

## PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS ON ADHERENCE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – A3P IN THE FEDERAL DISTRICT

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### **Introdução**

The Federal District joined the Public Administration Agenda - A3P in 2017, which aims to promote reflection on socio-environmental management actions instituted by public units and entities and the adoption of new environmental sustainability benchmarks. The research was built through a questionnaire and subsequent statistical analysis using the Likert scale of the results achieved. The result of the survey carried out with public servants regarding better perception of adherence to the A3P compared with the other ones.

### **Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo**

Is there a difference in the perception of civil servants assigned to organs and entities that support the A3P? It aims to achieve two basic specific objectives: • Identify the perception of DF public servants regarding the implementation of public sustainability and socio-environmental management policies defined in A3P, within the scope of their authority; • Check whether there is a difference in the perception of sustainability and socio-environmental management between public servants working in organs and entities that formally adhere to A3P and those that do not.

### **Fundamentação Teórica**

The 2030 Agenda (Brazil, 2000) met the new demands and new challenges projected for the millennium (Ferrari et al, 2022) with 17 sustainable development objectives and 169 goals that balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (National Confederation of Municipalities, 2022) The project was formalized with the preparation of the Public Administration Agenda (A3P), which is a concrete result of practical consolidation of environmental protection actions, aiming at the concrete adoption of environmental sustainability references in Public Administration.

### **Metodologia**

The information provided in 353 questionnaires sent will come from the quantitative analysis that was carried out on the Likert scale and the mode analysis of the results achieved.

### **Análise dos Resultados**

For the purposes of statistical analysis of this research, the results were analyzed based on the global number of public servants, managers and analysts: 353, which represents a total percentage of 15.35% of PPGG civil servants in the DF. Considering the universe of 2,299 people, the sample obtained was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The questions 10 to 14 show more knowledge of the servants who work in places with A3P implemented. Questions 15 to 18 don't show relevant differences.

### **Conclusão**

Projects, such as A3P, should be stimulated and increased in more public sectors, as their implementation generates noticeable results for the public agents involved. It is important to verify, in other researches, the reasons for the lack of action on the part of public authorities, for that sustainable objectives are effectively implemented. The importance of urgently adopting sustainable actions is currently visible to society as a whole. The perceived climate changes are already nature's response to the aggressions suffered.

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### **Palavras Chave**

socio-environmental sustainability, Environmental Agenda in Public Administration – A3, Federal District

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Agradecimento especial ao ENGEMA, por oferecer espaço de debate e interação sobre um assunto muito importante, que é a sustentabilidade;

# PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS ON ADHERENCE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – A3P IN THE FEDERAL DISTRICT

## Introduction

Sustainability is a topic of international relevance, whose importance is to ensure the existence of an environment suitable for the survival of humanity. The United Nations highlights the responsibility of all nations to promote actions that contribute to protecting the environment for present and future generations (United Nations, 2022).

For a real example, major media outlets, such as BBC news, report major heat waves and higher temperatures than in a normal winter, exceeding 45 degrees Celsius in some states in Brazil (BBC news Brasil, 2023).

Worried of the questions of sustainability, the MMA (Ministry of the Environment, 2022) prepared the Environmental Agenda in Public Administration (A3P), which is an important tool that consists of promoting sustainable practices in Public Administration, presenting clear objectives and basic guidelines that guide members of organizations – entities and organs, “*actions in the area of socio-environmental responsibility in their internal and external activities*” (Ministry of the Environment, 2022, pg. 1).

The Federal District (DF) formalized the adherence of the A3P by District Decree n. 38,246, on June 1st, 2017 (Distrito Federal, 2017) and currently has 13 signatory units to the A3P with the MMA (table 1), which represents 12.76% of the total of 94 linked organs and entities (Distrito Federal, 2019).

This article presents results of research carried out in organs and entities of the Executive Power of the DF, showing the perception of civil servants in the public policy and government management career (PPGG) on the topic of sustainability and socio-environmental management, answering the main question: Is there a difference in the perception of civil servants assigned to organs and entities that support the A3P?

The data presented was collected by handing out a questionnaire. The questions under analysis are objective and were designed to be analyzed using the Likert scale. The analysis presented is quantitative, aiming to achieve two basic specific objectives:

- Identify the perception of DF public servants regarding the implementation of public sustainability and socio-environmental management policies defined in A3P, within the scope of their authority;
- Check whether there is a difference in the perception of sustainability and socio-environmental management between public servants working in organs and entities that formally adhere to A3P and those that do not.

The research included the analysis of 353 questionnaires filled out by the aforementioned PPGG employees, which represented an opinion percentage of 15.35% of the total of 2,299 permanent employees working in public activities (Distrito Federal, 2023). The questions were prepared in the Likert scale format (Alves, 2012) and the “mode” statistical analysis was used to analyze the results (Zat, 2015).

The results showed that there is a difference in perception among employees working in organs and entities that adhere to A3P regarding management actions and projects related to sustainability; knowledge of the existence of A3P; knowledge of programs that favor the rational use of water, electricity or other natural resources, as well as the rationalization and good use of public goods; existence of a selective collection and solid waste separation program and employee quality of life programs

Topics related to participation in courses or training in the area of sustainability; encouragement, on the part of immediate management and other authorities, as well as other service colleagues, to engage in sustainable actions in public organs and society in general; to sustainability criteria in public tenders and teleworking as a sustainability tool, both PPGG servers working in organs and entities that adhere to A3P and others have the same perception.

The parameterized result allowed us to observe that the perception more focused on the application of sustainability projects already consolidated by the private sector and international organizations, such as selective collection and use of renewable resources, are more noticeable to employees working in organs and entities that adhere to A3P, which differs from other employees of non-participating organs and entities.

Socio-environmental actions more focused on the social - educational and economic area, which involve political actions with achievable results in the medium and long term, are not noticeable by employees working in organs and entities that adhere to A3P. The perception is similar among employees working in administrative units that do not adhere to the environmental agenda.

### **Theoretical foundation**

Sustainability is a relevant and complex topic studied by all world nations and a topic of constant debate at the United Nations – UN (United Nations, 1972).

The terminology “sustainability” first appeared in 1713, by Hans Carl von Carlowitz, who formulated the principle of sustainability due to the threat of wood shortages in Germany (Machado, 2020).

In 1983, the UN Secretary-General invited doctor Gro Harlem Brundtland to establish and chair the World Commission on Environment and Development, and in April of the same year, Brundtland's report - “My Common Future” was published.

The aforementioned report promoted the concept of sustainable development (United Nations, 1972; Sehnem et al., 2019), which highlighted that sustainable development is intergenerational and concern for the environment should be a global commitment.

Based on the aforementioned report, the UN called on nation-states to address the issue of sustainability within public organs. And in 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, which became known as the “Earth Summit”, adopting “Agenda 21” under the following definition taken from its website (United Nations, 2022):

“a blueprint for the protection of our planet and its sustainable development, the culmination of two decades of work that began in Stockholm in 1972”.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in 1992, was one of the most important events for the consolidation of sustainable policies. The MMA highlights, on its website, important considerations about the scope and relevance of the event for Brazil and the world (Ministry of the Environment, 2022):

“The United Nations – UN held the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. UNCED is better known as Rio 92, a reference to the city that hosted it, and also as the “Earth Summit” for having mediated agreements between the Heads of State present. 179 countries participating in Rio 92 agreed and signed the Global Agenda 21, a program of action based on a 40-chapter document, which

constitutes the most comprehensive attempt ever made to promote, on a planetary scale, a new pattern of development, called “sustainable development”. The term “Agenda 21” was used in the sense of intentions, desire for change towards this new development model for the 21st century. Agenda 21 can be defined as a planning instrument for the construction of sustainable societies, on different geographic bases, which combines methods of environmental protection, social justice and economic efficiency”.

The 2030 Agenda (Brazil, 2000) met the new demands and new challenges projected for the millennium (Ferrari et al, 2022) and consolidated in the UNCAD, with 17 sustainable development objectives and 169 goals that balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (National Confederation of Municipalities, 2022) and (United Nations, 2015), such as the Triple Bottom Line dimension elaborated by Elkington (2018).

In 1999, the MMA prepared a project that sought “the review of production and consumption patterns and the adoption of new environmental sustainability references in public administration institutions” (Ministério do Meio Ambiente do Brasil, 2021).

The project was formalized with the preparation of the Public Administration Agenda (A3P), which is a concrete result of practical consolidation of environmental protection actions, aiming at the concrete adoption of environmental sustainability references in Public Administration in general (Vieira, 2022).

A3P aims to encourage organs to comply with sustainable practices adopted by Brazil, based on five guiding principles: 1) rational use of public staffs; 2) adequate management of waste generated; 3) quality of life at work; 4) awareness and training of employees and 5) sustainable bidding (Ministry of the Environment, 2021).

Compliance with the axes aligned with socio-environmental management will have impactful effects beyond Public Administration: it is a positive reference for society as a whole.

This article will present the perception, by public servants, of sustainability in the Federal District (DF). The centralization of administrative decision-making power is carried out by the local governor, head of the Executive Power, who delegates competence to designated sector administrators (Distrito Federal, 2023).

Regarding the organic structure of executive power, administrative law, Public Administration is defined as Direct and Indirect, with Direct “composed of organs and services, central or peripheral, of the legal entity State, under the direction of the Government” (Felipe, 2018, p. 7).

Indirect Administration, according to Felipe, is formed by administrative units, called entities, designed to provide autonomous public services and independent of the central executive power (Felipe, 2018, p. 9):

There are services within the State that perform their functions autonomously, services that do not depend directly on Government orders: they are autonomous, they have their own steering and management organs.

The executive district government has, administratively, 61 “*órgão da administração direta*”; 6 “*órgãos especializados*”; 3 “*órgãos especializados autônomos*”; 6 “*fundações pública*”; 5 “*autarquias*”; 4 “*autarquias em regime especial*”; 7 “*empresas públicas*” and 5 “*sociedades de economia mista*” (Distrito Federal, 2023).

Public Administration is made up of public agents, who carry out activities for the benefit of society. Public agents are subdivided into public servants, civil servants and commissioned agents.

Public servants are agents who enter activities through a selection process called a public examination or examination and titles, to pursue careers governed by statutory legislation (di Pietro, 2006).

Public servants, as well as civil servants, are also admitted through public examinations or exams and qualifications, however, the regulation regime for the position is guided by the Labor Law Convention – CLT (di Pietro, 2006).

Commissioned agents perform a public function freely and access is by appointment, regardless of tests or other selections. These positions are considered functions of trust, and the agent may be appointed or dismissed at the discretion of the public authority. (di Pietro, 2006).

This article delimited the target audience to public servants in the Public Policy and Government Management career - PPGG, created by District Law n. 5,190/2013 (Federal District, 2013), with significant importance for the implementation of State public policies, both in the elaboration phase and in monitoring and evaluation. The sole paragraph of art. 1st describes the main objectives of the career responsibilities:

Art. 1 (...)

Single paragraph. This career is part of the Management Cycle of the Federal District, with responsibility for the elaboration, implementation, implementation and evaluation of public policies and public management at a strategic-executive level within the scope of its competencies. (translated by the author). (translated by the author).

Regarding the analysis of organs and entities that adhere to the environmental agenda under analysis, it is observed that, of the 94 organs and entities linked to the DF government, only 12 units are signatories to the A3P with the MMA, which represents 12.76% of the grand total.

Table 1 (attached to the article) provides detailed data regarding the names of the organs or entities that joined the A3P, year of constitution and normative instrument for the composition of the program's management teams.

Table 1 lists 12 organs that joined the A3P, including the secretariats SETUR; SEGETH and SEAGRI are not on the list of partner institutions on the MMA website (see <http://a3p.mma.gov.br/instituicoes-parceiras/>, accessed on 06/09/22). However, they published ordinances designating the A3P management committee in their organs.

SETUR; SEGETH and SEAGRI do not appear on the list of partner institutions on the MMA website (see <http://a3p.mma.gov.br/instituicoes-parceiras/>, accessed on 09/06/22). However, they published ordinances designating the A3P management committee in their organs.

The Administrative Region - RA do Lago Sul (Federal District, 2022); the specialized organs PMDF and CBDF, as well as the autarchy DETRAN and TERRACAP, do not appear to have published, in the Official Gazette of the Federal District – DODF, normative instruments for the constitution of the A3P management team (see consultation with the Integrated System of Legal Standards of the DF – SINJ, on the website <http://www.sinj.df.gov.br/sinj/>, accessed on 09/06/2022).

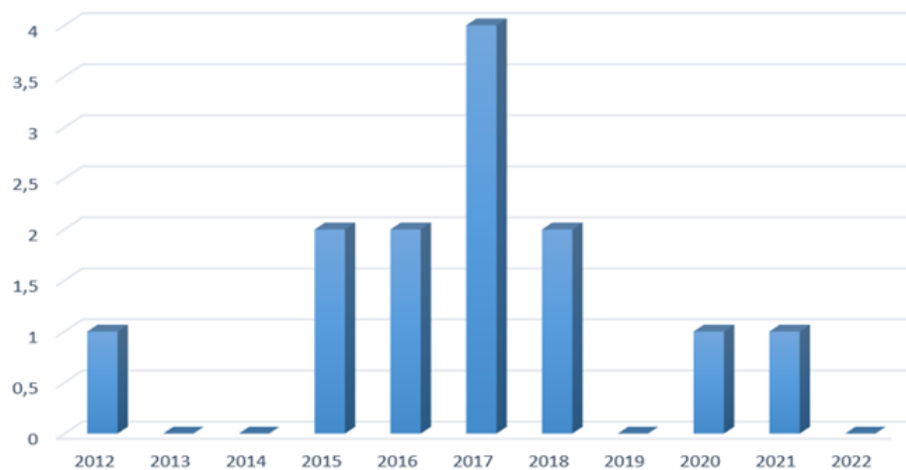
District Decree n. 38,246, of June 1, 2017 (Distrito Federal, 2017) assigned, among the organs listed in table 1 (attachment), to the State Secretariat for the Environment of the Federal District – SEMA, the responsibility for encouraging the implementation of the Environmental Agenda in Public Administration program - A3P, according to art. 4th, caput, in the following terms:

Art. 4 The State Secretariat for the Environment of the Federal District - SEMA is responsible for the general coordination of mobilization, awareness and guidance for selective collection, encouraging the implementation of A3P, its monitoring and evaluation of activities. (GN) (translated by the author).

Regarding the analysis of SEMA's institutional website (Distrito Federal, 2022), it is not possible to find, in the agency's access tabs, information regarding A3P, both regarding projects already developed and incentive programs for adherence of the agenda to other organs and entities in the Federal District.

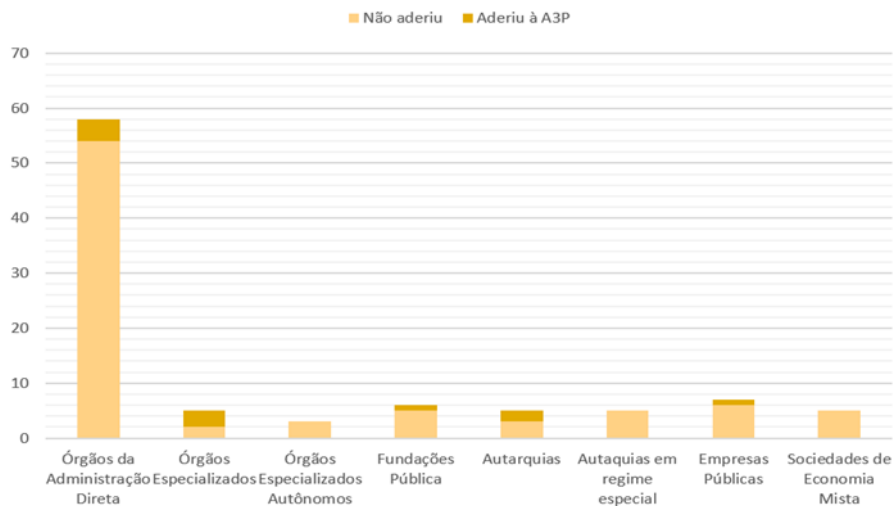
The analysis of the other organs and entities that joined the A3P, when analyzing the websites reported in Table 1, also highlighted the lack of disclosure of information regarding the existence of the executed agenda or the existence of projects and programs, by everyone.

The evolution of membership, in years, in the DF, as seen in figure 1, does not demonstrate significant voluntary adherence by organs to A3P, with only one registration per year, and no registration in 2013; 2014; 2019 and 2020.



**Figure 1** - Membership of A3P in DF per year

In an analysis of adherence by specialty of the administrative units of the Executive Power to the A3P, figure 2 shows that of the 58 organs of the DF's Direct Administration, only 04 adhered to the agenda; of the 05 specialized organs, 03 joined; of the 05 established municipalities, 03 joined; of the 06 public foundations created, only 01 joined the agenda; of the 07 public companies, 01 joined; and of the 05 existing municipalities, only 02 joined. The other organs and entities in the DF did not join the A3P:



**Figure 2** - Adhesion of organs and entities to A3P in DF

Regarding communication channels relating to monitoring, control and inspection actions, as provided for in article 4 of District Decree n. 38,246, of June 1st, 2017, (Distrito Federal, 2017), they were not identified on the official SEMA websites any information that proves the existence of practical actions developed.

## Methodology

The information provided will come from the quantitative analysis that was carried out on the Likert scale and the mode analysis of the results achieved.

The aforementioned research was carried out entirely within the scope of the Executive Power of the Public Administration of the Federal District, in organs and entities of the Direct Administration - Secretariat of State and Regional Administrations and Indirect Administration in general - local authorities, foundations and mixed capital companies.

The actions were carried out by forwarding 01 (one) thousand Google Forms forms, via WhatsApp, to employees in the PPGG career of Federal District.

Letters were also sent to the 94 DF organs and entities registered in the Electronic Information System (SEI), formalized in process no. 00055-00026930/2023-71, requesting the dissemination of the research questionnaire and sending of information to support this research. In this way, the research sought to reach the maximum number of PPGG servers possible.

The choice of the PPGG career is also justified by the fact that civil servants are assigned and perform their duties in all organs and entities of the Direct and Indirect Administration of the DF, which made it possible to show the vision of sustainability across different segments of the Public Administration of the Federal District. The population involving managers and analysts in PPGG in the Federal District is made up of 2,299 people.

The employees who participated in the research had their own mobile device (cell phone or tablet) or access to computers with internet. Access to the questionnaire was only permitted with prior knowledge and agreement to reading the Informed Consent Form (TCLE).

After agreeing to the terms of the ICF, the online questionnaire was released with 18 objective questions and one subjective question. For purposes of delimiting the scope of this article, only the results of questions 10 to 18 will be presented in this article:

10. I know management actions/projects related to sustainability in my organization
11. I've heard about the Public Administration Environmental Agenda (A3P)
12. There are programs in my department that prioritize the rational use of water, electricity or other natural resources, as well as the rationalization and good use of public goods
13. There is a selective collection and solid waste separation program in your agency/entity
14. Are there employee quality of life programs in your agency/entity
15. I am encouraged/participate in courses or training in the area of sustainability
16. There is encouragement, on the part of immediate management and other authorities, as well as other colleagues, to engage in sustainable actions in public organs and society in general
17. Tenders in my body/entity meet sustainability criteria
18. Teleworking is an important action that contributes to the implementation of sustainable measures in public authorities.

Questions 10 to 18 were prepared on the Likert scale, which allows us to analyze whether the strategies have been applied and what employees' perception of them is (Alves, 2012).

The Likert scale is used in questionnaires for opinion research, analyzing your level of agreement or not with the predefined statement. Five levels are usually used: totally disagree; partially disagree; indifferent; I partially agree and completely agree.

This scale becomes bipolar to the statement, as it can receive both a positive and negative response, in which the results can show problematic situations within organizations (Silveira et al, 2010).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, which is characterized as “a set of techniques that seek to describe, as well as analyze and interpret the numerical data of a sample or population” (Barros apud Fonseca, 2023, pg. 9).

In questions 10 to 18, quantitative analysis was also used by “mode”, which, according to Zat (2015, pg. 2), describes the statistical concept in the following terms:

The mode, object of this article, "is the value that occurs most frequently in a set of data, that is, the most common value" (SPIEGEL, 1976, p. 74). The word " mode " means, in everyday life, to be "very used" and according to Clegg (1995) it appropriately expresses the meaning of statistical mode. This is the value that is repeated the greatest number of times, in a set of values, that is , the most frequent.

The data obtained helped to trace the perception of DF employees, allowing us to compare, in isolation, the perceptual discrepancies of employees who are assigned to organs and entities that adhere to A3P or others.

## **Data and dialogue**

The results presented were extracted from information presented exclusively from questions 10 to 18 of the research. 353 questionnaires were analyzed, considered valid, sent by PPGG career employees.



For the purposes of statistical analysis of this research, the results were analyzed based on the global number of public servants, managers and analysts: 353, which represents a total percentage of 15.35% of PPGG civil servants in the DF. Considering the universe of 2,299 people, the sample obtained was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The statistical analysis of the results presented in questions 10 to 18 is presented, based on the Likert scale, referring to the level of global perception of PPGG servers in the DF, in relation to the theme of sustainability and A3P.

The quantity presented in each item of the questions mentioned above were tabulated in the tables below, separating the answers in table 1 for employees who are not assigned to organs and entities that have joined the A3P and in table 2 those who are assigned.

The statistical tool to be used in the analysis is “mode” (Zat, 2015), whose objective is to empirically present the analysis of sustainability perception among employees working in organs and entities that adhere to the A3P of others.

ÓRGÃO QUE NÃO ADERIRAM A AGENDA AMBIENTAL					
	Discordo totalmente	Discordo parcialmente	Nem concordo nem discordo	Concordo parcialmente	Concordo totalmente
Questão 10	81	42	32	51	29
Questão 11	125	28	31	18	33
Questão 12	100	54	19	46	16
Questão 13	98	33	16	61	27
Questão 14	77	22	27	66	43
Questão 15	129	36	15	42	13
Questão 16	104	37	30	48	16
Questão 17	39	23	104	38	31
Questão 18	11	7	9	50	158

**Table 1** - Response from servers (without A3P membership)

ÓRGÃOS QUE ADERIRAM A AGENDA AMBIENTAL					
	Discordo totalmente	Discordo parcialmente	Nem concordo nem discordo	Concordo parcialmente	Concordo totalmente
Questão 10	12	8	25	56	17
Questão 11	21	5	13	60	19
Questão 12	15	9	23	51	20
Questão 13	12	7	15	35	49
Questão 14	34	7	7	34	36
Questão 15	41	16	40	13	8
Questão 16	42	22	30	16	8
Questão 17	10	18	64	18	8
Questão 18	0	3	2	36	77

**Table 2** - Response from servers (with A3P membership).

The tables are in portuguese, in stead that now it show the translation to english refering to the tables 1 to 4:

- 1) Questão: question
- 2) Discordo totalmente: I totally disagree;

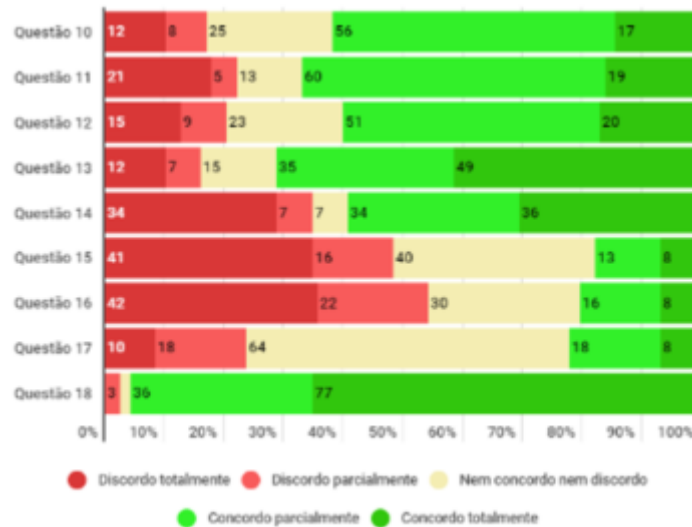
- 3) Discordo parcialmente: Partially disagree;
- 4) Nem concordo, nem discordo: Neither agree nor disagree;
- 5) Concordo parcialmente: Partially agree;
- 6) Concordo totalmente: I completely agree;

The analysis of the data presented in tables 1 and 2, with the premise of analysis by mode, highlighted the difference in perception in questions 10 to 14. Where there are PPGG servers assigned to organs and entities that do not adhere to A3P (table 1) the answer more incident is “totally disagree”. Unlike organs and entities supporting A3P, where employees responded “I completely agree” (for questions 13 and 14) and “I partially agree (for questions 10 to 12).

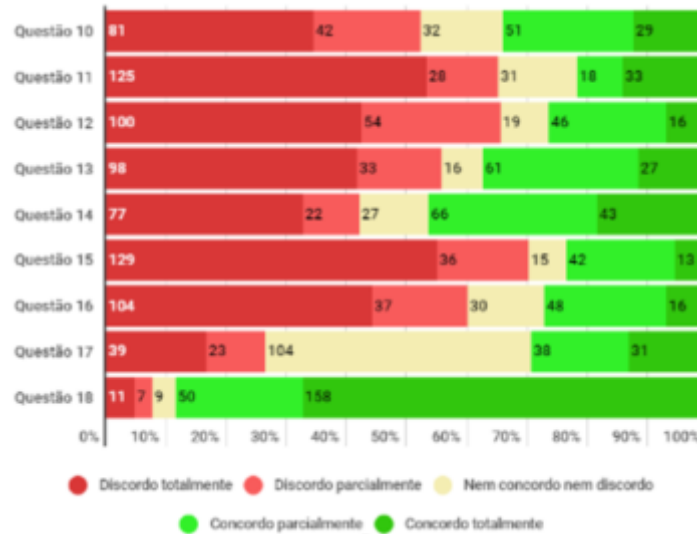
In questions 15 to 18, on the contrary, the majority of responses coincided both in terms of the perception of PPGG servers working in organs and entities that do not adhere to A3P and in places that do.

Figures 3 and 4 show the results of tables 1 and 2 in colored graphs, where the red color was defined as disagreements (light red, partial disagreement and dark red, total); the green color with agreements (light green, partial agreement and dark green, total) and the beige color, which is the neutral zone (neither agree nor disagree).

The visual perception of the graphs automatically highlights the differences between the responses presented by PPGG servers assigned to organs and entities that adhere to A3P (figure 3) and those that do not (figure 4).



**Figure 3 - Server Response (with A3P membership)**



**Figure 4 - Server Response (without A3P membership)**

The preponderant responses from PPGG servers working in organs and entities that do not adhere to A3P are more likely to disagree and those that adhere to agreement, for questions 10 to 14.

Questions 15 to 18 present similar data for the two groups compared, demonstrating that the implementation of the A3P did not change the perception of the servers inserted in their administrative units.

## Conclusions

Regarding the analysis, from a statistical perspective, with the use of the “mode” tool in questions 10 to 18, which were prepared using the Likert scale, it was evident that questions 10 to 14 had different answers from interviewees who were crowded. in organs and entities that adhere to the A3P of others.

On topics relating to management actions and projects relating to sustainability; knowledge of the existence of A3P; knowledge of programs that favor the rational use of water, electricity or other natural resources, as well as the rationalization and good use of public goods; existence of a selective collection and solid waste separation program and employee quality of life programs; The perception of PPGG employees assigned to organs and entities that adhere to A3P is more positive than the perception of other employees of non-compliant organs and entities.

Topics related to participation in courses or training in the area of sustainability; encouragement, on the part of immediate management and other authorities, as well as other service colleagues, to engage in sustainable actions in public organs and society in general; sustainability criteria in public tenders and; teleworking as a sustainability tool; Both PPGG servers assigned to organs and entities that adhere to A3P and others have the same perception.

At least, it is observed that projects more focused on the basic implementations of sustainable actions already consolidated in the private sector, such as selective collection; rationalization and good use of resources, managed to be implemented by public managers and are noticeable by civil servants.

The issue of public servants' quality of life is a hot topic in the Public Administration of DF. Even though there are incentive actions for all organs and entities, those who adhere to A3P have a better perception of the results of the implementation.

Actions more focused on socio-environmental management, which require decision-making by public authorities, both for direct sustainability actions and for encouraging actions by third parties, are not noticeable by employees in organs and entities that adhere to A3P. The perception is identical to that of employees working in other organs.

Projects, such as A3P, should be stimulated and increased in more public sectors, as their implementation generates noticeable results for the public agents involved.

It is important to verify, in other researchs, the reasons for the lack of action on the part of public authorities, for that sustainable objectives are effectively implemented.

The importance of urgently adopting sustainable actions is currently visible to society as a whole. The perceived climate changes are already nature's response to the aggressions suffered.

The choice of the Likert scale tool, as well as the analysis by “mode”, showed important results in the present research. However, it is important to check, in the academic world, whether other tools can obtain different results that complement the information provided and offer, to the academic community, important data on the topic of sustainability.

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