

PAA: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

This text addresses the institutional arrangements behind the implementation of a public purchase system for family farmer-sourced products and of the Food Purchase Program (PAA). It presents the main aspects related to the management model and the stakeholders responsible for the program.

Purchasing family farming-sourced products represents both an important learning experience for the State regarding the implementation of public policies geared towards the less favored and an opportunity to innovate in management capacity.

It is essential that the different stakeholders involved in implementing the program get together to discuss concrete issues for the implementation of the PAA. A non-exhaustive list of such issues would include things like what audiences will be prioritized, what food items will be purchased and how often they must be delivered, what infrastructure will be required, what pricing methodology will be adopted, what health and tax controls will be in place, how social control will be ensured etc.

There are several design possibilities. In the Brazilian case, the PAA was proposed by the federal government as an intersectoral policy to be implemented mainly at the local level. This required both coordination between federal government agencies (ministries, secretariats, public companies etc.) and interactions between different levels of government (state and municipal) as well as civil society.

Public purchases contribute to creating, recreating and establishing links between public policies, especially those related to food and nutrition security, strengthening family agriculture and social inclusion. The State must be prepared for this, meeting these demands in a coordinated manner.

The institutional arrangement should provide that the responsibility for the operation, including the decision of who and what to buy, is held at the local level, which is the one closest to the actual production and consumption of food. In other words, decisions on guiding principles may be made at other levels, but operational decisions on must be taken at the endpoint.

The management model adopted seeks to balance two fundamental aspects of the PAA:

- » Formulation and preparation of guidelines - centralized in the federal government; and
- » Execution - decentralized at the local level.

On the one hand, this arrangement aimed to set guidelines/procedures to provide uniform guidance on the implementation of the modalities and elements for monitoring. On the other, the arrangement sought to provide the PAA with the capillarity it needed to operate family farm purchases throughout the vast Brazilian territory and ensure food and nutritional security for poor populations, even in the most remote places.

The **centralized processes** of the PAA are mainly related to strategy definition, regulation and management of resources¹, aiming to establish priorities, ensure standardization of procedures and bring agility to monitoring and control activities.

In that context, the Steering Group (GGPAA) is the deliberative body responsible for formulating guidelines and monitoring their implementation, which is one of the strong suits of the management process.

Coordinated by the Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development, the PAA Steering Group is made up of members of the ministries responsible for the country's social, agrarian, agricultural, educational, economic and planning policies. The Steering Group of the PAA has an advisory group, which includes government officials and representatives from family farmers and the National Council for Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA). While the composition ensures dialogue with society, interactions can be broadened via direct relationships with local councils in the implementation of some modalities.

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Having various agencies and sectors representation in the PAA Steering Group is important for the resolution of the various issues that may arise in the implementation of purchase programs, strengthening the intersectoral nature, engagement and legitimacy of decision-making processes.

The **decentralized implementation** of the program is grounded on the premise that the municipality is the ideal space to promote the relationship between the supply and demand for food, facilitating direct relations between the producers and beneficiaries of the donations. At this point, the PAA's implementation process opens up for the creation of a range of institutional arrangements² that allow it to develop the necessary capacity to purchase from family farmers in all regions of the country, even in places where economic organization is precarious. The stakeholders involved interact in different ways with the social and institutional contexts and the modality being implemented.

The decentralized part of the operations is carried out in partnership with state and municipal governments and the regional offices (SUREGs) of the National Company for Food Supply (Conab). It also involves (among others) family farming organizations, the social assistance network and public food and nutrition facilities, all coordinated in order to match the availability of human, financial and technological resources to the need for purchases to meet the pre-established goals.

Local processes should also promote further dialogue with non-rural workers' unions, social movements, non-governmental organizations, technical assistance institutions and municipal governments, as well as advice or social control instances, composed of representatives of government and society.

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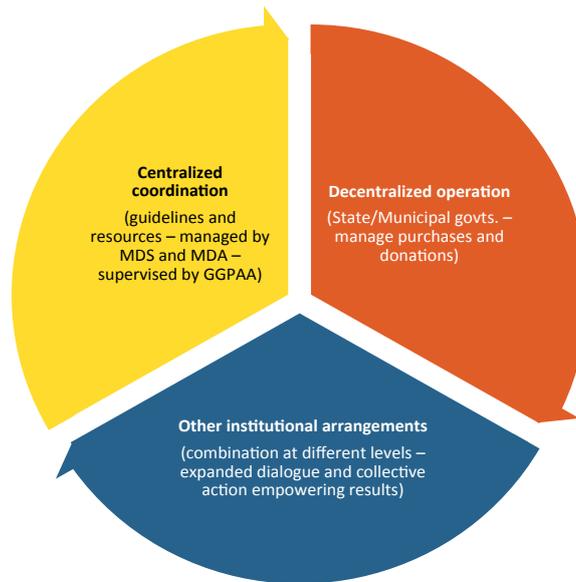
The greater the dialogue and collective action among stakeholders and public policies, the greater the unleashed potential in productive, economic and social terms for local development. Attracting participation of other levels of government is important not only for the aggregation of operational capacities, but also as a means to encourage the opening of institutional markets to family farming.

1 The one exception is the Institutional Purchases model, in which the operators of the program manage their own resources.

2 Here understood to mean the set of institutions that act in the implementation of the PAA in certain spaces.

This management model seeks efficient ways to solve operational issues in accordance with the PAA modality being implemented and existing objective conditions. The large number of actors involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the PAA requires organization and commitment for the operation to be successful (Figure 1).

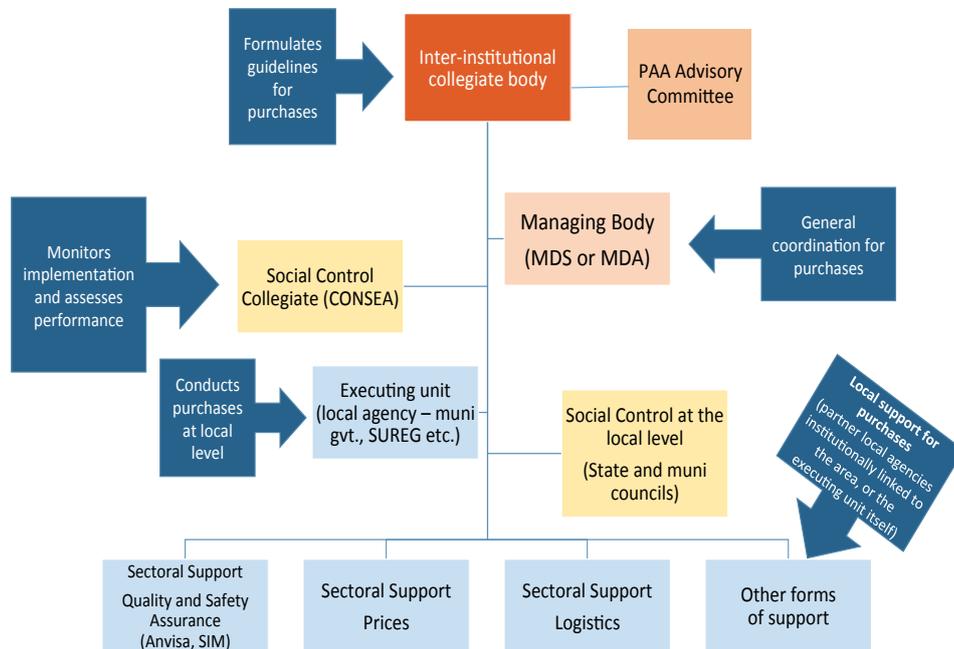
Figure 1: Coordination, operation and institutional arrangements align for the execution of the PAA



Source: Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development (MDSA)

As illustrated in Figure 2, the implementation of the PAA is integrated, coordinated and inclusive, with the participation of all the agencies that can broaden dialogue and integration with public policies. The creation of collegiate instances such as the GGPAA to establish guidelines and monitor the implementation of the program is an effective way to implement the intersectoral and crosscutting dimension of the PAA. Having a decentralized operation allows for better interaction between production and consumption at the local level.

Figure 2: Operation and attributions of the different agencies involved in the execution of the PAA.



Source: Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development (MDSA)

Deciding on the management model to be adopted by each country is a task influenced by a number of aspects, including their options, realities and the objective conditions for making purchases from family farming producers. Therefore, it is more than just a matter of choosing between centralized and decentralized formats, but rather of coming up with the best combination of human, financial and technological resources to ensure the family farming purchases can be implemented satisfactorily.

When implementing food purchase programs, it is important that the countries designate an entity as the process coordinator and constitute an intersectoral committee that can be put in charge of formulating policy guidelines and monitoring their implementation.

In the last text of this series, we will cover a brief history of the Brazilian PAA, with an overview of how the program has evolved since 2003.

