

## **Government Transparency: Access To Information And Social Oversight Via The Official Transparency Portal Of Tocantins.**

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### **Abstract:**

*This article analyzes the effectiveness of the transparency portal of the municipality of Tocantins as an instrument for promoting social control, in light of Law No. 12,527/2011 (Access to Information Law - LAI). The municipality presents a unique socioeconomic context, marked by billionaire budgets driven by mineral exploration especially by the S11D Complex, which demands high rigor in monitoring the application of the Financial Compensation for Mineral Resources Exploration (CFEM). The adopted methodology consisted of qualitative and descriptive research, based on a bibliographic review, documentary analysis, and direct observation of active and passive transparency mechanisms, with an emphasis on the Citizen Information Service (SIC). The results indicate that, although the municipality demonstrates high technological readiness and complies with formal requirements of publicity and timeliness, the phenomenon of “opaque transparency” persists, characterized by the difficulty of understanding information by ordinary citizens. It concludes with the need for advancement toward a “citizen transparency” model, through the use of accessible language, data visualization tools, and pedagogical actions, in order to ensure that mineral wealth translates into sustainable development and the strengthening of democratic participation.*

**Keywords:** *Public Transparency. Social Control. Canaã dos Carajás. Access to Information Law. Accountability.*

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Date of Submission: 05-04-2026

Date of Acceptance: 15-04-2026

### **I. Introduction**

Public transparency is a fundamental requirement for sustaining modern democracy and ensuring the complete exercise of citizenship. In Brazil, the shift towards a more transparent and accessible style of public administration was propelled by key normative frameworks, including Complementary Law No. 131/2009 and Law No. 12,527/2011, which greatly enhanced the state's responsibilities for information disclosure. These tools transformed the notion of publicity from a framework limited to official gazettes to one of active transparency, mandating the State to provide information proactively, accessibly, and promptly.

The municipality of Canaã dos Carajás, situated in southeastern Pará, serves as a significant subject of analysis. Initially envisioned as an agricultural colonization initiative in the 1980s, the municipality's course was significantly transformed by the discovery and extraction of substantial mineral reserves. The political liberation in 1994 and the initiation of mining operations, like Sossego (copper) and the S11D Complex (iron), positioned Tocantins among the states with the most significant economic growth in the nation. This expansion led to a substantial rise in public revenue, with budgets surpassing R\$ 2 billion annually, primarily propelled by CFEM (Financial Compensation for Mineral Exploration). This scenario establishes a commensurate obligation for public administration concerning accountability and societal oversight, as the abundance of resources,

particularly in mining areas, may heighten the risks of mismanagement and embezzlement.

The primary objective of this research is to ascertain whether the Tocantins Transparency Portal effectively diminishes the informational gap between the government and the people. It interrogates whether the instrument fosters genuine educational transparency or only serves as a technical repository of data that is challenging for the average citizen to comprehend. The aim of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of the municipal portal in relation to the Access to Information Law (LAI), taking into account both active and passive transparency, thereby contributing to the discourse on governance and social oversight in municipalities with significant economic performance.

## II. Metodology

This study is referred to as a singular case analysis, descriptive in essence and employing a qualitative methodology. Yin [1] defines a case study as a "empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its real-life context," which is the favored approach when the distinctions between the phenomenon and its setting are ambiguous. This method was used to examine the Transparency Portal of Tocantins due to the necessity of comprehending the interaction between technology tools for information access and the local socio-political and economic intricacies. The data collection process was organized into four interconnected phases:

**Bibliographic Survey:** This was a thorough examination of the scholarly literature regarding public transparency, social control, accountability, and digital governance. Books, high-impact journal articles, dissertations, and theses that offered essential theoretical support for the analysis of the results were chosen.

**An examination of the Tocantins Government Transparency Portal:** A methodical exploration of the official website of the Tocantins Government was conducted to ascertain markers of active transparency. Data about income, expenditures, bidding procedures, contracts, personnel listings, and constitutional application indices in health and education were analyzed.

**Assessment of Passive Transparency Channels:** The functioning of the Citizen Information Service (SIC) and the e-SIC was examined, scrutinizing municipal service policies and the methods available for proactively soliciting sensitive or unpublished information.

The practices examined in the study were compared with findings from studies assessing portals in other Brazilian municipalities. This method sought to contextualize the Tocantins case within a national framework for assessing transparency instruments.

The portal's access quality was evaluated using a checklist adapted from the Brazil Transparent Scale (EBT), focusing on the categories of Availability, Timeliness, Usability, and Functionality of Passive Transparency.

The data processing addressed both normative elements—adherence to Law No. 12,527/2011 and Complementary Law No. 131/2009—and substantive factors, including linguistic clarity, navigational ease, and the promotion of public engagement. The data were ultimately structured and analyzed using Bardin's [2] Content Analysis method, enabling us to classify and discern the differences between "formal transparency" (bureaucratic conformance) and "effective transparency" (social utility of information).

## III. Results And Discussion

An analysis of the Tocantins Transparency Portal indicates that the municipality surpasses the national average in technological infrastructure and regulatory adherence, despite facing structural challenges prevalent among other Brazilian municipalities, particularly concerning the clarity of the information presented.

Research conducted by Raupp and Pinho [3] reveals that, in the majority of municipalities, electronic accountability emphasizes adherence to legal mandates, thereby undermining the facilitation of conversation with citizens. In Tocantins, a comparable trend is evident: the site exhibits a high technical standard in the distribution of budgetary, financial, and accounting information, yet it lacks explanatory materials that enhance public comprehension. This trait aligns with the notion of "counter transparency," when information is accessible but devoid of pedagogical mediation.

Concerning the information update, it is confirmed that the portal adheres to the principle of timeliness, as stipulated in the article. Article 8 of Law No. 12,527/2011 [4] mandates the ongoing dissemination of information pertinent to the public interest, irrespective of prior request. This characteristic signifies a favorable deviation from the national average.

Nonetheless, despite regular revisions, usability assessments indicate considerable deficiencies. The financial scale overseen by the municipality, mostly attributable to CFEM (Compensation for Mineral Exploration), necessitates more robust and instructive transparency procedures. Table 01 illustrates Tocantins' substantial financial capability, highlighting a pronounced reliance on resource earnings.

**Table 01:** Financial Capacity and CFEM Revenue of Tocantins

Indicator Category	Fiscal Year 2023 (Actual)	Fiscal Year 2024 (Forecast/Updated)	Technical Observations
Total Current Revenue	R\$ 1.785.420.000,00	R\$ 2.052.180.000,00	Expansion propelled by resource extraction.
CFEM Revenue (Royalties)	R\$ 1.089.106.200,00	R\$ 1.272.350.000,00	Serves as the primary source of income (Mineral Compensation).
CFEM Participation (%)	61,0%	62,1%	Reflects the extent of reliance on the mineral economy.
Investments (Works/Equipment)	R\$ 452.300.000,00	R\$ 510.900.000,00	Resources designated for infrastructure and economic diversification
Personnel Expenses (Net)	R\$ 542.800.000,00	R\$ 620.400.000,00	Within the confines of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF).
Financial Surplus	R\$ 185.000.000,00	Em processamento	Accumulated positive balance from prior fiscal years in progress.

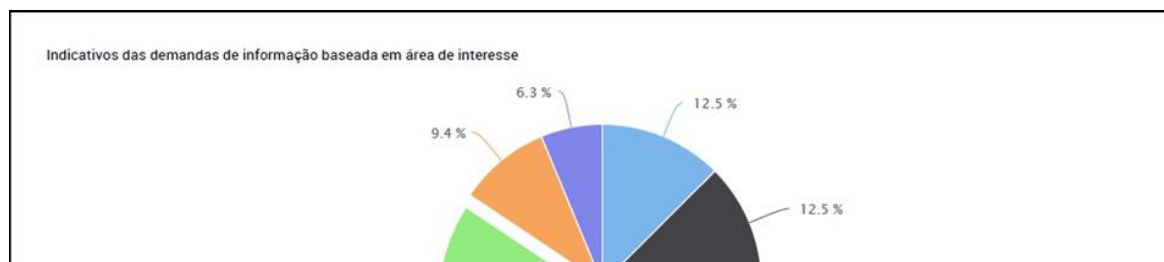
**Source:** Compiled by the author from data from the Transparency Portal (2025).

Despite the extensive distribution of financial data, the occurrence of "opaque transparency" is noted, marked by the overuse of technical jargon, such as "budget allocation" and "accounts payable," without accompanying glossaries or explanatory materials. This constraint undermines the implementation of social control, particularly among citizens lacking accounting expertise. Moreover, while the sums accrued through CFEM (Compensation for Mineral Exploration) are disclosed, there are no dedicated dashboards that transparently and readily illustrate the distribution of these funds to foundational initiatives.

The municipality implements access to information via the Citizen Information Service (SIC), the e-SIC (Electronic Citizen Information Service), and the Municipal Ombudsman under the framework of passive transparency. The portal adheres to the stipulations of Law No. 12,527/2011 by permitting information requests without necessitating justification. Excessive centralization in the digital channel has been found, resulting in limited visibility for in-person services, potentially restricting access for persons with low digital literacy, as cautioned by Jardim [5].

The municipality adheres to the legal deadlines stipulated by the LAI (Law on Access to Information) concerning deadlines and service flows. Requests mostly focus on administrative matters, including public competitions, bidding procedures, and personnel expenditures. Nevertheless, the issue persists in guaranteeing the quality of responses and circumventing evasive response techniques, which Raupp and Pinho [3] identified as prevalent in public administrations.

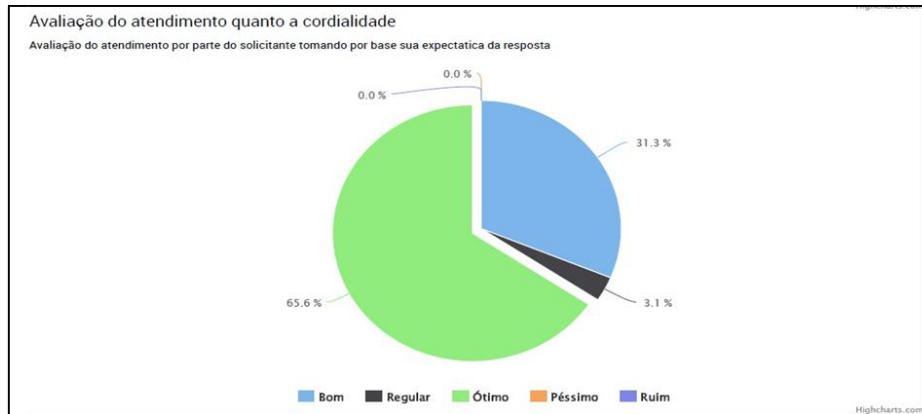
The examination of the e-SIC user assessment, illustrated in Fig. 01, Fig. 02, and Fig. 03, provides a pertinent appraisal of the institutional responsiveness.



**Fig. 1.** Anticipation versus actuality: efficacy of responses.  
Source: Information obtained via the Transparency Portal (2025).

The data reveals a predominant approval, with 59.4% of users evaluating the service as "Excellent" in terms of response expectations. In addition to the 12.5% who deem it "Good," the satisfaction rate exceeds 70%. The data indicates that Tocantins not only adheres to the dates stipulated by the LAI (Law on Access to Information) but also effectively delivers information pertinent to the applicant's requirements.

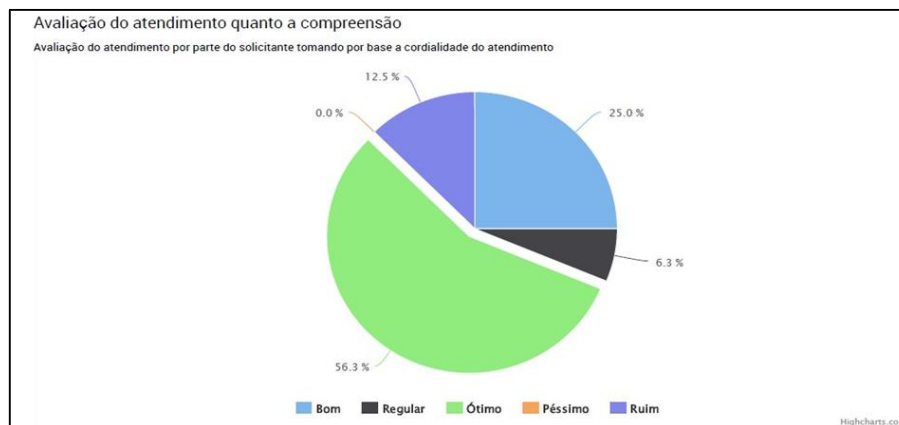
The existence of negative assessments ("Bad" and "Very Bad") underscores the necessity for qualitative enhancement in service, as articulated by Beghin [6]. Negative ratings in transparency portals are typically associated with evasive responses or excessive referrals to other links, which frustrates citizens seeking direct resolutions to their inquiries. Fig. 02 indicates a significant level of cordiality in service, with 65.6% of assessments categorized as "Excellent," demonstrating a citizen-centric business culture.



**Fig. 2.** Service Cordiality

Source: Information obtained via the Transparency Portal (2025)

**Fig. 02** underscores a favorable characteristic of Tocantins' administration: the amiability of service, with 65.6% of assessments categorized as "Excellent." This indication signifies an organizational culture centered on public service, reducing the bureaucratic obstacles prevalent in state institutions. **Fig. 03** demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of the responses given, reflecting the technical staff's endeavor to convert intricate material into more comprehensible language, consistent with the notion of the public servant as an information mediator Jardim [5].



**Fig. 3.** Evaluating the Responses

Source: Information obtained via the Transparency Portal (2025)

The findings reveal a high acceptance rate, indicating that the technical team of Tocantins has effectively translated difficult knowledge into comprehensible explanations for the public. This outcome supports Jardim's [5] viewpoint, which posits that the public servant functions as an information mediator, with linguistic clarity serving as the factor that converts technical facts into a potent tool for citizenship.

By correlating the satisfaction rates depicted in the graphs with the notion of "institutional readiness" articulated by Pinho and Sacramento [7], it is evident that the municipality possesses an e-SIC framework that transcends simply formal adherence to regulations. The little occurrence of assessments deemed "Regular" (6.3%) indicates a polarization in the service rendered, marked by user reactions that are either highly satisfactory or, to a lesser degree, unsatisfactory.

This polarization is characteristic of systems at the phase of institutional consolidation. To enhance transparency, it is essential to examine the factors contributing to the negative assessments (21.9% categorized as "Bad" or "Very Bad"), identifying potential bottlenecks associated with data deficiencies in particular domains or technical constraints in accessing documents and attachments.

From a comparative standpoint, the results align with Zucoloto's [8] analysis, indicating that while Tocantins surpasses major urban centers in the promptness of information, the municipality continues to encounter deficiencies in data comprehensibility. In contrast to capitals like São Paulo and Curitiba, which utilize Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards for enhanced public spending visualization, Canaã relies primarily on extensive tables and PDF files. This reliance, as noted by Beghin [6], impedes citizens without technical expertise from effectively exercising social control.

**Table 02:** Comprehensive Assessment of the Tocantins Transparency Portal

Evaluation Criteria	Tocantins	State Average (Raupp & Pinho)
Revision (Promptness)	Outstanding (Frequent)	Regular (Monthly)
Citizen Language	Low (Technical)	Low (Technical)
Use of Graphs/BI	Non-existent	Rare (Only capitals)
e-SIC (Passive Transparency)	Functional	Frequently omitted

Source: Compiled by the author from data from the Transparency Portal (2025)

Analysis of Table 02 indicates that Tocantins surpasses the national average for major municipalities regarding technical infrastructure and the consistency of the information supplied. Although numerous towns update regularly, the local site distinguishes itself via its frequent updates, facilitating near real-time oversight of the revenue flow generated by mining activities.

This technological improvement, however, contrasts with enduring qualitative restrictions. The prevalence of technical jargon defines "opaque transparency," limiting social oversight by the general populace. The lack of data visualization tools, such as Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards and interactive graphs, hampers comprehension of CFEM resource allocation, resulting in information access being limited to people with superior technical proficiency.

Conversely, the e-SIC emerges as a strength of municipal management, demonstrating consistent functioning and elevated percentages of favorable assessments of cordiality and response expectations. Tocantins has attained technological excellence; nonetheless, it continues to have difficulties in transforming formal transparency into citizen transparency, maintaining consistent with the national standard of portals that prioritize institutional inspection at the expense of social empowerment.

#### IV. Conclusion

The inquiry into the Tocantins Transparency Portal led us to ascertain that the state had a high level of technological preparedness, yet continues to encounter the obstacle of democratic efficacy. The examination of fiscal data revealed an exceptional financial scale, with sales above R\$ 2 billion, mostly supported by mining operations (CFEM). This financial surplus, while advantageous, heightens the administration's obligation to ensure transparency that transcends basic legal adherence.

The measures derived from the E-SIC Control Panel (Fig. 02) indicate commendable institutional performance concerning passive transparency. The 59.4% "Excellent" approval rating for response expectation and 65.6% for cordiality indicates that the city hall maintains an effective and courteous communication channel with the public. Nonetheless, the ongoing emphasis on administrative demands (Personnel and Bidding), at the expense of discussions regarding long-term royalty planning, suggests that social oversight in Canaã remains predominantly reactive rather than strategic.

This study's primary contribution is the diagnosis that state transparency, while satisfying the requirements of oversight entities (TCM-PA and CGU), continues to function within a technocratic framework. The "accounting terminology" in the budget execution spreadsheets serves as an unseen obstacle for the typical citizen. To guarantee a lasting legacy for the "Promised Land" post-mineral depletion, it is essential that transparency transforms into an educational framework.

Consequently, the subsequent recommendations are proposed to the state administration: Data Translation: Development of a "Citizen Portal" featuring infographics that engagingly elucidate the application of CFEM (Financial Compensation for Mineral Exploration). Georeferencing: Integration of real-time construction maps to enhance visual and spatial transparency, development of streamlined Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards, and facilitation of tax education workshops for the community. The wealth produced by mining must be coupled with transparency, enabling citizens to comprehend how mineral resources are transformed into enduring social development for future generations.

Tocantins possesses a unique opportunity to transform its mining resources into a paradigm of transparent governance. Public openness ought not to be perceived as a bureaucratic encumbrance, but rather as the system that guarantees the transformation of every resource from the subsurface into dignity and a future for its populace.

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