


## Introduction of popular financial reporting in municipal health councils in Brazil


Introdução de relatórios financeiros populares nos conselhos municipais de saúde do Brasil

Introducción de informes financieros populares en los consejos municipales de salud en Brasil


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### Abstract

This study aims to understand how the format of popular financial reports (RFPs) can help municipal health councilors make better decisions about financial information. The research adopted a qualitative approach for collecting documentary data from the Annual Management Report (RAG) approved in 2019 by the Health Council of the municipality of Florianópolis, located in the state of Santa Catarina, in the south of Brazil. It was suggested, based on RFP literature and on the experience of one of the authors who has been working in the area of human communication for 20 years, to use the *Design Thinking* methodology and the Canva® platform. This proposal could ultimately serve as a basis for a popular report in the Municipal Health Council object of analysis. The suggestions presented in this study are intended to grab readers' attention by using contrasting colors, drawings, and images. Presenting an RAG with a visual encourages one to read the material, as well as better understand its content.

**Keywords:** Citizens; Comprehensibility; Municipal Health Councils; Accounting Information; Popular Financial Reports

### Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo compreender como o formato dos relatórios financeiros populares (RFPs) pode contribuir para que os conselheiros municipais de saúde possam tomar melhores decisões sobre informações financeiras que estejam sob seu julgamento. A pesquisa trouxe uma abordagem qualitativa atrelada à coleta de dados documental impressos no Relatório de Gestão Anual (RAG) aprovado em 2019 pelo Conselho de Saúde do município de Florianópolis, localizado no estado de Santa Catarina, Região Sul do Brasil. Foi sugerido, a partir da literatura de RFPs e da experiência de um dos autores que atua na área de comunicação humana e suas nuances há 20 anos, com o uso da metodologia *Design Thinking* e a plataforma Canva®, uma proposta que, eventualmente, pode ser usada como base para um relato popular harmonizado no contexto do Conselho Municipal de Saúde objeto da análise. As sugestões apresentadas têm como propósito provocar a atenção do leitor, com o uso de cores contrastantes, desenhos e imagens com simulação de movimento, visando motivar a leitura do RAG e melhorar a percepção dos conselheiros sobre seu conteúdo.

**Palavras-chave:** Cidadãos; Compreensibilidade; Conselhos Municipais de Saúde; Informação Contábil; Relatórios Financeiros Populares

## Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo comprender cómo el formato de los informes financieros populares (RFP) puede ayudar a los consejeros municipales de salud a tomar mejores decisiones sobre la información financiera que está a su juicio. La investigación trajo un enfoque cualitativo vinculado a la recopilación de datos documentales impresos en el Informe Anual de Gestión (RAG) aprobado en 2019 por el Consejo de Salud del municipio de Florianópolis, ubicado en el estado de Santa Catarina, Región Sur de Brasil. Se sugirió, con base en la literatura de RFPs y en la experiencia de uno de los autores que trabaja en el área de la comunicación humana y sus matices desde hace 20 años, utilizando la metodología Design Thinking y la plataforma Canva®, una propuesta que, eventualmente, pueda servir de base para un informe popular armonizado en el contexto del Consejo Municipal de Salud objeto de análisis. Las sugerencias presentadas tienen como objetivo provocar la atención del lector, con el uso de colores contrastantes, dibujos e imágenes con simulación de movimiento, con el objetivo de motivar la lectura del RAG y mejorar la percepción de los orientadores sobre su contenido.

**Palabras clave:** Ciudadanos; Comprensibilidad; Consejos Municipales de Salud; Información de Cuenta; Informes Financieros Populares

## 1 Introduction

Understandability refers to the concept that financial information should be easy for users to comprehend (Dias Filho, 2000; Ifac, 2014). Regulatory bodies in both the private and public spheres have an interest in this particular feature of financial information (Ewer, 2007) as it allows for accounting to play its most important role: to aid in the decision-making process (Dias Filho & Nakagawa, 2001).

For Oliveira (2004), some explanations for the lack of understandability for financial information are the failure to observe fundamental elements of the communication process as well as the inadequacy of the message and the incompatibility of the channel. The literature shows that in the public sector, users of this information struggle to understand what is being transmitted in financial reports (Platt Neto, da Cruz, Ensslin, & Ensslin, 2007; Souza, 2020). According to Mendes, Pereira, Noriller and da Silva (2018), “users” refer to all members of a society in order to represent a universal set of users with regard to the need to use financial information.

The Conceptual Framework for Applied Accounting to the Public Sector states that citizens are among the primary users of financial reports in the public sector (Ifac, 2014). One way for citizens to actively participate in creating public policies in Brazil is by acting as advisors on municipal councils (Magalhães & Xavier, 2019). One of the functions performed by councilors is the supervisory role, where the individual monitors and controls the acts performed by the governing authorities (CGU, 2012).

In order for these citizen advisors to play this crucial role in government decision-making processes, and in order not to weaken their confidence, it is important that said governments start investing in solutions to suppress this problem (Martins & Lima, 2021). Popular Financial Reporting (RFPs) emerged as a response to concerns that traditional government financial reporting, while accurate and detailed, fails to provide the general public with an overall understanding of the government use of public funds (Yusuf, Jordan, Neill, & Hackbart, 2013).

RFPs are an important resource in this scenario for improving citizens' understanding of state finances by making them more accessible (Martins & Lima, 2021). The average citizen, as described by Cabral and Aquino (2020), does not have prior experience or formal knowledge in the dynamics of recognition, measurement, accounting (or preparing financial reports), and public finances.

The literature shows that there are several spaces for social participation in Brazilian public administration. Councils, for example, are one of the most well known spaces (Silva, Gonçalves, Santos, & Pirkiel, 2018), and according to these researchers, the most relevant examples of councils are the Municipal Health Councils (CMS). These councils were created to monitor the application of public funds, make sure that health care meets the needs of the public, and ensure that the government health policies are serving the population (Silva et al., 2018). CMSs are deliberative in nature and operate in several Brazilian municipalities and unite various segments of society (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], 2019).

CMSs are important towards restructuring health care in Brazil (Ventura, Tellini, & Britto, 2014). They represent the broadest political-administrative decentralization initiative implemented in the country (Moreira & Escorel, 2009; Pereira, Chai, Dias, Loyola, & Pacheco, 2019), propose and monitor actions related to local health, in addition to controlling and inspecting the proper use of the resources for the Unified Health System (SUS), which are deposited in a special account which is constantly monitored (National Council of Municipal Health Departments [CONASEMS], 2019). In 2018, 99.9% of Brazilian municipalities had a CMS in place (IBGE, 2019).

Formed by a collegial body composed of managers, service providers, workers and health users (Silva et al, 2018), the CMSs must analyze the Management Report presented by the SUS manager for the respective federal entity and issue a conclusive report on whether there is compliance (or not) of the norms

defined in the legislation. According to Zambon and Ogata (2013), there are several obstacles that may interfere in the health counselor fulfilling his or her role, from withholding information to understanding the language adopted in the reports.

Researchers have already identified that, with regard to financial communication, scores are limited to assessing the legibility of written financial information (Selzer 1981; Rezende, & Gonçalves, 2014; Fernandes, 2019). When analyzing the understandability of the accountability reports for a particular CMS, Fernandes (2019) highlighted that the counselors struggled to analyze the Annual Management Report (RAG) due its complex language and a lack of training in accountability.

In order to overcome these challenges and help CMS members perform their duties, the TCU launched a booklet in 2010 entitled *Guidance for Health Counselors*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of this booklet, published in 2015, suggested that the Health Council could be creative and communicate its actions in a newspaper or comic book, use internet pages, or put up posters in important locations (TCU, 2015).

The need for technical information to be condensed, summarized, and more accessible for dissemination and distribution to citizens has also been the subject of research (Jordan, Yusuf, Mayer, & Mahar, 2016; Martins & Lima, 2021). In effect, *popular financial reporting* is used as a tool to “translate” the results (Biancone, Secinaro, & Brescia, 2016a; Martins & Lima, 2021).

After reviewing literature on this subject from 2019 to 2021 (Journals CAPES, EBSCO, Emerald, Scopus, Science Direct and Web of Science), we came across some previous studies on the understandability of financial information from accounting users and popular financial reports; however, we did not find any study that related this issue to municipal councils.

In view of this and considering that the Popular Financial Report (RFP) is a complementary instrument for the dissemination of financial information for citizens in a vocabulary that is more easily understood by the general public (Lee, 2006; Oliveira, Santos, & Jorge, 2018), and that the disclosure of more accessible financial information can improve the quality of the government-citizen relationship (Martins & Lima, 2021), this study raises the following research problem: *how can the format of popular financial reports (RFPs) help city councilors make better decisions about financial information?*

Thus, this study aims to understand how the format of popular financial reports can help municipal councilors make better decisions about financial information. Thus, based on *Design Thinking* literature, we question how the organization of the RAG in the format of RFPs can help municipal health councilors make better decisions about financial information.

For this purpose, we used a qualitative approach and collected documentary data printed in the Annual Management Report (RAG), which was approved in 2019 by the Health Council of Florianópolis, a municipality located in the state of Santa Catarina, in the south of Brazil. The methodology involved the following two steps: (i) a preliminary analysis of the RAG originally published on behalf of the municipality, performing content analysis of the information contained therein; and (ii) proposing a layout for some pages of the same RAG in light of the RFP literature, using the *Design Thinking* methodology and the Canva® platform.

In addition to helping make financial information more understandable for health counselors and enabling the disclosure of more accessible financial information to strengthen the quality of the government-citizen relationship, this experience seeks to show that the introduction of RFPs in public sector entities, more specifically in CMSs, can help to improve the legibility of financial information, and ensuring that it gets read, understood, and used in a timely manner by its users.

## 2 Development

### 2.1 Human communication and its nuances

Human communication is a relational process, the objective of which is not only an individual level of expression, but also how the collective or another individual receives what is or has been expressed. This means that for any professional communication product to be considered effective (even if that product is unrelated to the classic fields of training, such as journalism or advertising), the message between sender and receiver needs to be fully understood. In this way, “[...] *the dissemination of popular financial reports can be analyzed as a communication process, since the purpose of popular reporting is to bring citizens closer to government financial information*” (Rodrigues, Dias, & Vargas, 2021, p. 10).

This perspective is mainly based on a review of Aristotle’s classic model of communication (the person who speaks → the speech that is made → the person who listens) (Martino, 2001) carried out by the mathematical theory of communication proposed by researchers Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver. According to Martino (2001), both Aristotle and Shannon and Weaver understand that the communication process cannot be considered successful if the reception (the person who listens) struggles to understand what the sender (the person who speaks) intends to communicate.

When it comes to communication from public bodies, the source of information is usually specialized yet the recipient is not. The source may be linked to institutions for various reasons, and it is expected that

the source will make a greater effort to ensure that the process occurs without noise (or at least that noise is minimized) (Carvalho, 2012). For Dias Filho (2000), most of the efforts to achieve effective communication need to come from the source and must comply with the principle of understandability, which state that information is more beneficial to a greater and more varied number of people if it is understandable.

As Carvalho states (2012), the source's specialized language needs to be translated into terms that the recipient can fully assimilate, but that same recipient needs to be able to engage with the data they receive. In other words, "[...] a) *the user must be able to obtain the data, which means that the data must be accessible; b) the user must be able to understand the syntax and semantics of information; c) the information must be useful; and d) the information must have credibility for the user*" (Wang in Arouck, 2011, p. 5-6).

Therefore, whatever the message may be, it must always be thought of in terms of the quality of its information. Arouck (2011) identifies these terms as accessibility, appearance, clarity, conciseness, format, readability, scope, currentness, coherence, completeness, reliability, correctness, credibility, understandability, convenience, importance and interpretability.

All these attributes, if observed, help to reduce noise from communication materials (Carvalho, 2012). By establishing effective communication as the parameter, Carvalho points out that the focus on interpretation and assimilation by the recipient then becomes fundamental.

From the perspective of those who use financial information in the same way, to effectively communicate this information there must be a common meaning between sender and recipient so that the latter is able to understand it, and thus able to identify the elements of communication theory in the communication of financial information, which helps understand this process (Shannon, 1948; Dias Filho & Nakagawa, 2001; Camacho, Weffort, Gonçalves, & Garcia, 2020).

According to Dias Filho and Nakagawa (2001) and Mota, Coelho and Queiroz (2014), there are three factors that can influence the sender's behavior, thus influencing communication in the financial environment: (a) communicative ability; (b) the level of knowledge; and (c) the sociocultural system. These researchers claim that while communicative ability influences the individual's ability to analyze his or her own goals and intentions, as well as the ability to encode the message in order to express what is intended, the level of knowledge refers to the sender's knowledge of certain financial information, and this knowledge influences the quality of information.

Regarding the sociocultural system, Wolf (2008) and Mota, Coelho and Queiroz (2014) show that media (channel) are influenced by economic, social and cultural contexts, in addition to those who own the media (sender). The recipient, in turn, is the ultimate human recipient of the information, to whom the message is intended. In this sense, as Nöth (2011) explains, the receiver "shares" knowledge with the sender, taking in the information about the world elaborated in the sender's message.

Looking at CMSs, Gonçalves, Gonçalves, Lustosa and Celestino (2010) consider that improving financial communication is fundamental for councillors to exercise their roles, such as controlling and monitoring management, and discussing and deliberating the strategies that are to be adopted. According to these researchers, evaluating the decisions that have been taken becomes more difficult if the councillors do not have the relevant information related to acts and events of management.

## 2.2 Limitations on the legibility of financial information

The limitations on the legibility of financial information is something researchers have been discussing for decades. For Daniels and Daniels (1991) and Paton (1992), public sector financial reporting formats are not easy to understand because they require specific financial knowledge and may actually conceal more than they reveal. These researchers claim that additional narratives are needed to reveal what is behind the numbers, to concisely meet the informational needs of *stakeholders*.

As laid out in *The Conceptual Framework for General Purpose Financial Reporting by Public Sector Entities*, edited by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), the purpose for preparing and disclosing accounting information is to provide information about the public sector entity that is useful to users of general purpose financial reports (RCPGs) for *accountability* and decision making. This framework states that in order for the preparation and disclosure of accounting information to not be an end in itself, its purpose is to provide useful information to users of RCPGs based on their information needs (Ifac, 2014).

According to the Conceptual Framework, citizens are considered primary users of accounting reports, and the primary role of governments and other public sector entities is to provide services that enhance or maintain their well-being. These services include wellness programs and policies, such as those offered in healthcare.

The framework also states that meeting the obligations related to accountability requires the entity to provide information on its resource management with the purpose of providing services to citizens and other individuals.

Thus, the disclosure of non-financial and financial information on service provision activities, performance, and/or results during the year provide inputs for evaluating the economy, the efficiency and the

effectiveness of the entity's operations. It is necessary for the government or any other public sector entity to fulfill its accountability obligations, that is, justifying the use of resources obtained from or on behalf of society.

Thus, in order for financial information to be useful it must be a reliable representation of the economic phenomena (or any other phenomena) that it intends to represent. Reliable representation is achieved when the representation of the phenomenon is complete, neutral, and free from material error. Information that faithfully represents an economic or another phenomenon portrays the substance of the transaction, which may not necessarily correspond to its legal form.

Therefore, given the need to provide information that can be read and understood and, in the specific case of financial information, in order for it to reach recipients in such a way that it can be used, the user needs to be able to read and understand the transmitted message (Camacho et al., 2020). This will allow the communication process to be effective, as long as its main objective – to influence the behavior of the receiver – is fully achieved, if not, there will be no communication (Silva & Novais, 2014).

In the case of health in Brazil, the different levels of government are expected to fulfill distinct and complementary roles in relation to public health. The Union plans and coordinates the SUS; the states, in addition to developing their own health policies, act as organizers and articulators for the municipalities within their jurisdiction; and lastly, the municipalities are responsible for providing effective health services, especially those linked to primary care (TCU, 2016; Busato, Garcia, Rodrigues, Salesbram, & Berté, 2020).

From the point of view of information circulation, Dalmonte (2015) states that the evolution of new media/informational environments provides greater circulation of content and allow individuals to participate in the elaboration and distribution of this type of content. Studies on communication and information in CMSs show that this communication process is weak due to the difficulty in understanding the documents and the lack of access to information (Oliveira, 2004; Saliba, Moimaz, Ferreira, & Custódio, 2009; Fernandes, 2019).

Unlike the private sector where information users are specialized, the information users (citizens) in the public sector are usually lay people and need the information translated in a didactic and simple way, in addition to offering subjects of personal interest or from their community. (Viana, 2010; Silva, Fedato, Almeida, & Almeida, 2016). Likewise, CMSs are composed of members who are not fully knowledgeable about their functions, and most of these individuals report difficulty in understanding documents (Saliba et al., 2009). According to the authors, the transfer of information to society and discussions about the budget are factors that need to be improved.

Furthermore, Silva et al. (2016) point out that the counselors, although they demonstrate a desire to meet the needs of the population, are concerned with the legal requirements (a mandatory practice in public entities) and show a certain lack of preparation when it comes to complying with the precepts of *Accountability*.

A study conducted by Silva et al. (2018) shows that most municipalities in the northeast region of Brazil struggle to monitor the execution of public resources. There is a lack of infrastructure for councils and a lack of training for council members, which draws attention to the low effectiveness of the primary function of the councils which is to monitor the correct application of public resources.

Added to this is the issue of data being withheld by the municipal administration, which makes it difficult to socialize information to improve control activities and follow-up of local public policies (Silva et al., 2018). In addition, the fragmented health information systems are also a weakness in management as it makes it difficult to compile data and allocate resources.

What we see here then is that, although the municipalities are responsible for developing plans, there are some cases where the resources are not directed toward the needs of the population. So, even when the budget proposal aligns with the Municipal Health Plan, the needs of the users are not translated (Sampaio, Carvalho, Pereira, & Mello, 2011; Lorenzetti, Lanzoni, Assuiti, Pires, & Ramos, 2014; Fernandes, 2019).

As a result, it becomes difficult or even impossible for the councils to control and monitor management, to discuss and deliberate on which strategies will be adopted, and to evaluate decisions that have been taken if the councillors do not have the relevant information on events of management (Gonçalves et al., 2010). In this context, councillors who work in the CMSs must seek alternatives to overcome the legibility of the financial information.

In their analysis of eye movement and cognitive challenges as they pertain to understanding popular reports, Cabral and Aquino (2020) present evidence of the advantages of replacing financial jargon with more familiar words and include them in contexts or examples that help readers make sense of the content that is presented. For these researchers, in addition to simplifying phrases and words, financial jargon must be translated and context must be added. In this sense, RFPs can be an important tool towards improving the legibility of financial information analyzed by CMS counselors.

Based on the concepts and features presented in the literature on the subject (Governmental Accounting Standards Board [GASB], 1992; Yusuf & Jordan, 2012; Yusuf et al., 2013; Cohen & Karatzimas, 2015; Yusuf & Jordan, 2015; Biancone, Secinaro, & Brescia, 2016a; Biancone, Secinaro, & Brescia, 2016b; Jordan et al., 2016; Groff, Pitman, & Tervo, 2017; Martins & Lima, 2021), the expectation is that introducing

the fundamentals of the RFPs in CMS reports will increase the understandability of written financial information and, consequently, allow CMS councillors to make more technically informed decisions.

### 2.3 Understandability of government reports: *accountability* and transparency

According to Langella, Anessi-Pessina, Redmayne and Sicilia (2021), governments around the world are involved in various transparency initiatives, the goal being that these initiatives will produce a wide range of positive results, including citizen participation. According to the aforementioned researchers, however, greater transparency may not automatically translate into greater participation.

There are some works on transparency that focus on the availability and accessibility of information (Cucciniello, Porumbescu, & Grimmelikhuisen, 2017; Langella et al., 2021), claiming that availability and accessibility of information do not necessarily translate into the understandability of the information disclosed.

While conducting a study to assess how modern technology could promote citizen participation in public issues, Cohen, Mamakou and Karatzimas (2017) found that financial information presented in popular reports with the aid of information and communication technologies (ICTs) provides for information that is closer to reality and current practices. They also found that further studies are needed to clarify what the real needs of citizens are, not only in terms of RFP content but also how they are presented and disseminated.

According to Cordella and Bonina (2012), the rapid advancement of ICTs and their use in all aspects of everyday life has led them to be explored as a means of increasing transparency, accountability, and performance in the public sector. Bonsón, Royo and Ratkai (2015) highlight that, in the context of accountability and transparency towards citizens, the use of the internet and social media to inform the public is substantial and has a relatively low cost.

Examining popular financial reporting as a citizen-centered public accountability tool, Manes-Rossi, Aversano and Polcini (2019) consider that popular financial reporting should incorporate information on revenue sources, expenditures, and the costs of government services. This new way of reporting citizen-centric information could help governments gain legitimacy.

For Manes-Rossi (2019), there is currently a crisis in public accountability. She states that *accountability* in countries which have already experimented with New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG) can be equated to the accessibility of information to ensure market competition and citizen engagement.

She does consider, however, that in order for accountability to be effective and make an impact on citizen engagement in decision-making and policy-making, reports must cover democratic participation initiatives such as the participatory budget, focus groups, community assemblies, or alternative formats suitable for a particular community (Manes-Rossi, 2019).

Santos, Santos, Pessali and Rover (2020) point out that a system which includes citizen participation must give citizens access to intelligible information. This is a basic issue that can reduce the inequalities of the decision-making process. These researchers believe that adopting the RFP can also contribute to a new form of public transparency, one that breaks from the prototypical jargon used by public administration in order to strengthen *Accountability*.

### 2.4 On Popular Financial Reporting (RFPs)

According to Cohen & Karatzimas (2015), popular reporting refers to the preparation of concise, easy-to-read, comprehensive and user-friendly financial reports which primarily focus on the needs of citizens.

In addition to those citizens who constitute the fundamental target group of popular reporting, these reports can be useful to politicians, public sector officials, the media and community groups (Gasb, 1992). They can be an important mechanism to improve the transparency of government budget information (Yusuf & Jordan, 2015) and facilitate the provision of information that is essential for developing informed citizens who can effectively participate in the budget/tax policies (Jordan et al., 2016). For Groff, Pitman, and Tervo (2017), RFPs are also designed to be useful to constituents, providing less detail and more of an overview of government financial activities and conditions.

Popular Financial Reports (RFPs) can therefore address a very broad audience of users who all share a common denominator— a lack of experience in accounting and financial reporting (Cohen & Karatzimas, 2015). According to these researchers, the basic philosophy behind popular reports is to provide a simplified view of financial statements by avoiding detailed analysis and the use of complicated technical terms.

Thus, the complexity of these reports is driven by the users' (citizens) level of "maturity" rather than that of those who prepare them. The information they contain comes from formal financial statements and formal financial systems (Sharp et al., 1998; Cohen & Karatzimas, 2015).

In practice, Popular Financial Reports (RFPs) emerged to facilitate the understanding of users who were not familiar with the language used in accounting and financial reports (Yusuf et al, 2013; Groff, Pitman, & Tervo, 2017). Although many government entities do respond to this trend and develop popular reports, they do not advance to the second necessary step, which is to actively disseminate those reports to constituents (Yusuf et al., 2013; Cohen & Karatzimas, 2015). This then raises the question about whether there is a demand for them or not.

One explanation for this may be the fact that information that would be effectively applied in practice is not always contained in the RFPs, not to mention that it can be difficult to implement an RFP due to the numerous variables of each government (Martins & Lima, 2021). Clay (2010) and Martins and Lima (2021) also point out that RFPs are not always disseminated properly and effectively in order to be seen.

In practice, the RFP is a simplified version of a government report which uses texts with shorter sentences and words, and has a simpler, more direct writing style which is ultimately easier to understand (Aquino & Cabral, 2020). According to Yusuf et al. (2013) and Martins and Lima (2021), RFPs can be presented in a variety of templates – popular annual financial reports, citizen's guides to the budget, service and achievement reports, annual corporate reports, and state government reports.

According to Hermann (2011), an RFP must contain the following characteristics: (i) have a theme; (ii) begin with a letter and a photograph; (iii) use plain language; (iv) present an open and appealing *layout*; (v) make good use of graphics and images; (vi) only include information that is relevant and significant; and (vii) adopt an educational tone.

When presenting guidelines for preparing popular financial reports in Brazilian public entities based on the concepts and characteristics presented in the literature on the subject, Martins and Lima (2021) state that a simplified view of financial statements must be provided and that jargon and technical language which may not be immediately understandable to those without financial or accounting backgrounds be avoided.

These authors also recommend that close attention be paid to citizens' concerns and the message that local authorities wish to convey by providing organized and relevant information which is presented in such a way that citizens can understand how it relates to or impacts them (Martins & Lima, 2021).

One option is that the dissemination of RFPs accompanied by short videos on social networks can bring better results, better combining other elements of the language and favoring the understanding of the message (Cabral & Aquino 2020; Martins & Lima, 2021).

There are practical cases of recent RFPs in Brazil, such as the Citizen Balance Sheet for the state of Santa Catarina (Estado de Santa Catarina, 2019) and the Simplified Annual Reporting for the state of Bahia (Estado da Bahia, 2019). However, the academic research on this subject is limited (Biondi & Bracci, 2018; Rodrigues, Dias & Vargas, 2021; Martins & Lima, 2021).

While it is important to examine how non-experts understand government reporting– since using (with greater understanding and engagement) RFPs is the reason for all government data transparency and openness initiatives as a solution to participatory democracy (Cabral & Aquino, 2020) – the fact is that, in Brazil, the participation of these actors is still ineffective and needs to be better explored (Martins & Lima, 2021).

## 2.5 The Role of Councils and Public Health Accountability Reports in Brazil

Initially created through Law No. 241/1992, the municipal health councils have undergone some changes and are currently governed by Law No. 1.274/2010, which provides for its creation, organization and functioning, described as a consultative and deliberative body with the objective of continuing the SUS guidelines (Silva et al., 2016).

Similar to the Education and Social Assistance Councils, the CMS are autonomous bodies and make independent decisions. They strive to work in conjunction with the health secretariats, helping to develop plans and policies, while monitoring the services provided and the resources received by the public agency through direct application by the municipality or through an agreement (Silva et al., 2016).

For Silva et al. (2016), the creation of CMS made it possible for people and managers of public bodies to work together, providing opportunities for democratic and participatory management in the area of health. According to these authors, this also signifies a greater responsibility and transparency in the actions of these bodies as the public are able to participate more actively in the development of public policies, given that they are the main stakeholders in the efficiency and effectiveness of these policies.

In the case of health, according to Carvalho (2013), CMS promotes and protects health and disease prevention actions, expands the public's access to health actions, guarantees funding to improve health care, and develops policies in work management and health education: humanization, reception and quality. These factors can help to improve the health of Brazilians and strengthen the SUS.

Currently ruled by Ordinance No. 2135, created on September 25, 2013, the SUS health policy is summarized in three main documents: health plan (PS), annual health program (PAS) and annual management report (RAG). The RAG, the object of analysis of this study, is the management tool that allows

managers to present the results from the PAS and guide any redirections that might be necessary in the PS (Santos et al., 2020).

Paragraph 1 of Article 36 of Complementary Law No. 141, January 13, 2012, states that in order for the Union, the Federal District and the municipalities to be compliant with the provisions under this article they must send a RAG to their respective CMS until March 30 of the following financial year. The councillors must issue a conclusive opinion on whether or not to comply with the rules established in that Complementary Law. These decisions will be widely published, which includes releasing them in electronic mediums that are of public access.

According to the *Manual of Recommendations for closing the Municipal Health Management* (CONASEMS, 2020), in addition to preparing the secretariats and their teams for a new management, the municipal health secretaries must also carry out an assessment of everything they have designed in their municipal health plans, be accountable for what has been accomplished, and point out suggestions and strategies for the future. The main SUS accountability reports for CMS are presented in Table 1.

According to the Ministry of Health guidelines (2010), the RAG must include the following constitutive elements:

- a. the objectives, guidelines and goals in the Health Plan (HP). It is recommended that its presentation observe the axes adopted in the Plan (population health conditions; health determinants and conditions; and health management).
- b. the annual actions defined - and not defined - in the Annual Health Program (PAS), planned and achieved goals.
- c. expected and implemented budget resources.
- d. specific observations of programs deemed necessary.
- e. the analysis of implemented PAS, which includes the planned and unplanned actions and established goals, explaining the obtained resources.
- f. the recommendations for both the PAS of the following year and for eventual adjustments in the PS.

Considering that the RAG must be approved by the respective CMS, it is suggested that the approval document be attached to it.

Table 1

**Main SUS Accountability Reports for Municipal Health Councils**

<b>Municipal Health Plan</b>	The Municipal Health Plan (PMS) is the basis for the activities and programs of the municipal health department. Not only is it approved by the municipal health council and a legal requirement, but it is also a fundamental tool for consolidation of the SUS since it explains the path that the Health Department needs to follow in order to achieve its mission.
<b>DigiSUS Administrator</b>	This platform registers the Guidelines, Objectives, Goals and Indicators of the Municipal Health Plan. It registers the Annual Health Program (PAS) for four years and its information on the planned actions and budgets. The platform also provides accountability for planned actions through the Quarterly Detailed Report (RDQA) and the Annual Management Report (RAG).
<b>Annual Management Report (RAG)</b>	The Annual Management Report (RAG) is prepared annually for accountability purposes and to evidence the application of health resources. It presents the results from the Annual Health Program (PAS), controls any redirections that may be necessary in the Health Plan and, pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 36 from LC 141, must be presented by March 30 of the following financial year. The Council is responsible for issuing a conclusive opinion through the DigiSUS Administrator/Planning Module system (DGMP).
<b>Quarterly Management Reports</b>	The quarterly reports are tools for monitoring the implementation of the Annual Health Program (PAS), and must be presented by the SUS manager at the end of May, September and February at a public hearing held in City Council and the respective health council.
<b>Audits and Other Monitoring Procedures</b>	The Annual Management Report and the Quarterly Reports require the disclosure of all audits which have been conducted or are in the process of being conducted, including their recommendations and determinations. The Manager must list and include in these reports all the Municipal Health Department health audits and inspections in progress, including those triggered by other bodies, such as the National Department of SUS Auditing (DENASUS), the Federal Comptroller General (CGU), the Federal Court of Audits (TCU), the state and/or municipal audit courts, and the State Health Department.

Source: CONASEMS (2020), adapted by authors.



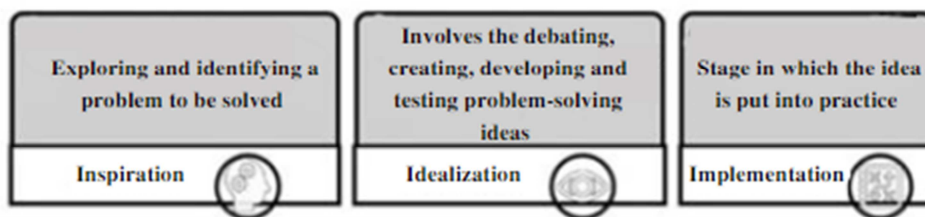
### 3 Methodology

With the goal of understanding how the Popular Financial Reporting (RFPs) format can help municipal councilors make better decisions about financial information, this study adopts a qualitative approach supported by a methodology which includes documentary data collected from literature on RFPs and the experience of one of the authors who has been working in the area of human communication and its nuances for 20 years.

The documentary approach used secondary data from the collection and content analysis of the information contained in the Annual Management Report (RAG), approved in 2019 by the Health Council of the municipality of Florianópolis, located in the state of Santa Catarina, in the south of Brazil. The methodology was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved a preliminary analysis of the RAG originally published by the municipality and a content analysis of the information contained therein. The second stage involved proposing a *layout* for the same RAG in light of RFP literature using the *Design Thinking* methodology and the Canva® platform.

Even though identifying a method for adapting the language from the field of communication to make *popular financial reporting* more readable is not possible at this time, journalistic language techniques are adopted (Lage, 2006) so that the final product is communicated with less noise, thus enabling a more effective communication of data using the *Design Thinking* methodology.

According to Brown (2008), the Design Thinking methodology “uses the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with what is technologically feasible”, and what is viable as a business strategy “can be converted into values of the customers and market opportunities” (p.2). The *Design Thinking* methodology is composed of three fundamental steps: inspiration, idealization and implementation (Brown, 2010; Quinaud, Lumini; & Baldessar., 2018), as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 – Communication using the *Design Thinking* methodology**

Source: Adapted from Brown (2010) and Quinaud, Lumini and Baldessar (2018)

Clearly, when we talk about RAGs we are not talking about clients, but about citizens who need access to information according to the *design* of the documents, generating a greater level of understandability. Cerezini and Silva (2017) point out that the *Design Thinking* approach can also be divided into seven stages, which include (i) understanding, (ii) observation, (iii) point of view, (iv) ideation, (v) prototype, (vi) test and (vi) iteration (Table 2).

Brown (2020) points out that we need new products that balance the needs of individuals and society as a whole; new ideas that tackle the global challenges of health, poverty and education; new strategies that result in differences that matter and a sense of purpose that engages everyone who is affected by them.

For Brown, we need an approach to innovation that is powerful, effective and widely accessible, that can be integrated into all aspects of business and society, and that individuals and teams can use to generate innovative ideas that are implemented and that make a difference. This kind of approach is made possible by *Design Thinking* (Brown, 2020).

Graphic representations will also be used as tools to explain ideas, concepts and processes that have been in use for a long time. For example, platforms such as Canva® can use drawings and figures to provide a more simplified explanation of the studies and theories on various subjects (Archanjo & Santos, 2020).

According to Cândido, Bertolotti and Bedin (2017), platforms such as Canva® provide an overview of what is expected of projects and how they will be implemented, recording improvements and opportunities that may arise during their development. The platform is a free *online* service and is an ideal collaborative tool for creating *design* material and image editing, used to produce greeting cards and create identities for projects, products, services, etc. (Archanjo & Santos, 2020).

As Brown (2010) and Quinaud, Lumini and Baldessar (2018) point out, the steps of the methodology do not have to occur in a linear fashion, meaning that if during the implementation phase it turns out that a particular solution needs to be revised, it is possible to go back to the idealization phase in order to review it.

Table 2  
**Stages of Design Thinking**

<b>Understanding</b>	A time for differing opinions. It is necessary to make a holistic understanding of the problem, looking at it from different points of view so that the real problem to be solved can be understood.
<b>Observation and Research</b>	Involves going out into the field and talking, observing and experimenting. Also, getting out of one's comfort zone and getting the information that will be valuable to the process. The product or service is made for people; thus, all observations will be based on them.
<b>Point of View</b>	A time for differing opinions. The point of view is always one of the most difficult phases of the process as a lot of information has been collected, and the main challenge needs to be redefined based on understanding and group research. It is a time for navigating between the information collected. The time and effort it takes to conclude this phase will be proportional to the opening generated in the previous phases.
<b>Ideation</b>	The point when solutions come to life. This is the time when the famous <i>brainstorming</i> is done and solutions are created for the challenge defined in the previous steps. It is important to realize that the ideas generated here are actually about solving the problem.
<b>Prototype</b>	A time for divergence and for generating even more ideas, to increase understanding, to expand. This is the moment when the ideas on paper come to life. Building models helps you visualize and iterate on how the idea works. The prototype can give one an idea before the solution even exists.
<b>Test</b>	This is when the prototypes are tested. A prototype doesn't have to be faithful to the future product, sometimes a design on a sheet of paper is sufficient.
<b>Iteration</b>	This is the opportunity to refine the solutions and improve on them, that is, take them to the next level. All stages of <i>Design Thinking</i> are iterative and can relate to each other, regardless of the stage of the process. Going back to previous stages for verification purposes is very common and adds a lot to the process.

Source: Cerezini & Silva (2017). Adapted by authors.

Canva® is a visual representation of the project plan and *Design Thinking* is a methodology for solving problems that helps build desirable, creatable and practicable answers. Uniting these two methodologies produces an inspirational and creative environment for co-participatory and active planning (Ruiz, 2019).

Based on the stages defined by Brown (2008), Quinaud, Lumini and Baldessar (2018), the first stage (inspiration) of this study involved an initial analysis of the RAG approved by the CMS of Florianópolis in 2019. The second stage (idealization) focused on the search for *design* and language possibilities, as well as its critical evaluation in the transformation of the analyzed RAG and its possible transformation into an RFP. The third and final step (implementation) involved data migration from the original RAG to the RFP format using Canva®, exploring what was assessed in the previous steps.

The proposal for a new RAG *layout* in light of RFP literature presented in this study is an alternative to reduce noise from the councilors of the respective CMS during the RAG approval process in order to contextualize the understanding of the goals and procedures developed to strengthen the SUS. The hope is that the proposal to simplify the information in the RAG in light of RFP literature will allow councillors to act more efficiently. As a result, the analysis of the report is descriptive, based on current legislation regarding the procedures necessary for the annual accountability of the CMS, based on RFP literature (Yusuf & Jordan, 2012; Martins & Lima, 2021).

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Preliminary analysis of RAG in light of RFP literature

In terms of organizing the RAG document, the applicable legislation suggests that it include (i) an introduction, with the representation of data and characterization of the corresponding management sphere; (ii) a summary table with the budget statement; (iii) frameworks with constitutive elements of the RAG; (iv) analysis of the implementation of the PAS, with an assessment of the scope of actions and goals in the year and how they correspond with the PS objectives; and (v) recommendations for the following year's PAS and eventual adjustments to the PS, including explanations for this (Ministry of Health, 2010).

In this sense, the RAG approved by the Florianópolis CMS in 2019 is composed of 62 pages, divided into 12 chapters: (1) Identification; (2) Introduction; (3) Demographic, Morbidity and Mortality Data; (4) Data on the Production of Services in the SUS; (5) Physical Network Service Provider to the SUS; (6) Health Professionals Working in the SUS; (7) Annual Health Program (PAS); (8) Interfederative Agreement Indicators; (9) Budget and Financial Implementation; (10) Audits; (11) Analysis and General Considerations; and (12) Recommendations for the Following Year. Documentary analysis shows that the RAG (the object of

study for this paper) meets the requirements of Brazilian legislation, and therefore meets the normative perspective established for it (Figure 3).

The financial statements are also presented as they were established in the regulations, in the same technical formats as other rendering of accounts required by the supervisory bodies (Figure 4). The original RAG from the Florianópolis CMS did not make use of many graphics, illustrations, colors, or different tables to simplify the complexity of the material (Figure 5). There is no emphasis placed on the relevance of information content in people's lives, nor is there evidence of how it impacts citizens (Figure 6).

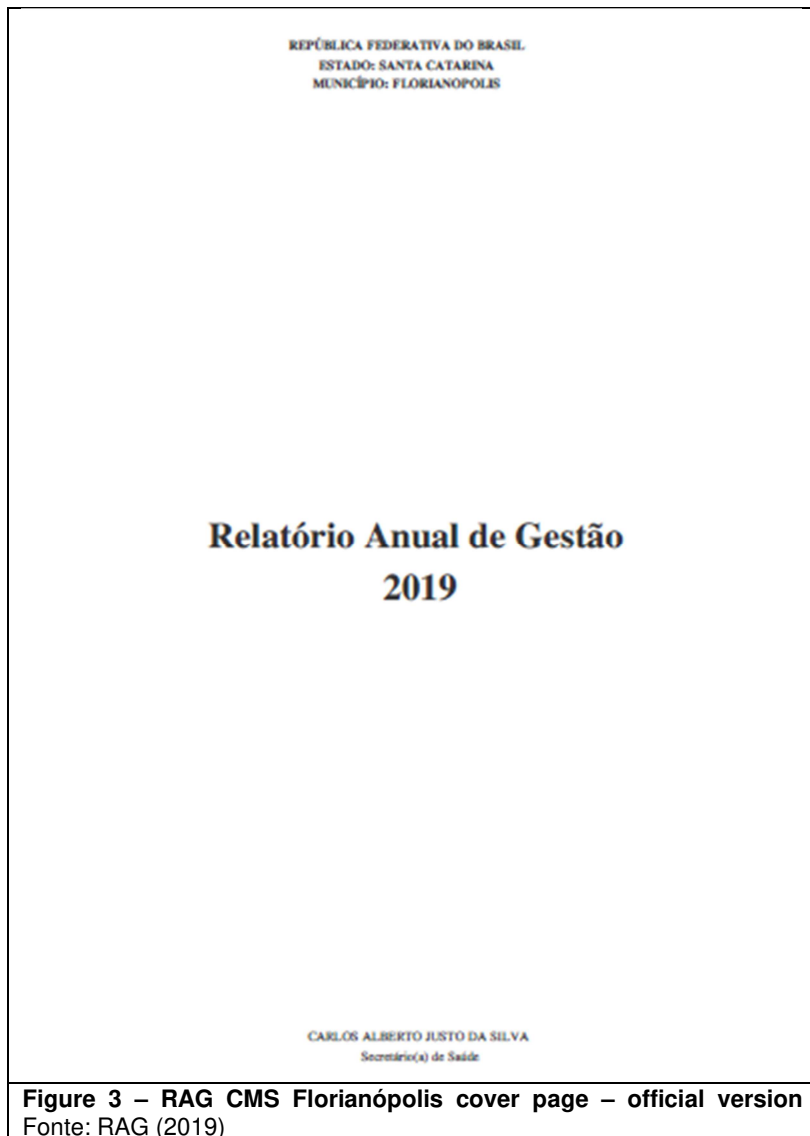


Figure 3 – RAG CMS Florianópolis cover page – official version  
Fonte: RAG (2019)

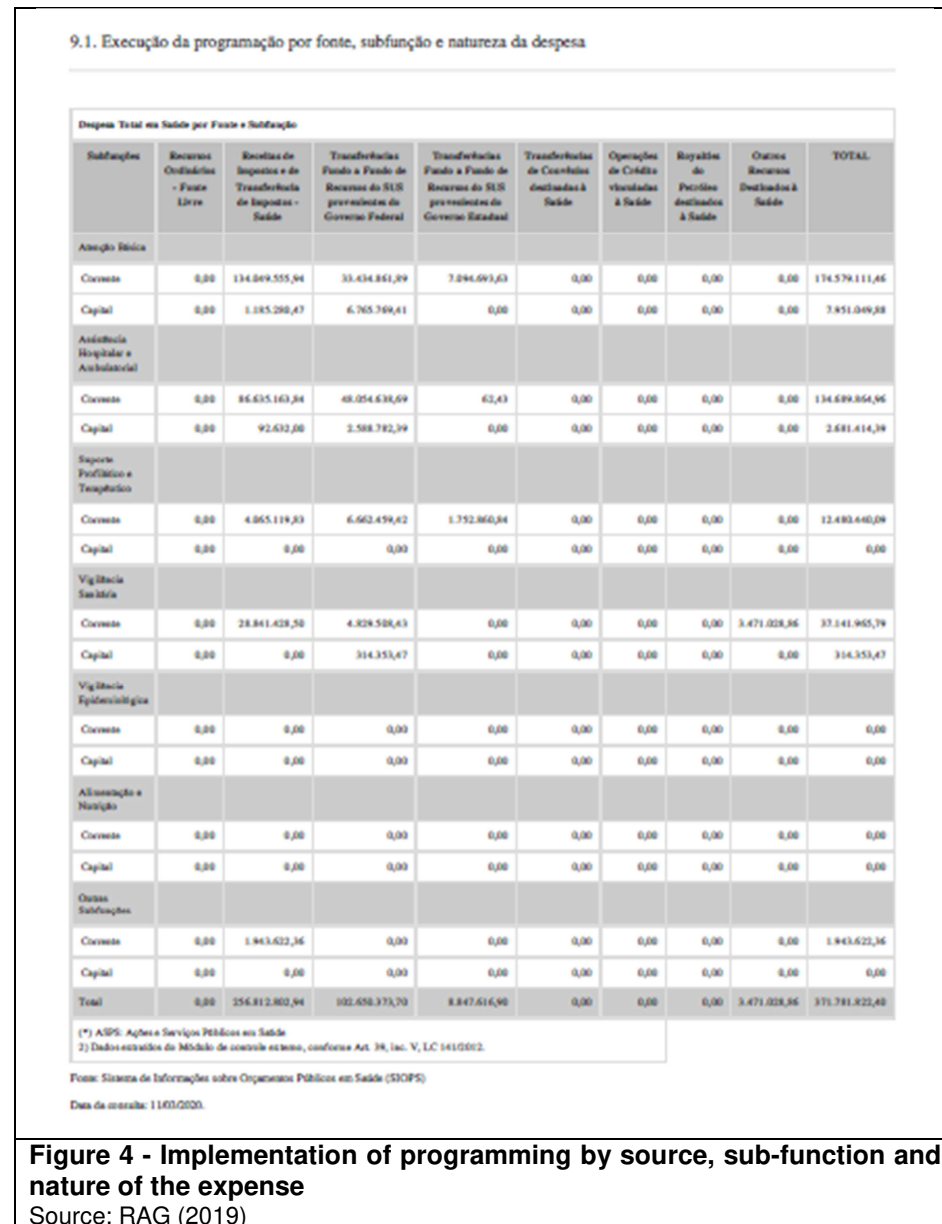


Figure 4 - Implementation of programming by source, sub-function and nature of the expense  
Source: RAG (2019)

DESPESAS COM SAÚDE NÃO COMPUTADAS PARA FINS DE APURAÇÃO DO PERCENTUAL MÍNIMO	DOTAÇÃO INICIAL	DOTAÇÃO ATUALIZADA	DESPESAS EXECUTADAS		
			Liquidadas Até o Bimestre (b)	Inscritas em Restos a Pagar não Processados (l)	% [(b+l) / IV(f+g)]
DESPESAS COM INATIVOS E PENSIONISTAS	N/A	4.102,46	4.102,46	0,00	0,00
DESPESA COM ASSISTÊNCIA À SAÚDE QUE NÃO ATENDE AO PRINCÍPIO DE ACESSO UNIVERSAL	N/A	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
DESPESAS CUSTEADAS COM OUTROS RECURSOS	N/A	149.547.240,80	110.646.362,48	4.322.656,98	30,92
Recursos de Transferências Sistema Único de Saúde - SUS	N/A	145.592.436,78	107.175.333,62	4.322.656,98	29,99
Recursos de Operações de Crédito	N/A	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Outros Recursos	N/A	3.954.804,02	3.471.028,86	0,00	0,93
OUTRAS AÇÕES E SERVIÇOS NÃO COMPUTADOS	N/A	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
RESTOS A PAGAR NÃO PROCESSADOS INSCRITOS INDEVIDAMENTE NO EXERCÍCIO SEM DISPONIBILIDADE FINANCEIRA <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.802.905,18	
DESPESAS CUSTEADAS COM DISPONIBILIDADE DE CAIXA VINCULADA AOS RESTOS A PAGAR CANCELADOS <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	0,00	0,00	0,00
DESPESAS CUSTEADAS COM RECURSOS VINCULADOS À PARCELA DO PERCENTUAL MÍNIMO QUE NÃO FOI APLICADA EM AÇÕES E SERVIÇOS DE SAÚDE EM EXERCÍCIOS ANTERIORES <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	0,00	0,00	0,00
TOTAL DAS DESPESAS COM SAÚDE NÃO COMPUTADAS (V)		N/A		118.736.027,10	31,95
TOTAL DAS DESPESAS COM AÇÕES E SERVIÇOS PÚBLICOS DE SAÚDE (VI) = [(IV(f+g)-V(b+l))]		N/A		253.005.795,30	
PERCENTUAL DE APLICAÇÃO EM AÇÕES E SERVIÇOS PÚBLICOS DE SAÚDE SOBRE A RECEITA DE IMPOSTOS LÍQUIDA E TRANSFERÊNCIAS CONSTITUCIONAIS E LEGAIS (VIPS) = [(VI(b+l) / IIIb) x 100] - LIMITE CONSTITUCIONAL 15% <sup>4</sup>					19,62
VALOR REFERENTE À DIFERENÇA ENTRE O VALOR EXECUTADO E O LIMITE MÍNIMO CONSTITUCIONAL [(VI(b+l)-(15*IIIb)/100)]					59.618.870,99

Figure 5 – RAG – original version  
Fonte: RAG (2019)

## 11. Análises e Considerações Gerais

A Programação Anual de Saúde de 2019 foi elaborada considerando os ajustes e orientações apontados no RAG do ano anterior.

O acesso e a melhoria contínua da qualidade têm sido pontos fundamentais no desenvolvimento da saúde pública do município de Florianópolis nos últimos anos. Para tal, o município tem investido grande esforço nos projetos de educação permanente e formação, como as residências em saúde da família, implementação dos protocolos de enfermagem, os guias de prática clínica, o sistema de acreditação em saúde e na gestão do desenvolvimento do sistema de análise de custos.

Algumas das iniciativas de gestão em saúde do município foram reconhecidas nacionalmente, o que o levou a integrar o Laboratório de Inovação da OPAS, principalmente com os projetos inovadores relacionados à APS Forte e a atuação clínica da Enfermagem.

A SMS de Florianópolis trabalhou na estruturação do Projeto de Atendimento Pré-Clinico, bem como na consolidação do Projeto de Acesso Avançado na APS, o que incluiu a disponibilização de *smartphone* para todas as equipes de atenção primária. Em fevereiro de 2019 a população do município passou a contar com a UPA Contínua como mais um serviço de atendimentos às urgências e emergências.

Ainda em 2019, a SMS implantou uma nova plataforma de registro eletrônico em saúde, o que oportunizou que alguns serviços no município, como o processo de alvará sanitário e outras atividades remotas da vigilância sanitária se tornassem digitais, oferecendo mais agilidade e confiança. Propiciou também integração completa entre as atividades das equipes de Saúde da Família, o serviço de regulação e as equipes de controle de agravos. Como toda mudança de plataforma, o sistema exigiu um tempo de adaptação e ajustes para se adequar às necessidades da SMS, porém melhorias estão sendo realizadas sistematicamente e acompanhadas pela área responsável da Secretaria.

Deve-se destacar ainda o esforço empreendido no objetivo de ampliar o acesso e reduzir o tempo de espera dos pacientes para o acesso aos exames, consultas e procedimentos da atenção especializada.

Figure 6 – General Considerations for RAG – original version  
Fonte: RAG (2019)

Analyses and considerations on the topics covered in the section are presented at the end of the chapters in the original RAG to complement the data. As can be seen, despite presenting relevant information and complying with Brazilian regulations, the Florianópolis CMS RAG is composed of 62 pages and uses technical terms and detailed analysis. This means it is not immediately understandable for those who have no financial or accounting training and makes it difficult for the councillors who must approve its content to understand it.

We also found that the information from the original RAG is always presented in tables, which can make for a lengthier document. In terms of adapting to the RFP, the literature shows that the use of graphics and images would allow for shared understanding and a more dynamic reading of the information; however, this resource was not used, perhaps because there are no parameters in Brazilian legislation for the presentation of information. In addition, the data disclosed in its entirety may compromise the transmission of the message to recipients.

In light of the RFP literature, the perception is that the information provided in the original RAG is too technically complex and thus makes it difficult to dialogue with users who may be interested in the information it contains. Silva et al. (2018) had found that the lack of training for counselors could be one of the main factors that compromises the monitoring of public resources for municipal programs seeing as how a minimum level of technical knowledge is required to understand the budget process.

#### 4.2 New *Layout* Proposal for the RAG Object of Analysis in light of RFP literature

The RFP is an effective communication tool, its visual and textual planning are important elements for building a message that is not only fully decoded by the recipient, but also serves as a fundamental liaison between the product and its consumer.

Similar to newspapers and other materials that seek to reach a broader audience, the RFP needs to be developed based on these two aspects. It needs to have an attractive layout, with fluid and organized text from the cover page to the graphics, thus simplifying the financial language by using terms that lead to a better understanding of the message.

The literature shows that RFPs are created by professionals who are not formally trained in *design*, as such, we recommend using platforms that are accessible and easy to use. In this paper, we suggest using the free software Canva® (<https://www.canva.com>) which contains a number of ready-made *layouts* that allow a margin of authorship and creativity even for people who have little knowledge of digital technologies and *design* concepts, such as alignment and chromatic composition. This is based on the *magic suggestions* resource where the program's algorithm suggests resources.

All these issues align with the *Design Thinking* process, a systemic approach to problem solving that removes *design* work from the hands of specialized professionals by allowing its principles to be employed by people working in a variety of professional areas, as well as financial professionals. When using *Design Thinking* individual work is replaced by group work in the search for developing solutions, products, services and processes (Ruiz, 2019).

Using the *Design Thinking* methodology and the Canva® platform, the proposal is to make extensive use of drawings and figures to provide a simplified explanation of the studies and theories, as in Figure 7 which shows the rebuilt version of the RAG original cover page. Note that this is the same cover page in Figure 3.

Another suggestion pertains to graphics that are generally difficult for the average person to understand as they require not only specific knowledge of mathematics, but also an understanding of the expressions used that need to be translated for the average reader. In addition, the graphics must also be modified in order to serve the broader public. Thus, they should be thought of as elements of *Design Thinking* that seek to “visually translate data and information that would be complex for most individuals” (Costa, 2015).

Regarding basic information, our suggestion is that a simplified view of financial information be offered, one that avoids a detailed analysis or the use of complicated technical terms, as shown in Figure 8.

By offering a visually appealing language using different graphics, illustrations, colors and tables, the expectation is that, based on the characteristics of the RFPs, the complexity of the material will be reduced, as shown in Figures 9 and 10.

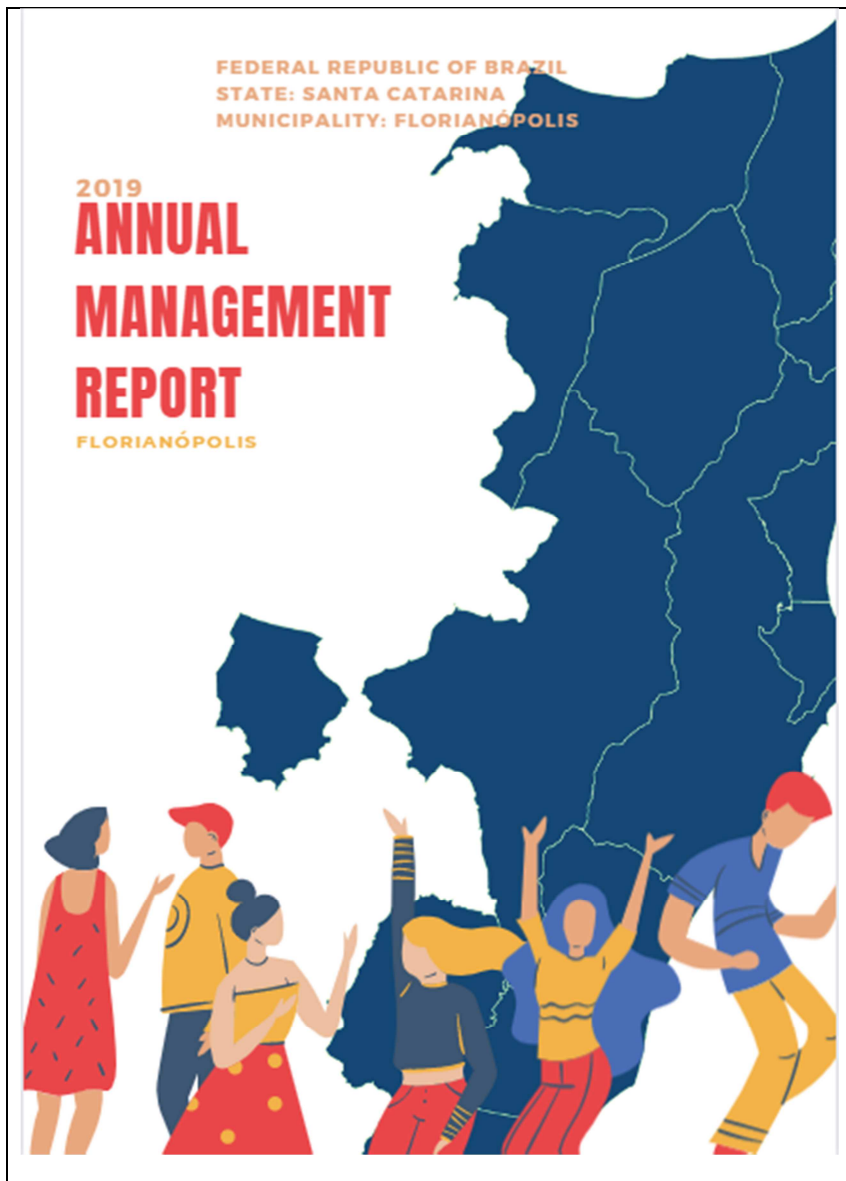


Figure 7 – Suggested layout for RAG cover page, made in Canva® with stock elements  
 Fonte: Adaptação RAG (2019)

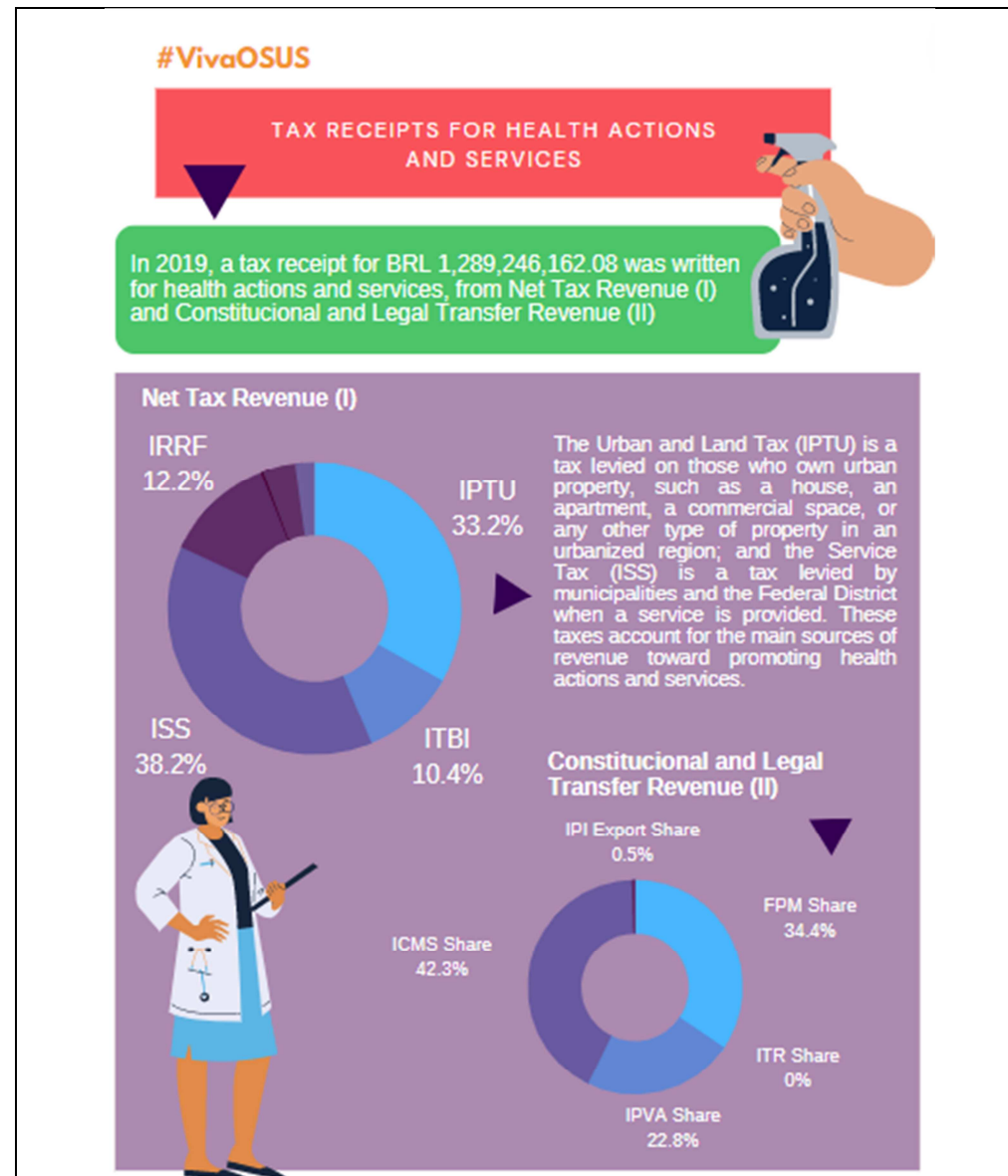


Figure 8 – Budget implementation summary, created in Canva® with stock elements  
 Fonte: Adaptação RAG (2019)



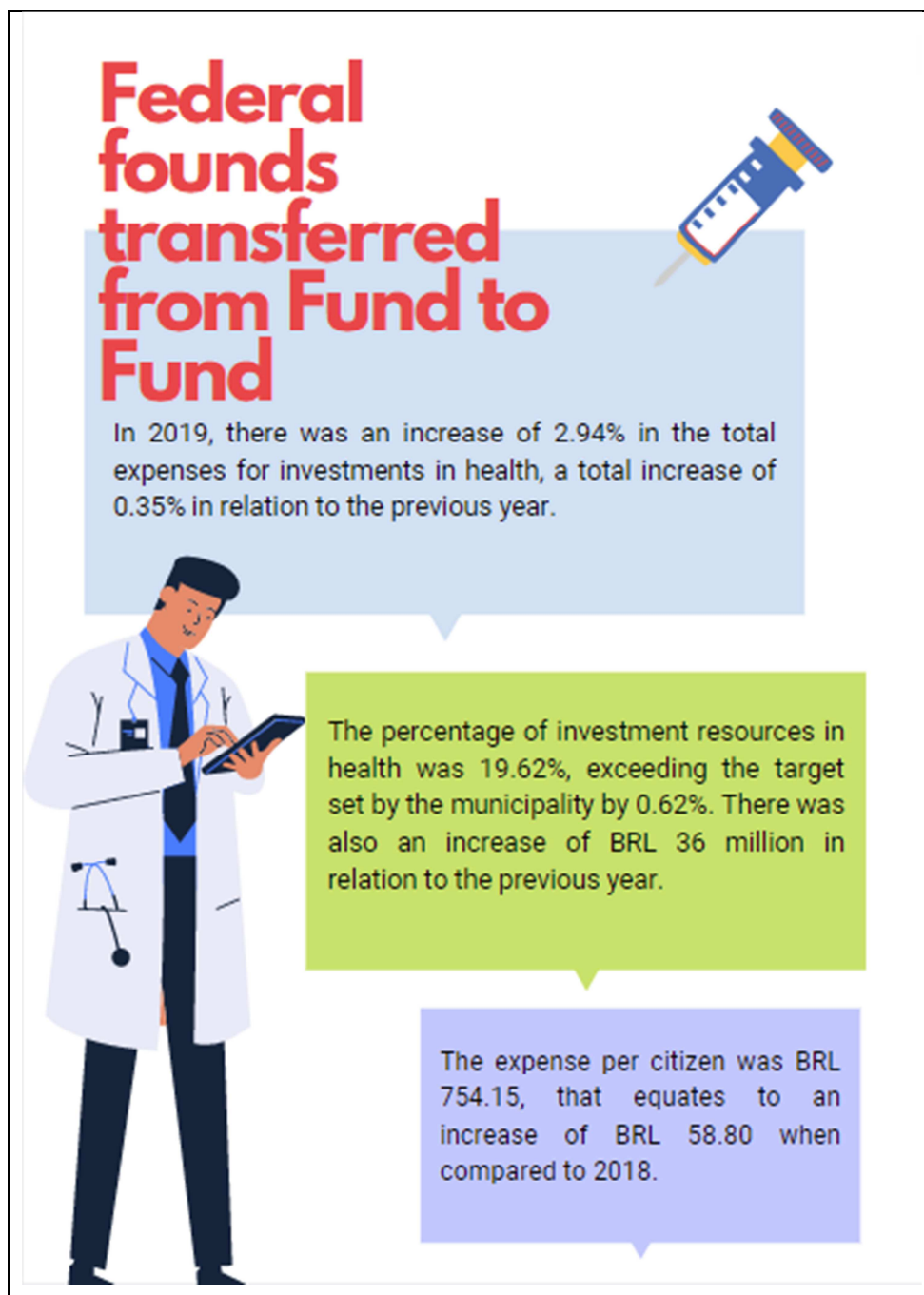
Figure 9 – Implementation of programming by source, sub-function and nature of the expense, created in Canva® with stock elements  
 Fonte: Adaptação RAG (2019)



Figure 10 – Implementation of programming by source, sub-function and nature of the expense, created in Canva® with stock elements  
 Fonte: Adaptação RAG (2019)



The idea is to also pay attention to citizens' concerns and the message that local authorities want to convey, as shown in Figure 11.



**Figure 11 – Budget and financial implementation of federal funds transferred from fund to fund, according to the financing package and work program, created in Canva® with stock elements**  
Fonte: Adaptação RAG (2019)

It should be noted that, in his research, Souza (2020) had already pointed out that graphics are one of the accessibility tools which is mentioned the most. It is the tool that most facilitated the understanding of the financial information in the management report included in his study. However, according to this same researcher, these resources must be strategically inserted into the materials that will transmit information.

For example, a narrative about expenses spent on service contracts must appear next to a graph showing the institution's total expenses. Similarly, if explanatory audio were to be used with visual *slideshows*, that audio must remain in sync with what is being visually represented. This was precisely the concept of this study.

The suggestions presented in this study are intended to grab readers' attention by using contrasting colors, drawings, and images. Presenting an RAG with a visual encourages one to read the material, as well as better understand its content.

However, seeing as how financial professionals publish financial information in the public sector (Rodrigues, Dias & Vargas, 2021), our expectation is that these professionals can consider the discussions and suggestions presented here when creating a new form for developing and divulging financial information as it pertains to accountability in the public sector, notably for councilors on municipal councils.

## 5 Final Considerations

This study aims to understand how popular financial reporting (RFPs) can help city councilors make better decisions about financial information. To do this, our study was based on a qualitative approach which involved collecting documentary data from the Annual Management Report (RAG), approved in 2019 by the Health Council for the municipality of Florianópolis, located in the state of Santa Catarina, in the south of Brazil. This was performed using the *Design Thinking* methodology and the Canva® platform.

Review of the literature revealed there are some obstacles that could hinder the municipal health councilor from performing his or her role. One such obstacle is the difficulty in analyzing the RAG due to technical language and the councillor's limited training in accountability. This study also found that the need for technical information to be condensed and summarized in order to make it more accessible and more easily disseminated and distributed to citizens has been a concern among researchers. The *popular financial reporting* literature is presented as a tool for "translating" the results.

The first stage of the methodology for this study (a preliminary analysis of the RAG originally published by municipality) revealed that said RAG meets the requirements of Brazilian legislation; however, it uses technical terms and contains a detailed analysis which does not make it immediately understandable to those who do not have a financial or accounting background.

The second stage of the methodological strategy involved proposing a new *layout* for the RAG in light of the RFP literature using the *Design Thinking* methodology and the Canva® platform. The new illustration was designed to be attractive to readers by using contrasting colors, drawings, and images that would encourage councillors to read the RAG and give them a better understanding of its content.

Relying on the experience of one of the authors who has worked in the field of human communication for 20 years, the expectation for this study is that the new RAG *layout* proposal based on the RFP literature will be able to help users understand the language used in accounting and financial reports. These elements could be used as a basis for a popular report on the Municipal Health Council object of analysis.

It should be noted that the discussions and suggestions for developing and disseminating RFPs in this study are in line with the findings contained in literature, which recommends using audiovisual information in addition to the normative aspects needed for developing and disseminating financial information within the Brazilian public sector.

For future studies, we recommend that the suggested RAG *layout* presented in this study be presented to CMS counselors in order to ascertain whether the elements introduced in light of the RFP literature actually helped said counselors make better decisions about financial information and whether it provided them with a better awareness and understanding of the information.

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