



# How Espírito Santo Built a Statewide Culture of Evaluation

Stories of Change  
Espírito Santo, Brazil



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When evaluators in the state of Espírito Santo, on the southeastern coast of Brazil, examined the state's Nossa Bolsa scholarship program, they found that its income threshold excluded a significant share of the low-income students it was designed to reach.

As a result of the findings, the state raised the threshold for the program from 1 to 1.5 times the minimum wage.

*“Based on the scientific evidence generated by the study, the Governor was convinced of the need to adjust the income limit,”* said Pablo Lira, Director-General of the [Jones dos Santos Neves Institute](#) (IJSN), the state research body that led the evaluation.

The evaluation also found that beneficiaries were significantly more likely to be employed and reported higher income levels than non-beneficiaries. These outcomes reflected a broader shift in how Espírito Santo generates and uses evidence to inform public policy.

For the past 20 years, Espírito Santo has been known for disciplined public administration, long-term planning, and a results-oriented culture. Yet evaluation activities were fragmented, with no shared framework guiding how evidence was produced or used across government.

[Espírito Santo's Public Policy Monitoring and Evaluation \(M&E\) System](#) (SiMAPP) was created to address that gap by establishing a structured, statewide system to guide how evaluations are selected, conducted, and used.

This was the [kind of result](#) SiMAPP was designed to achieve when Katia Cesconeto de Paula, Executive Coordinator of SiMAPP, helped lead efforts to strengthen how public policies were assessed in the state.

*“Although Espírito Santo had already been conducting evaluations for some time,”* she said, *“there was a clear understanding that it was necessary to bring decision-making*

*in planning and budgeting cycles closer to the production of evidence on public policies.”*

SiMAPP brought structure, consistency, and transparency to public policy evaluation, helping organize evaluation efforts across institutions and making their findings visible and usable beyond individual programs or sectors.

## **From Good Intentions to a System**

In 2015, the IJSN began working with the [Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Lusophone Africa and Brazil](#) (CLEAR-LAB), an implementing partner of the [Global Evaluation Initiative](#) (GEI), to design a structured response. What began as a single impact evaluation quickly revealed a deeper appetite across government. Sector secretariats began requesting additional evaluations. Some offered their own resources to fund studies. The demand was real, and it was growing.

Rather than responding with piecemeal efforts, the state opted for a coordinated, systemic approach. CLEAR-LAB contributed technical expertise and referenced international examples of evaluation systems from Chile and the United Kingdom. IJSN convened planning, management, research, and public administration institutions across the state to design a system suited to Espírito Santo's institutional context.

In 2017, the state enacted Law No. 10,744, establishing SiMAPP, making it Brazil's first legally mandated, state-level public policy M&E system. The governor insisted that all evaluations be made public from the outset, embedding transparency into the law itself.

## **Building Capacity, Not Just a System**

Legislation alone does not build a culture of evaluation. CLEAR-LAB and IJSN co-developed a practical [M&E procedures guide](#) and delivered a structured training program for government.

Between 2017 and 2018, a foundational three-month version of ForMA, CLEAR-LAB's core M&E training program, reached 36 civil servants across agencies. An advanced ForMA course trained 41 managers responsible for more complex evaluations. Most participants were career civil servants, chosen precisely so that knowledge could be retained and replicated.

*“CLEAR's support was fundamental for structuring and institutionalizing the system, providing the necessary guidance to design the framework and train civil servants and researchers to operate it,”* said Ms. Cesconeto de Paula.

After ForMA, Espírito Santo built upon the foundation. The state developed its own M&E learning pathway in partnership with the [Public Service School](#) (ESESP), which now delivers courses regularly to new public servants. Approximately 500 civil servants have been trained to date, and a postgraduate program in evaluation is being launched to extend this reach to municipalities.

To coordinate the system, the state created [Numa](#), the Hub for Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies, a multisectoral body composed of IJSN, the State Secretariat for Economy and Planning, the Secretariat for Management and Human Resources, the State School of Public Service, and the state research and innovation foundation (FAPES).

Evaluations are reviewed by a FAPES Scientific Council, which includes government representatives, technical-scientific experts, and members of the productive sector, providing an additional layer of objectivity and credibility.

## **Evidence That Makes a Difference**

Over six years, SiMAPP has supported evaluations of 13 public programs spanning youth violence prevention, gender-based violence, environmental policy, income transfer, and education.

One of the most illustrative examples is the impact evaluation of the [Reflorestar Program](#), a payment-for-environmental-services initiative promoting native forest restoration. Using propensity score matching, the evaluation found increases in native forest cover and reductions in pastureland among participating properties. To analyze vegetation cover, the state purchased high-resolution satellite imagery and produced an updated territorial map of Espírito Santo, saving approximately R\$3.6 million (US\$880,000) by avoiding separate procurement.

Other evaluations have fed directly into policy decisions. An [impact evaluation](#) of the [Estado Presente program](#), a state public security policy, found that an estimated 1,600 murders were avoided between 2019 and 2022 in the territories where the program had been implemented. Using a quasi-experimental design that combined propensity score-weighted panel matching and difference-in-differences estimation, the evaluation compared outcomes against a matched counterfactual. The program was subsequently maintained in those territories and expanded to others.

*“The evaluation research conducted by IJSN has been essential to improving the Estado Presente program,” said Dr. Álvaro Duboc Fajardo, Secretary of Economy and Planning. “It provides solid evidence on the impact of security and social prevention actions, helping to identify what works and what needs to be adjusted. Through this, Espírito Santo advances in consolidating a public policy guided by data and results, reinforcing its commitment to efficiency, transparency, and the sustainable reduction of violence.”*

## **From State Innovation to National Reference**

Perhaps the most telling measure of SiMAPP’s impact is what it has inspired beyond Espírito Santo’s borders. As the first subnational government in Brazil to create a legally institutionalized evaluation system, the state became a national reference.

*“The creation of the M&E system of Espírito Santo by law showed to other Brazilian states that the legal aspect of M&E institutionalization is essential to its development and sustainability, far from a mere formality,” said Lorena Figueiredo, a researcher at CLEAR-LAB.*

Since then, the states of Ceará, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Maranhão have all developed their own evaluation systems.

In 2025, the [three municipalities](#) of Anchieta, Serra, and Montanha located within the state of Espírito Santo began developing local evaluation systems. They received training and mentorship from CLEAR-LAB, in partnership with the State’s Court of Accounts (TCE-ES).

*“This is a pioneering initiative,” said Rodrigo Rezende, an auditor at the Court of Accounts. “In Brazil, only the municipalities of Niterói and São Paulo have M&E systems. Our intention is not to develop a system and hand it over to managers, but to provide tools so they can create systems in the way that will be most useful to them.”*

Officials in Minas Gerais state have been very clear about what they have learned.

*“One of the most remarkable lessons was how the legal framework in Espírito Santo provided continuity and stability to M&E practices across government transitions,” said Carolina Imura, former Director of Public Policies at the João Pinheiro Foundation, who led Minas Gerais’s own M&E system. “The institutionalization of M&E through law demonstrated that evaluation could be protected from political cycles and embedded in the daily routines of public management.”*

In September 2023, Espírito Santo hosted Brazil’s first National Seminar on M&E Systems in Vitória, the state capital. Representatives from national, state, and municipal governments gathered to exchange experiences and build the national M&E agenda together, a signal that a state-level experiment had helped catalyze a national movement.

## **From Fragmentation to a Lasting System**

Before SiMAPP, there was no shared understanding of what evaluation was; no trained evaluators, and no standardized methodology, and evaluation findings rarely influenced planning or budget decisions.

Today, Espírito Santo has a common evaluation framework, practical guidance tools, a trained cadre of M&E professionals embedded across government, and a multi-institutional governance structure designed to sustain the system across political cycles.

### **SIMAPP BY THE NUMBERS**

**First legally mandated, state-level M&E system in Brazil** (Law No. 10,744, 2017)

**13 public programs** evaluated over six years

**500+ civil servants** trained

**120+ research fellows** engaged in studies

**R\$10 million** (approximately US\$1.8 million) invested in research and innovation

For GEI and CLEAR-LAB, Espírito Santo demonstrates what country-led, systems-based evaluation capacity building can achieve. By combining locally grounded expertise with regional experience and global knowledge, the initiative enabled the state to build a lasting system that generates and uses evidence to improve policy. Espírito Santo’s experience has since informed the development of evaluation systems across Brazil.