

NON-URBAN SOIL AND LAND GOVERNANCE

Why TCU performed this audit

One of TCU's strategic objectives is that of “improving governance in public and political organizations”. SecexAmbiental has in turn three main objectives related to the performance of control actions: “contributing to food production in sufficient quantity and quality to ensure food security to the Brazilian people and generate exports”; “contributing to the organization of rural areas and to the development of family agriculture”; and “contributing to economic and social development and to preserving a healthy environment”. All of these objectives are strongly linked to the topic of soils. The audit work on non-urban soil and land governance conducted by TCU/SecexAmbiental was aimed at evaluating the governance of initiatives designed to regulate soil occupation and use, in addition to actions designed to ensure soil and water sustainability.

Main TCU Findings

As audit findings, it should be particularly mentioned that the Brazilian State must set its priorities for soil use and occupation and also for its actions to promote sustainable soil and water use, as there are many laws dealing with these topics and a wide range of scattered and not integrated governmental institutions whose roles have not been clearly defined. In addition, although they are inseparable, soil and water resources are dealt with in different laws that are not integrated among them. It is also noteworthy that the government imposes costly obligations on farm owners, even though the available information has limited reliability, due to the various objectives of such information, limiting its use for public policy making in connection with soil and water conservation.

With regard to the planning, coordination and consistency of soil and water policies, there is a need to formalize a logic for government interventions that is consistent with the problems diagnosed for soil and water issues. A long-term, integrated planning for public policies is also necessary, coordinated between the various institutions involved. As for knowledge, the audit findings show that Brazil has little baseline knowledge both on the occupation of its territory and on soil use capacity and mapping according to its type, making it difficult to establish specific policies.

Finally, based on the results of the analysis that there is a need to establish a dynamic for inter-institutional evaluation and monitoring to improve the quality of decisions and promote transparency and social participation in the making of public soil and water policies.

What TCU Decided

Based on the audit findings, TCU determined or recommended that laws to regulate soil occupation and ensure the sustainability of soil and water use should be consolidated and that the competences of the institutions involved should be appropriately defined, without overlappings or gaps. Also resolved that long-term soil and water plans should be drawn up; that territorial information should be consolidated and collated and the scale of availability of information on soils and soil mapping should be increased; and that a consistent dynamic of monitoring and evaluation should be institutionalized with systems integration, development of indicators and consistent rules for measuring the results of policies according to their goals.

TCU Deliberations

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Decision nº 1.942/2015 – Plenário

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