challenges, the Institution can contribute to enhancing the whole Justice System, fostering similar actors to develop – in their particular role of acting – similar EGOV initiatives which contribute to improving the system widely. Finally, a strategic

approach involving all these players should be interesting, as detailed in the literature section of this study.

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