Sustainability of the Brazilian Economy Using the System Public Funds Transfers in SICONV

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Abstract

Decree No. 6,170/2007 regulated agreements, transfer agreements and terms of decentralized execution signed by federal public administration's organs and entities with organs or, public or private nonprofit entities for the implementation of programs, projects and activities involving the transfer of resources and decentralization of credits arising from the Union's Fiscal and Social Security Budget; and created the Agreements and Transfer Agreements Management System - SICONV, open to the public, through the Portal of Agreements. SICONV initiated a new era in public and private entities signing agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership celebrated with Union's resources. This initiative automated transfers' processes, since all procedures are now performed and recorded in this system. SICONV covers all operations of the voluntary transfers life cycle, from the provision of resources to accountability, and it is seamlessly integrated with the main structuring systems of the Federal Government. Thus, SICONV established itself in the Public Administration as a major transformation system that enabled and consolidated changes in many patterns and concepts - currently already established - of how voluntary transfers were executed.

Keywords: Information Technology, Government Information Systems, Public Management, Public Administration, Knowledge Management

1. Introduction

Since 1966, with the introduction of the Brazilian Tax Code establishing general rules of tax law applicable to the Union, States and Municipalities, the Union got to collect most of the taxes, thus allowing their use in programs set by Federal Government. After the change, the Federal Government introduced Constitutional, Legal and Voluntary transfers as means of resources decentralization, given the Feds difficulty of directly acting across the country.

The decentralization model of financial resources through voluntary transfers adopted, did not, originally, contemplated the systematization and automation of processes, resulting in nonexistence of standards for the management of such transfers by grantor organs, causing inefficiencies in registration procedures, monitoring and controlling, and lack of information transparency.

Added to this, grantor organs were developing their own solutions, with individual character goal, for the management and control of information about voluntary transfers. These isolated initiatives powered the maintenance of decentralization and did not provide sufficient information to the federal government to handle this information in a standardized way.

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Thus, based on the model adopted for the decentralization of federal resources, the Union needed to develop a tool capable of performing the control of voluntary transfers, strengthening the federal pact by providing greater financial stability in the distribution of revenues to States and Municipalities, in a fair and democratic manner.

In January 1987, the Financial Management System of the Federal Government -SIAFI, developed by the National Treasury - STN in conjunction with the Data Processing Service - SERPRO started its operations.

With the implementation of SIAFI, the Federal Public Administration now had an important tool for monitoring and controlling Federal Government's budget, financial, asset and accounting execution, as outlined by (Feijó et al., 2006):

"The Integrated System of Financial Administration - SIAFI is the computerized system that processes and controls budget, financial, assets, and accounting execution of the Union. SIAFI was implemented in 1987, becoming, since then, an important instrument for monitoring and controlling Federal Government's budget, financial, assets and accounting execution. Today, it is recognized, among its counterparts in the world, as one of the largest and most comprehensive public finance management tool in operation." (Emphasis added)

SIAFI implementation brought additional benefits: i) improvement of the control methods of budgetary and financial resources; ii) standardization of Management information at all levels of the Federal Public Administration; and iii) execution of financial book keeping in real time, providing the ability to generate Budgetary, Financial and Assets statements at any time.

Its main activity was and still is, the Federal Public Administration's accounting control and does not include the required systematization for the management of voluntary transfer's processes.

As a result, and given the need for greater control and transparency in the Union voluntary transfer's processes, in mid-2004, the Department of Logistics and Information Technology of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management - SLTI / MP started the development of a system focused on the management of agreements, resulting in the prototype Covenants Management System and Transfer Contracts - SICONV.

The project to create the SICONV was driven by the need for standardization and optimization of processes and also in the light of evidence of irregularities found in audits conducted by the Union's Accounts Tribunal (TCU) in adjustments celebrated between the Union and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or entities of indirect administration, since 1999. In such audits were explained the difficulties of controlling the execution and accountability¹ for voluntary transfers done by the Federal Government.

In this context, TCU, through Decision No. 2066/2006 - Plenary, issued the corresponding following determination:

"9.1. Determine to the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management, in order to allow for

¹ Responsibility of managers and leaders to account for their actions on a regular basis to society, not restricted to quantitative aspects but also including an assessment of the work and considering what was done, how it was done and why it was done.

transparency that should be given to public actions, to facilitate social control and to attend the principle of publicity inscribed in art. 37 of the 1988 Federal Constitution combined with art. 5, subsection XXXIII of the same Constitution, within 180 (one hundred and eighty) days submit to this Court a technical study for computer system implementation on web platform that allows online tracking of all agreements and other legal instruments used to transfer federal funds to other organs/entities, States and Municipalities, federal agencies and private sector entities, which can be accessed by any citizen via the worldwide web, containing details of signed instruments, especially data about contracting party, [.....], the financial execution with executed expenses analytically broken down by supplier and a form for denunciation collection; "

Faced with the determination of the court of accounts and the need to implement a system that meets the precepts relating to transparency, management and standardization of acts related to the process of voluntary transfers, the Federal Government issued Decree No. 6170 of 25 July 2007, regulated through the Inter ministerial MP/MF/MCT No. 127 of May 29, 2008, and later by the Ministerial Decree No. 507 of November 24, 2011.

Thus, SICONV was developed to consolidate a clearer integration basis for all involved and to make the process more transparent for civil society (accountability), as well as, reduce operating costs; automate the entire life cycle of transfers; facilitate monitoring and control; simplify, streamline and standardize procedures and generate interoperability with other government structural systems².

With the enactment of Law No. 12,527/2011, entitled "Access to Information Act" - LAI, which main objective is to regulate the constitutional right of citizens to access information generated or stored by public organs, it is evident that SICONV design guidelines are in line with the premises set out in this law and voluntary transfers data recorded in the system is already available on the Transparency Portal of the Federal Government.

The availability of SICONV the world wide web (Internet), through the Portal of Agreements, at www.convenios.gov.br, can be considered a breakthrough by the Federal Government, since this initiative promoted the relationship among all actors involved into voluntary transfer's processes. It strengthened this relationship and offered society higher levels of transparency and social control over the allocation of resources, which promoted the rupture of many established paradigms.

With the availability of this new platform, it became clear that the decentralization of resources has become more democratic, as all agencies responsible for implementation of public policies involving resources transfers through agreements, transfer contracts and terms of partnership should annually publish on the Agreements Portal a list of governmental programs, increasing transparency of the process of decentralization of these public resources. This manner of disclosure allows all involved and interested parties to have full and unrestricted knowledge of the rules and criteria that underlie the choice of partners who execute public policies at national, regional or local level.

In addition to the transparency provided by the disclosure of rules and criteria when programs are published, it can be verified that after SICONV implementation, the

² Systems with focus on unified management of the State. Examples are SIAFI, SIASG, SIAPE, among others.

process of presentation of proposals/work plans gained agility, given that all proposals are sent electronically, offering all bidders an equal basis to plead for federal resources to implement projects and activities of common interest, provided that they meet specific criteria of the programs they applied for.

Moreover, SICONV lets any citizen consult voluntary transfers of federal government through the World Wide Web, allowing society's control over the use of public resources in line with constitutional principles sculptured in the caput Art. 37 of the Constitution, namely, legality, impersonality, morality, publicity and efficiency.

Furthermore, it is important to note that SICONV is a public tool that allows grantors covenant agencies to efficiently manage their transfer processes through the on-line management of all agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership, from formalization, implementation, monitoring to accountability.

SICONV also allows internal and external control agencies to timely identify the main types of irregularities, analyze results and consequently propose preventive measures, in order to remedy the practice of illegal and illegitimate acts.

Through the Data Warehouse - DW³ tool, it is possible search and interpret information stored in the system's database to organize reports in various forms, which help in the management of the instruments of voluntary transfers. Such information can be used to support decision-making processes by identifying, for example, regions or localities with the highest incidence of irregularities, the type of irregularity and therefore determine the appropriate action to correct the situation. SICONV DW also handles extensive time series, with emphasis on information retrieval, where the user specifies and executes his own queries without the need to develop specific programs.

The design and development of SICONV in the administrative structure of the Federal Government is the result of a joint effort of various agencies and entities, namely: Ministry of Planning - MP; Ministry of Defense, represented by the Navy of Brazil; Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ, through the Foundation Projects' Coordination, Research and Technological Studies - COPPETEC. This institutional arrangement was made possible through an agreement signed by above mentioned entities.

Other partners have contributed to the improvement of the system, among them some federal public financial institutions such as *Caixa Econômica Federal* - CEF, Bank of Brazil, Bank of Northeast and Bank of Amazon. They operate in an integrated manner for the automatic opening of checking accounts and execute all financial transactions of the voluntary funds transfers. The Secretary of Federal Budget - SOF and the Ministry of Finance, through the National Treasury - STN, have integrated budgetary and financial information with SICONV data. Important contributions have been provided by the Union's Internal Control Agency – CGU and the Union's Accounts Tribunal - TCU that proposed improvements to the current regulations and suggested addition of new features.

Ministry of Planning has a contract for services with the SERPRO, for maintenance, hosting and development of new features based on needs identified by the system

³ System used to collect information regarding the institutional activities in databases, enabling the extraction through tables and graphs.

manager.

In summary, SICONV innovated with the implementation of its model of voluntary transfers management, imprinting speed to procedures and cutting red tape off core activities, with emphasis on the gradual replacement of the manual by automated process and recording, in real time, all processes of celebration, implementation, monitoring and accountability, enabling greater social control and democratizing access to Government's actions.

2. SICONV Implementation Goals

With the implementation of SICONV, the Federal Government automated procedures, reducing the efforts aimed at publicizing, celebrating, monitoring and accountability, as well as, effectively controlling and increasing transparency of agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership. Effectiveness was augmented, making the funds release process to States, Federal District, Municipalities, public consortia and private nonprofit organizations more agile and transparent.

This process enables the dissemination of data about transfers, contributing to increase control over the use of public funds, both by supervisory and control agencies (TCU, CGU, MPF, National Congress), as well as by ministries and civil society.

Besides above mentioned macro goals, which outlined the design and implementation of SICONV, it can be verified that the system has brought positive impacts on other fields, such as: i) increased support to federal entities (Federative Pact) relations; ii) fostering the relationship between the Federal Government and civil society organizations; iii) contribution to decrease bureaucracy of voluntary transfers processes; iv) standardization of procedures; v) provision of data to the effective participation of citizens in the social control of education, health, social welfare, environment, agriculture, tourism public policies, among others.

2.1 Audience

The target audience are agencies or entities of the direct or indirect public administration of any sphere of government, public consortium and private non-profit entities that celebrate or execute agreements or contracts that include the transfer or receipt of the Fiscal Budget and Social Security of the Union funds, aiming the implementation of government programs, involving the realization of projects, activities, services, purchase of goods or mutual interest events, in mutual cooperation arrangements, as well as, Control Agencies that started to monitor and control the application of public resources more effectively.

In a broad sense, the target audience is the society as a whole, since the system allows monitoring the use of federal public resources, enabling the exercise of social control and heaping social benefits derived from good and regular execution of programs.

3. Background and Implementation Methodology

The initiative was implemented iteratively and incrementally⁴ following the steps outlined below.

In September 2008, the MP released the first version of SICONV using the system architecture called MDArte⁵ and the PostgreSQL⁶ database, both free software. Concurrently, it was issued Ministerial Decree No. 127 of 2008 regulating Decree No. 6,170, 2007, which provides the rules for federal funds transfers.

This was the year of implementation of the system and its main features included: proponent of accreditation; proponent of registration; user registration; publicity of programs; proposals; work plan; management unit of voluntary transfer - UGTV; commitment of funds; celebration and formalization; publishing; recording voluntary transfers of in SIAFI; authorization document; money order for transfer agreements; execution of the contracting party and several queries.

The year of 2009 was used to implement adjustments and refinements of the features released in the previous year and for the consolidation of SICONV as the official system of the Federal Public Administration for the management of the Union's voluntary transfers.

In 2010, due to the implementation of the accountability module, the entire cycle of an agreement began to be performed or recorded via SICONV. The main features implemented during that year were: automatic opening of bank account; integration with information systems SIAPE and CEF; standardization of objects; public consortium - contracting party; statements; accountability; additional terms; work plan adjustments; extension of limits; progress reports; bank of projects and system administration.

With the significant increase of the number of SICONV users, in 2011, it was identified the need for system improvement, making it necessary to expand hardware dedicated to the support structure (servers, storage⁷, etc.) and communication links.

The management team has become exclusive, providing a greater focus on work undertaken culminating in improvements to the system. Features implemented were: functionality and profiles queries; contract' history; transfer agreement's history; accountability's history; other additives terms; alerts (inbox) and load SIAFI legacy data.

With the increased usage by the Federal Government organs (grantors), States, Federal District, municipalities and private non-profit (covenants), a rich information base was created, being necessary to develop specific tools for accessing data. As a consequence, data extractors and the Agreements' Data Warehouse - DW were implemented. These tools are frameworks for public transparency. While the extractors are available to society, enabling querying information from any agreement through the Portal of Agreements, the DW is a solution aimed to grantors and control agencies. Both

⁴ Staged software planning process in various pieces of the system being developed in parallel and integrated when completed, with predefined time to review and improve pieces of the system.

 $^{^5}$ MDArte is a framework used to develop software for the Brazilian government, being made available as public domain software.

⁶ PostgreSQL is an open source relational database management system.

⁷ Network designed to group data storage devices.

have the same information, but in different formats. In 2012, SICONV continued its development and evolution, highlighted with deployment of a feature set called Voluntary Transfers' Wire Transfer - OBTV which allows grantors to use the system to directly make agreements' payments, centralizing agreements' resources management, as well as providing a greater control in funds usage. The main features implemented were: monitoring and control; proof of the execution of activities; implementation of events termination, cancellation and extinction; voluntary transfers' wire transfer - OBTV; integration with other agencies of Federal Public Administration using web services; sending data to the Open Data Portal; integration of accountability activities with SIAFI; recording of notifications; events of rectification; public call; previous price quotes and Terms of partnership. That year, there was also the creation of several Inter Ministerial Working Groups, gathered to propose processes improvements of transfers made through agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership.

In 2013, the groups presented suggestions to improve the voluntary transfer process, which had direct impact on SICONV. Alongside presented suggestions, the SLTI identified the need for enhancements in relation to SICONV integration with other systems; service and training of users; implementation of new functional requirements; improvements to data and information access, usability, accessibility and software performance.

In order to add efforts to work done by the above mentioned groups, SLTI set up a working group whose objective was a full evaluation of SICONV.

At the end of the work, the group presented its evaluation, which was accomplished through the systematization and analysis of legal instruments, reports and general documents related to SICONV, and the Union's process of voluntary transfers.

Based on the results presented by the groups, forums and SLTI evaluation, it was evident the need for the incorporation users' feedback (their perceptions, suggestions and criticisms about SICONV) in the improvement process. Thus, and in order to effectively carry out the improvement process, SLTI together as ASEGE-MP, SAF-PR, SG-PR and COPPETEC, planned and built all the artifacts of the first SICONV Workshop – Improvement of Management Process of Voluntary Transfers Realized Using SICONV, which was realized August 6 - 8, 2013. Representatives of agencies (federal, state, municipal) and civil society organizations attended the event. All data collected was categorized and analyzed, in order to provide quick and conclusive feedback to SICONV users. After consolidation of the demands raised in the workshop, 199 (one hundred and ninety-nine) enhancement requests of the management process of voluntary transfers were listed.

3.1 SICONV Implementation benefits

After the implementation of SICONV, all programs of the Federal Government, whose operationalization were done through voluntary transfers, are disclosed on the Agreements Portal within 60 (sixty) days after the sanction of the Annual Budget Law - LOA, thus enabling higher degree of transparency and democratization in the proposal of partnership processes for to the implementation of public policies.

Another factor that indicates that there has been efficient use of resources is that the

Federal Government now has a tool that enables electronic management, monitoring and inspection of all voluntary transfers.

Since September 2008, SICONV enabled the signing of agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership in the amount of approximately R\$ 77.5 billion and that the cost to implement the system was approximately 0.07% of this amount, thus the "cost x benefit" relation shows that the use of resources to implement the SICONV occurred effectively, efficiently and effectively.

The availability of information relating to agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership on the Internet provides citizens, control agencies and the media means of supervising the implementation of government programs for society's profit, which constitutes ultimately an additional benefit, whose effectiveness is difficult to measure.

3.2 Quantitative and qualitative results concretely measured

With respect to the quantitative results, it is important to note that there are approximately 72,000 registered users in SICONV spread between grantors and with agreements. It is observed that the registration in the system is dynamic and changes are constant. During peak periods, it was observed approximately 90,000 registered users.

Another quantitative information expressing the magnitude and greatness of SICONV is the number of about 12,000 simultaneous accesses that can occur in times of concentration of the celebrations of voluntary transfers of the Union.

As shown in Table 1, from 2009 to 2015, the number of voluntary transfers carried out by the Union to States, Federal District, Municipalities and private non-profit organizations reached the mark of 95,284 agreements recorded in the system.

Regarding the financial value transferred through voluntary transfers recorded in SICONV, Table 2 shows the global value of voluntary transfers by agreement type. The global value is the sum of the amount transferred by the Union with the counterpart amount brought by the contracting party. Since its creation, SICONV celebrated 95,284 agreements transferring approximately R\$ 77.5 billion from which 85% is funded by the Federal Government.

In regards to qualitative results, it is important to highlight the aspects related to transparency, control and management of registered voluntary transfers and carried through SICONV, in line with the previous items. It is noteworthy that by executing the whole voluntary transfer process via the Internet, the system provides easier access and agility in achieving mutual interests, of grantors, covenants, control agencies and civil society as beneficiary of public policies.

3.3 SICONV Monitoring and evaluation

SICONV is systematically monitored by SERPRO, metrics gathered are performance, number of simultaneous accesses, availability, service level agreements -SLA of incidents and help desk, as well as system security risk management.

Whereas the initiative was completed in September 2012, four years of operation and, during that period there were constant changes, it was deemed necessary to carry in the first half of 2012 a satisfaction survey with system's users. This survey was made possible through a partnership between the MP and the TCU.

The methodology used was a questionnaire consisting of 26 questions for grantors and

27 questions for covenants. The survey was sent by e-mail to 14,912 grantors and 57,688 covenants. Responses were received from 21% of grantors and 16% with covenants.

The survey focused in: identification of the users' profile; overall level of satisfaction; perception of system response time; training; SICONV manuals; system usability and system's management tools.

Although SICONV is considered a "young" in terms of years of operation, research results were considered very satisfactory, especially in regards to system usability, response time and usefulness of available manuals.

3.4 Key success factors

The success of this initiative can to be attributed to a number of factors, which together consolidated the use of SICONV in a short period of time. Thus, we first highlight the legal framework which institutionalized the use of the system as well as the constant corporate developments that enabled users to carry out all stages and procedures relating to voluntary transfers from the Union.

In addition to the normative framework and incremented improvements, it is important to highlight the effort to empower users of the system, culminating in a continuous training process, as shown in Table 3.

4. Conclusion

SICONV brought great innovation in management from the time it renewed the relationship between the Federal Public Administration and the organs, and public and private entities that celebrate agreements, transfer agreements and terms of partnership with federal funds. This initiative computerized and streamlined voluntary transfers, as all the procedures are performed and recorded this new environment.

In this context, there was a big change from the procedures previously used, since the initiative broke new ground by establishing and standardizing the accreditation procedures and registration of bidders, as well as provided the online disclosure of government programs related to voluntary transfers.

With the announcement of programs, innovation that has democratized access to federal funds and made it possible for bidders to submit projects through the World Wide Web. In addition to the procedures mentioned above, the celebration, release of funds, monitoring, control and accountability are processed by the Internet through the Covenants Portal - www.convenios.gov.br. This initiative contributes to: the elimination of paper in most cases; the federative pact; reduce bureaucracy and improve efficiency in an essential area for the Brazilian society. It is emphasized that voluntary transfers enable investments in key areas such as social assistance, education, health, employment, agriculture, among others.

SICONV is a complex system and is continually evolving, as it is governed by an extensive regulatory framework.

Finally, the initiative provides the expansion of transparency and efficiency, contributing to the qualification of public management and the correct application of resources, bringing benefits for the whole society.

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Tables and Figures



Figure 1 - SICONV Implementation Benefits

Table 1: Total Number of Voluntary Transfers Registered in SICONV by Federative Unit	it From
2009 - 2105	

Federative unit	Agreements	Global value
AC	1,217	1,075,930,416
AL	1,533	1,869,988,040
AM	902	1,742,871,173
AP	707	647,406,872
BA	5,269	5,771,916,663
CE	3,883	4,373,502,159
DF	1,054	1,476,648,203
ES	2,061	1,248,419,255
GO	3,590	2,176,401,487
MA	2,243	2,048,402,596
MG	9,373	6,155,114,032
MS	2,058	3,397,331,702
МТ	1,818	1,812,847,884
PA	1,740	1,531,608,717
PB	2,535	2,130,661,261
PE	3,039	6,109,504,360
PI	2,232	1,665,559,753
PR	8,277	4,221,953,145
RJ	3,289	4,597,126,616
RN	2,540	1,424,571,345
RO	2,046	1,062,843,170
RR	607	1,232,625,844

RS	11,581	5,469,241,006
SC	5,363	2,507,217,914
SE	1,501	1,307,537,626
SP	12,985	9,367,370,966
ТО	1,841	1,146,361,181
Total	95,284	77,570,963,389

Source: General Coordination of Training and Customer Service - DTV/SLTI/MP. March/2016.

Table 2 - Global	Value of Volunt	tary Transfers by	Agreement Type
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Type of Agreement	Year	Number Of Signed Agreements	Global Value	Transferred Value	Counterpart Value
	2009	11,920	5,090,381,089	4,366,923,857	717,963,663
	2010	12,116	5,264,768,004	4,655,797,962	603,638,998
	2011	6,848	4,111,640,939	3,490,031,002	619,703,629
Transfer	2012	5,841	5,030,006,883	4,272,902,800	751,780,531
Agreements	2013	10,431	7,457,408,691	6,406,266,147	1,049,832,316
	2014	6,782	3,245,101,238	3,029,848,322	215,164,192
	2015	4,846	2,618,557,059	2,512,625,638	105,931,421
	Total	58,784	32,817,863,904	28,734,395,728	4,064,014,749
	2009	8,728	7,785,990,529	6,679,127,710	1,042,833,630
	2010	7,702	6,386,520,198	5,651,030,751	678,767,485
	2011	4,540	6,507,587,133	5,775,014,021	697,225,000
A	2012	3,906	7,114,048,581	6,533,903,249	516,379,692
Agreements	2013	4,299	8,603,726,224	7,809,160,481	769,468,218
	2014	4,185	3,378,017,954	3,183,288,430	191,250,581
	2015	3,017	2,751,640,173	2,650,650,852	100,954,994
	Total	36,377	42,527,530,793	38,282,175,494	3,996,879,599
	2009	39	72,314,429	69,562,227	2,677,502
	2010	35	235,249,812	234,731,845	410,639
	2011	9	44,863,722	44,376,420	459,899
Terms of	2012	16	506,036,037	503,452,863	401,256
Partnership	2013	11	949,899,999	948,955,966	942,143
		_	400 544055	129,973,324	401 206
•	2014	7	130,514,255	129,975,524	491,286
·	2014 2015	7 6	130,514,255 286,690,440	286,261,464	491,286
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Source: General Coordination of Training and Customer Service - DTV/SLTI/MP. March/2016.

Table 3 - Number	of Users	Trained	to Use SICONV
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Year	Number of Users Trained
2009	2.701
2010	4.048
2011	2.313
2012	5.165
2013	5.02
TOTAL	19.247

Source: General Coordination of Training and Customer Service - DTV/SLTI/MP. March/2016