

Advancing Public-Interest AI In Brazil and Latin America

Institutional Pathways, Governance Gaps, and Strategic Opportunities for Fundação BRAVA

Prepared for **Fundação BRAVA**

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Why study Public-Interest AI?

12

WORKERS OVERSEEING
AN AI SYSTEM

ADMINISTERING BENEFITS TO

28 million BRAZILIANS

Overview and Introduction

Our Team



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About BRAVA Foundation



- A non-profit organization established in 2000, aimed at building a more efficient, equitable, and resilient society
- BRAVA's efforts are focused:
 - Enhancing public sector management capabilities
 - Supporting the development of innovative and high-impact initiatives
 - Systematizing and disseminating evidence-based best practices

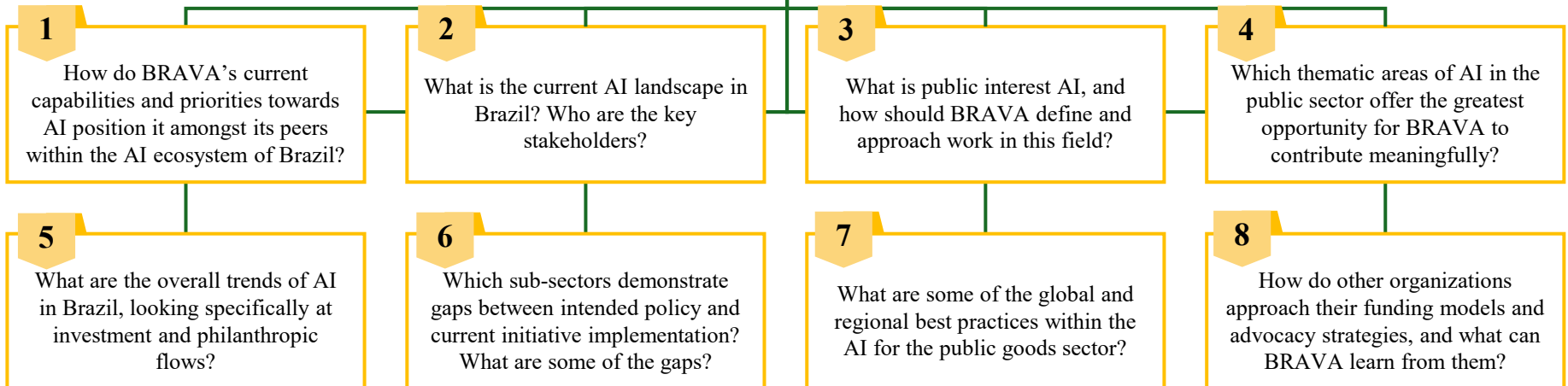
BRAVA aims to understand where philanthropic investment, partnership-building, and convening can advance public-interest AI in Brazil.

Research Objective

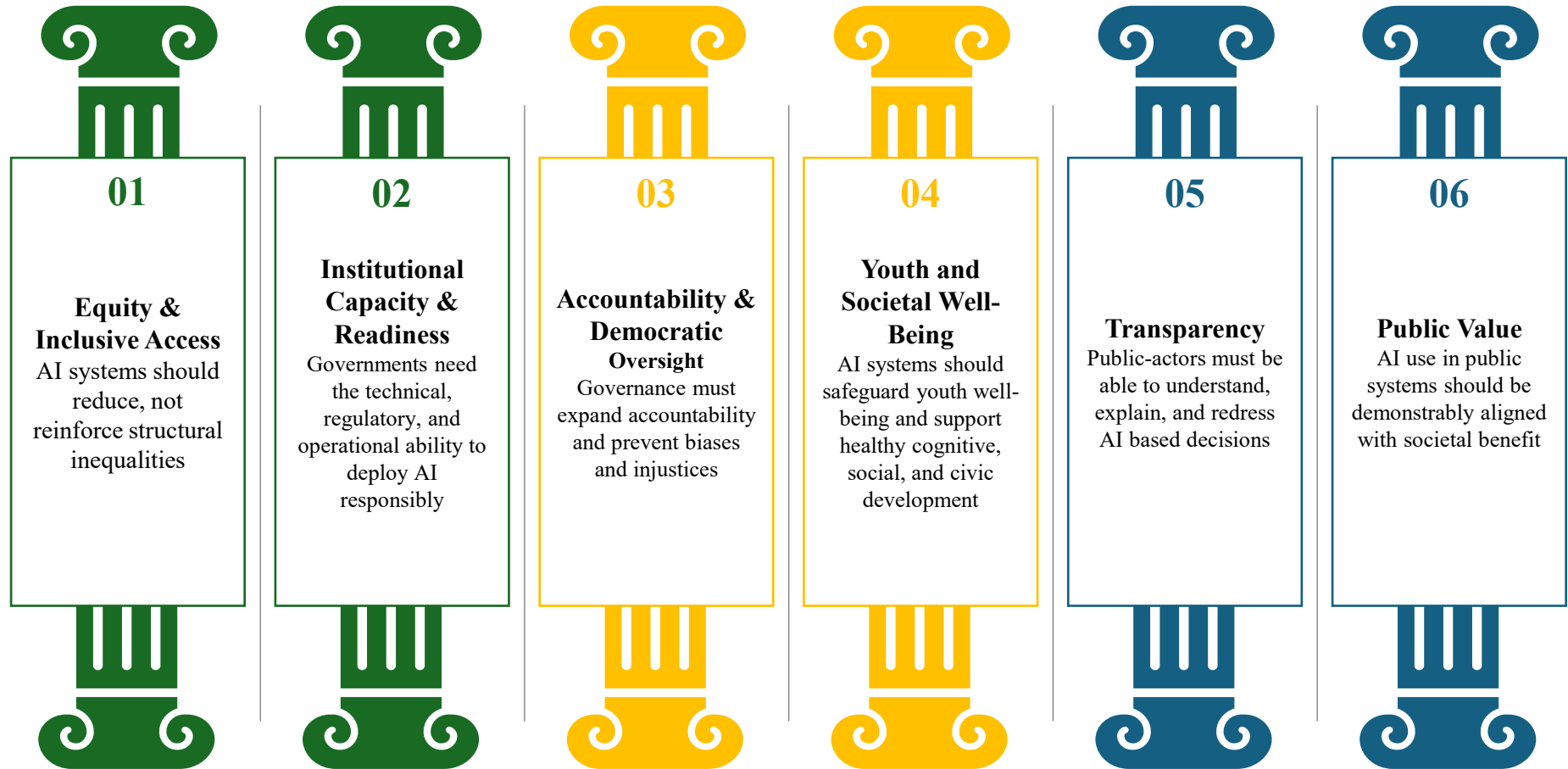
Central Research Question

What are the highest-value initiatives and strategic steps BRAVA Foundation can undertake to maximise its contribution to advancing AI for public interest in Brazil?

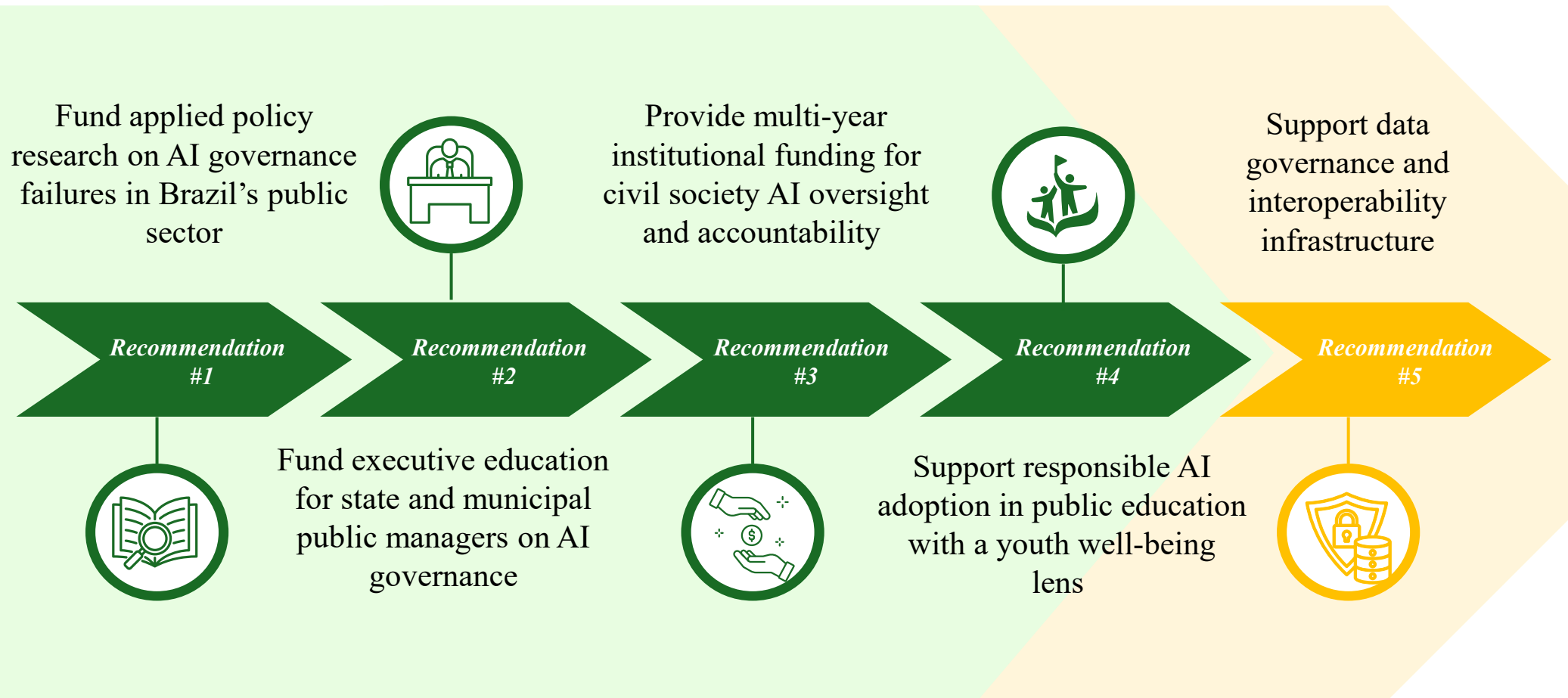
Secondary Research Questions



Good Governance Pillars



Recommendations Preview



An aerial photograph of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, featuring the iconic Sugarloaf Mountain (Pão de Açúcar) in the center. The city's dense urban landscape is visible in the foreground and middle ground, with the bay and distant mountains in the background. A semi-transparent green and yellow geometric overlay, consisting of diagonal bands, covers the entire image. The text 'Methodology & Approach' is written in a dark blue, serif font, positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlaid by the yellow band.

Methodology & Approach

Research Design

- Reviewed Brazil's key AI regulations (PL 2338/2023, LGPD, EBIA)
- Mapped cross-sector landscape
- Applied global AI readiness frameworks such as OECD, Oxford Insights, etc to define best practices

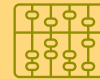
MAP



01

Established the landscape of public-interest AI in Brazil to identify strengths and structural gaps.

02



ASSESS

Desk research findings were validated through stakeholder interviews.

8 public-sector AI use cases across **4** partnership models

6 governance pillars for evaluation

3 global benchmarking examples

3 client interviews

16 global external in-depth interviews

03



RECOMMEND

Translated findings into targeted investment recommendations.

- Identified intervention areas: institutional capacity, data governance, and civil society strengthening
- Mapped near-term, and longer-term impact opportunities
- Defined an engagement strategy for BRAVA

Secondary Research Approach

1



Key Frameworks Utilized

Applied **leading global frameworks to assess** Brazil's AI ecosystem and readiness.

Utilized these to construct a partnership evaluation framework based on governance best practices:

- Oxford Insights Government AI Readiness Index
- OECD Framework
- UNESCO Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM)

2



Variety of Sources Assessed

Built a **reliable secondary-source repository** to support comprehensive mapping of Brazil's AI landscape.

Key categories of sources included:

- International governance frameworks and index reports
- Legislative and regulatory documents
- Academic and applied research
- Internal BRAVA documents

3

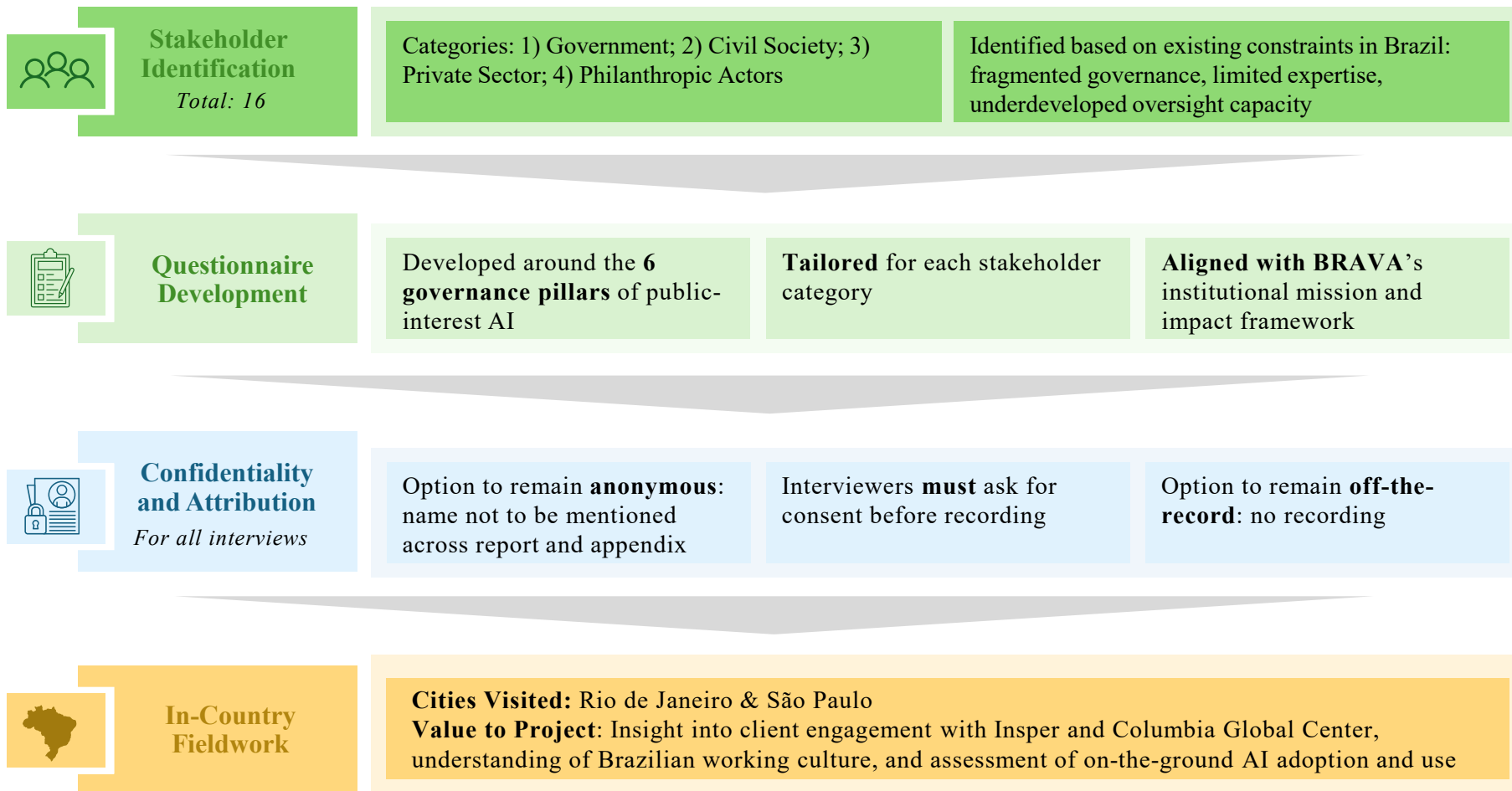


Interview Functions Identified

Utilized secondary to research shortlist target interviewees and design questionnaires across three functions:

- **Validated** key findings on Brazil's AI landscape, gaps, and priority sectors
- **Benchmarked** global funders to assess investment and philanthropic trends
- **Engagement** opportunities identified by assess potential partners against BRAVA's priorities

Primary Research Approach



Development of Partnership Evaluation Framework



In-depth interviews
with BRAVA team



Global and regional
best practices on
good governance of
AI

Evaluation Criteria

1

Equality and Inclusive Access:

Does the program include measures that promote equitable AI in Brazil?

2

Transparency

Does the program include transparency measures for use of AI systems or AI-related advocacy?

3

Accountability and Democratic Oversight

Does the program include accountability measures for use AI systems or AI-related advocacy?

4

Building Institutional & Social Capacity

Does the program include objectives to build institutional and social capacity for responsible AI use?

5

Financial Sustainability

Does the program demonstrate financial viability, and room for co-funding opportunities?

6

Technical Capability and Track Record

Does the partner demonstrate technical capability and credibility?

7

Institutional Strength

Does the partner demonstrate organizational stability, operational credibility, and transparency?

Methodology Limitations

2

The Election Year Constraint

Brazil's 2026 pre-election climate limited criticism, so primary data may understate political and institutional issues

1

Incomplete Public-Sector Interview Coverage

Interviews skewed toward São Paulo and Rio, leaving federal bodies like ANPD and MCTI underrepresented

3

Heavy Reliance on Secondary Sources

The analysis relies on credible secondary sources but may not fully reflect on-the-ground realities

3 4

Geographic and Organizational Skew

Interviews focused on São Paulo and Rio, thus perspectives from other regions and local actors are underrepresented

5

Limited Coverage of Global Philanthropic Actors

Analysis of major global funders relied on public information rather than direct input, so the philanthropic is only partially captured.

6

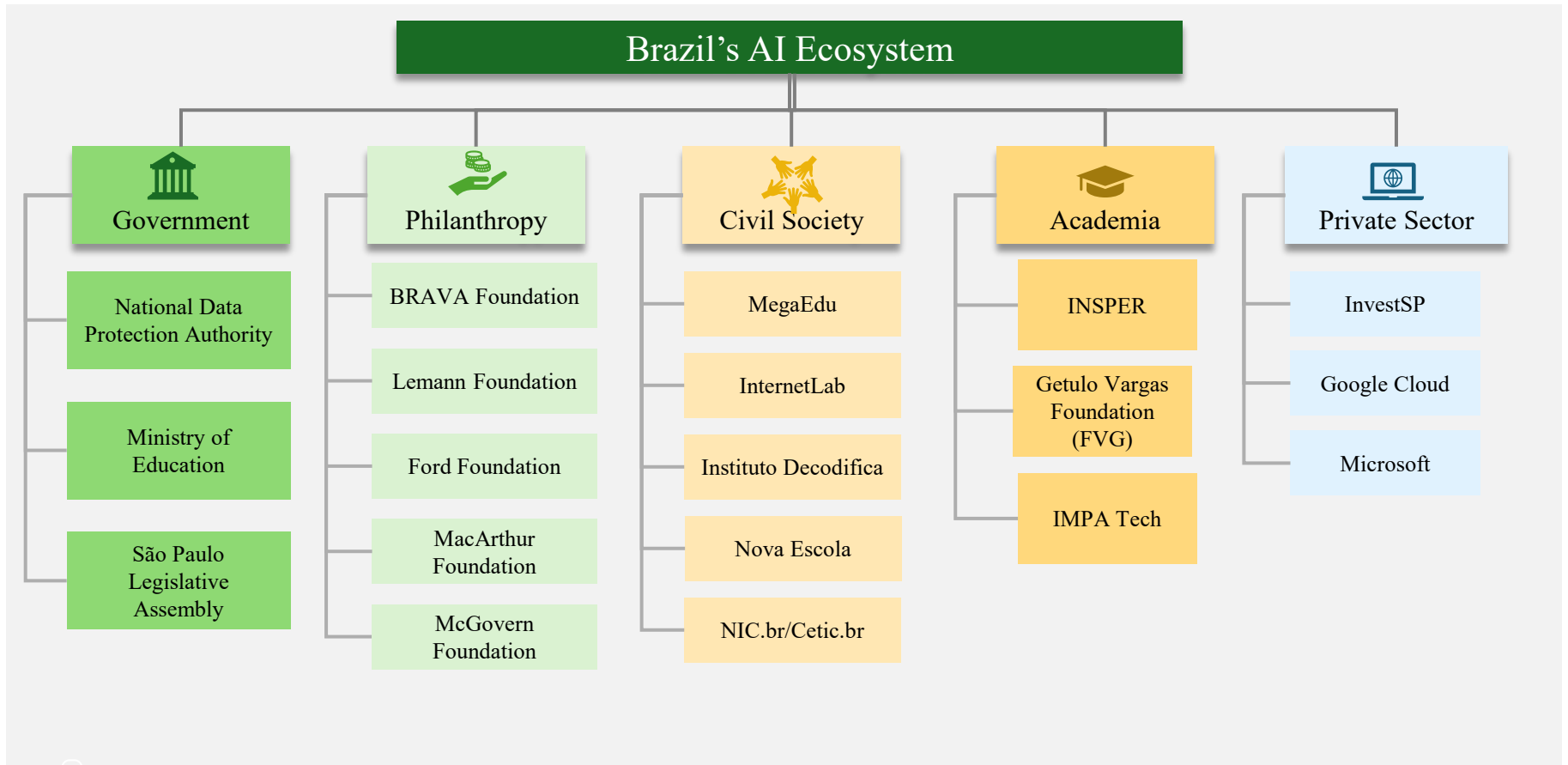
Short Monitoring Duration

The study reflects a single point in time, and ongoing regulatory changes may alter the landscape before implementation

An aerial photograph of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, featuring the iconic Sugarloaf Mountain (Pão de Açúcar) in the center. The city's dense urban landscape is visible in the foreground and middle ground, with numerous high-rise buildings and winding roads. The background shows the bay and distant mountains. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green and yellow geometric pattern consisting of large, overlapping triangles. The title 'Landscape Analysis' is centered in a dark blue serif font.

Landscape Analysis

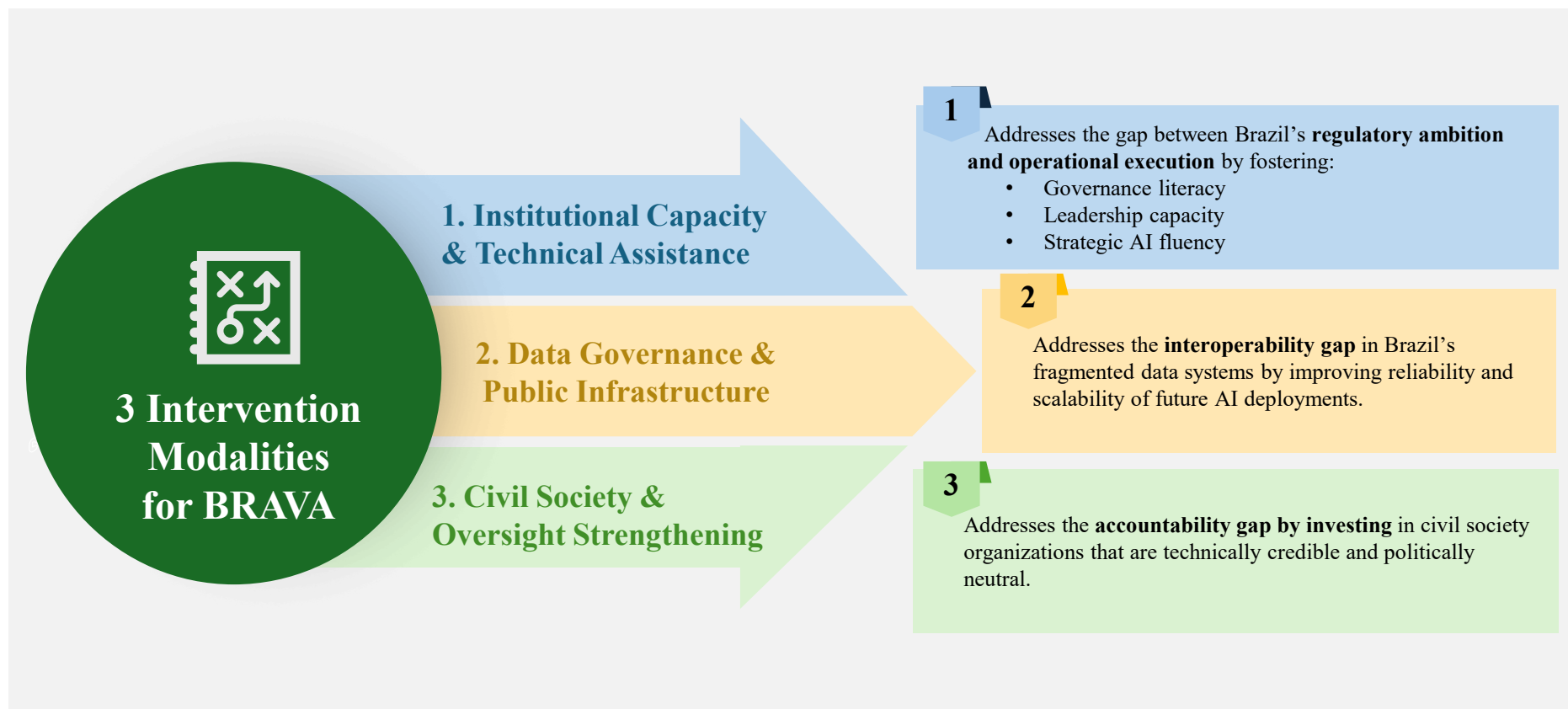
Landscape Analysis: Key Actors



Landscape Analysis: System Gaps

1	Fragmented Governance	AI governance is split across at least six federal entities with limited coordination, no shared standards, and minimal oversight
2	No Coordination Mechanisms	Multi-stakeholder coordination occurs on an ad hoc basis, with no formal body responsible for ensuring consistency in AI standards across agencies or levels of government
3	Data Silos	Brazil's public-sector data silos and lack of standardized data governance protocols results in less reliable and scalable AI systems
4	Institutional Capacity Gaps	Public managers frequently lack capacity, resulting in vendor capture, as they are unable to evaluate AI vendor claims or define problems before procurement decisions, leading to external reliance
5	Foreign Technology Dependence	AI ecosystem is reliant on infrastructure and models provided by international technology companies with design assumptions that do not always reflect Brazilian institutional realities.

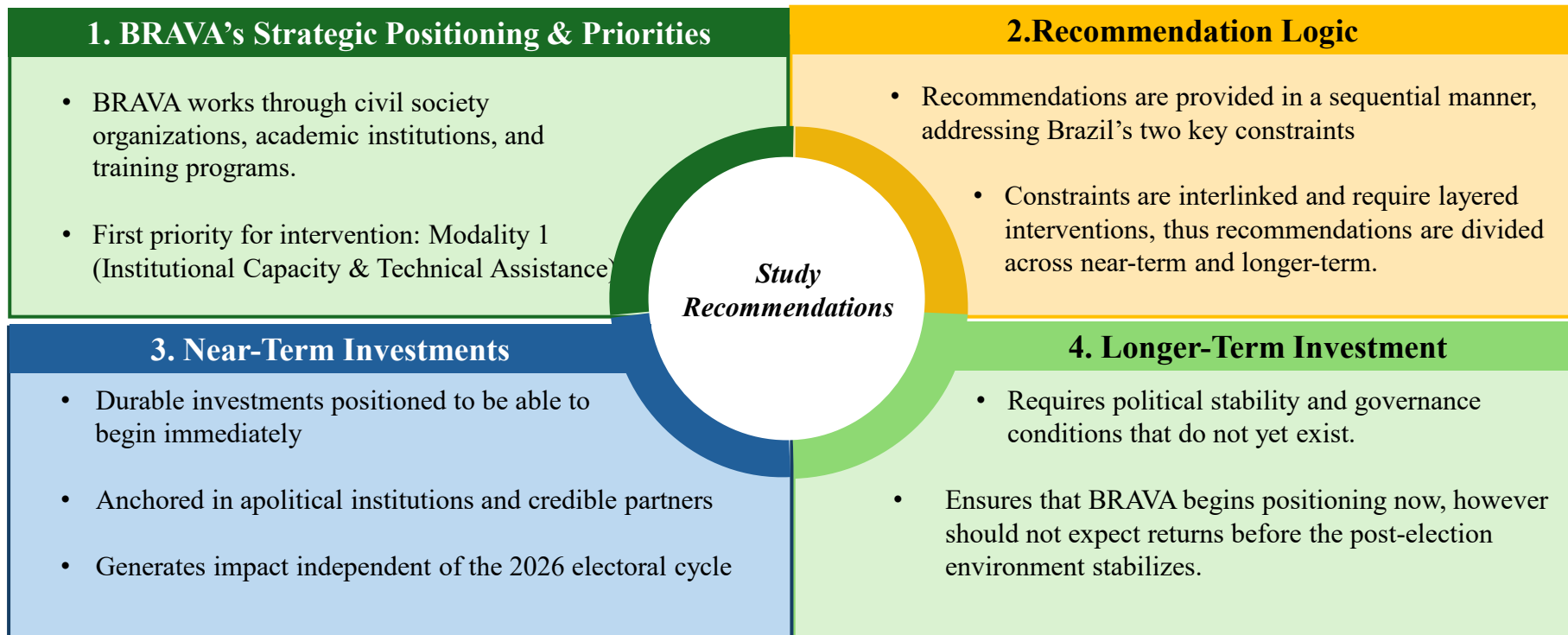
Landscape Analysis: Intervention Modalities



An aerial photograph of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, featuring the iconic Sugarloaf Mountain (Pão de Açúcar) in the center. The city's dense urban landscape is visible in the foreground and middle ground, with the bay and distant mountains in the background. A large, semi-transparent geometric overlay in shades of green and yellow is positioned on the left side of the image, partially covering the city and the mountain.

Study Recommendations

Recommendations Overview



Recommendation 1

Near-Term

“No credible independent body exists to capture transferable learning from failures across Brazil’s public-sector AI use.”

This recommendation seeks to bridge this gap, by ensuring funding for a program that generates a diagnostic foundation for AI investments.

Recommended Partner:

INTERNETLAB
pesquisa em direito e tecnologia



1

Fund applied policy research on AI governance

Modality 3: Civil Society & Oversight Strengthening

Modality 1: Institutional Capacity & Technical Assistance

Support a sustained program that documents how AI governance is unfolding in Brazil's public sector and translates findings into practical guidance for decision-makers

Example Outcomes:

- 2 research outputs published
- Co-funding secured from ~1 additional source sustained program
- Research agenda actively informs executive education curriculum

Ideal Indicators:

- Curriculum updates for further recommendations driven by research findings
- Research outputs cited in regulatory consultations or by other ecosystem actors

Recommendation 2

Near-Term

“In the absence of governance literacy among decision-makers, vendors effectively determine what gets built.”

This recommendation was confirmed independently by two government practitioners as the highest-leverage near-term investment available to a philanthropic actor in Brazil.

Recommended Partner:

Insper



2

Fund executive education for state and municipal public managers on AI governance

Modality 1: Institutional Capacity & Technical Assistance

Invest in a short format program building AI governance literacy among state and municipal public managers, equipping them with practical AI governance and procurement skills

Example Outcomes:

- Complete pilot of **30-50** public managers
- Learnings applied to procurement in **~3** municipalities/states
- Curriculum updated using findings from Rec.1

Ideal Indicators:

- Utilization of program frameworks
- Completion of program with an AI procurement evaluation framework
- Curriculum updates driven by Rec.1 research findings

Recommendation 3

Near-Term

“Funds typically go to projects that are already proven, where outcomes are predictable, leaving no money or space to innovate or test new ideas.”

This recommendation funds the institutional stability that civil society organizations need to do sustained, credible AI oversight work over time.

Recommended Partner:

Base dos Dados



3

Multi-year institutional civil society oversight and accountability funding

Modality 3: Civil Society & Oversight Strengthening

Provide multi-year funding to suitable civil society organizations working on AI governance and accountability, with explicit support for participation in regulatory forums where AI decisions are being shaped.

Example Outcomes:

- Presence of funded entities in APND consultations
- ~1 formal policy submission produced and in circulation
- Core program continuity and staff retention until year 2

Ideal Indicators:

- Presence of funded entities in relevant policy forums
- Research outputs cited in regulatory consultations or by other ecosystem actors
- Organizational stability

Recommendation 4

Near-Term

“

AI is already in Brazil's classrooms. The question is whether anyone is governing it.”

This recommendation ties the loop on this sequence. Research, training, and oversight all work together to build institutional capacity and generates oversight evidence at the same time.

Recommended Partner:

**nova
escola**



4

Support responsible AI adoption in public education

Modality 3: Civil Society & Oversight Strengthening

Modality 1: Institutional Capacity & Technical Assistance

Invest in a civil society organization that models responsible AI deployment for teachers and students while generating governance evidence to inform Brazil's regulatory approach.

Example Outcomes:

- ~1 AI tool deployed in public schools with oversight
- ~1 research output on youth AI governance
- Governance findings shared with Rec.1 as a case study

Ideal Indicators:

- Research outputs cited in regulatory consultations or by other ecosystem actors
- Curriculum updates driven by Rec.1 research findings

Recommendation 5

Longer-Term

“Funders and governments alike tend to skip directly to the software and AI layer, and the initiatives fail because the layers beneath them were never built.”

This recommendation would use existing national-scale public systems such as Cadastro Único as an anchor use case to ground and operationalize the infrastructure development.

Anchored in:

Cadastro
Conhecer
para incluir **Único**



5

Support data governance and interoperability infrastructure

Modality 2: Data Governance and Public Infrastructure

Invest in reusable, ‘stackable’ open-source data governance infrastructure which follows the Digital Public Infrastructure Framework once political conditions stabilize.

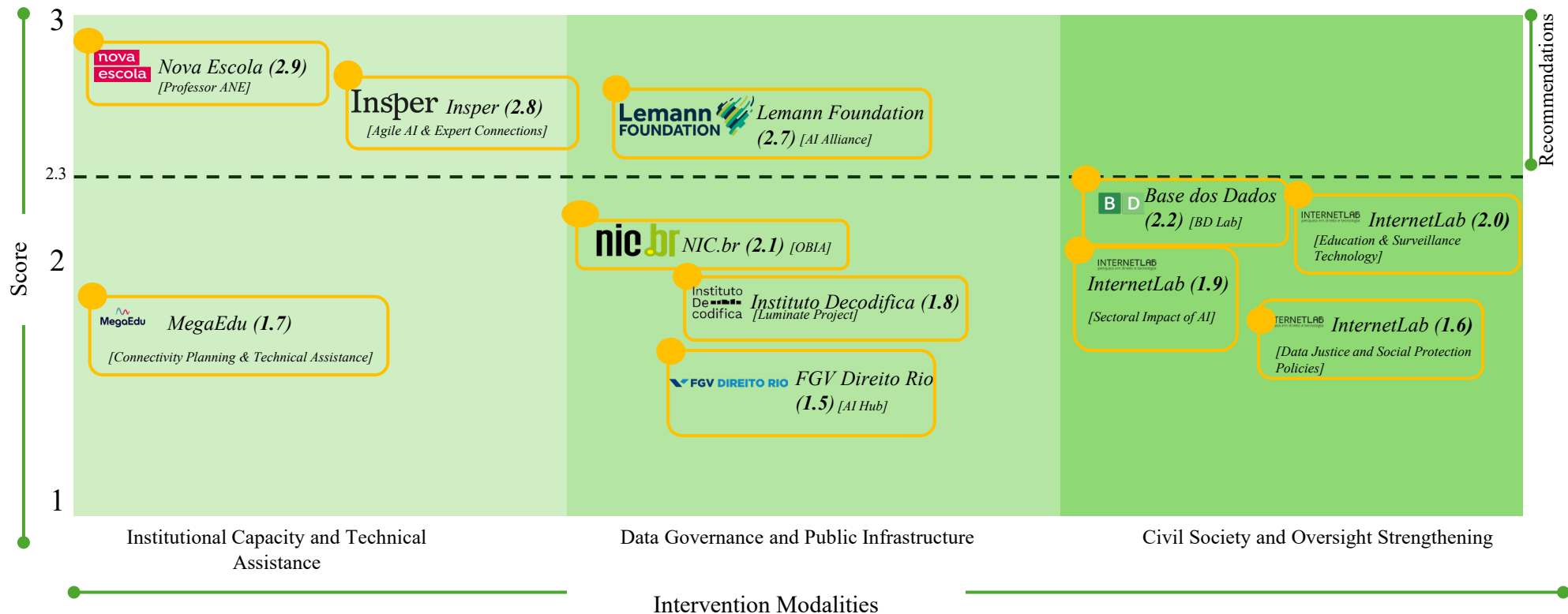
Why Timing Matters:

- Short-term improvements will be limited without better shared data systems, and meaningful reform will only be possible once political conditions stabilize

What BRAVA can do now:

- Lay groundwork with Fundação Lemann while using near-term research to gather the evidence needed for a future investment.
- Begin engaging key government stakeholders early to understand system gaps and shape a more targeted approach.

Partnership Recommendations: Overview- (1/2)



Partnership Recommendations: Deep Dive - (2/2)



Nova Escola

- Program supports public education by leveraging AI to provide lesson planning support in public schools
- Ensures transparency and accountability by employing an LLM-as-a-judge system to evaluate AI generated content

Score: 2.9



Insper

- Program places students in structured sprints with partners to develop applied AI solutions for real-world problems
- Demonstrates strong co-funding potential, with support from the Becker-Friedman Institute and investment from TCS

Score: 2.8



Lemann Foundation

- A co-funding program that evaluates and funds AI solutions for public education in Brazil
- Demonstrates a comprehensive approach to scale, designing sustainability frameworks from the beginning.

Score: 2.7



InternetLab

- Project evaluates risks, justifications and policies of facial recognition and surveillance in public schools
- Demonstrates a strong track record of work on technology and human rights, with a transparent methodology

Score: 2.0



Demonstrates SIPA team's recommendation, outside of the scoring matrix. InternetLab's programs demonstrate a strong alignment with BRAVA's strategic priorities. InternetLab and its project received a lower score due to reliance on limited secondary research and the absence of an interview.

Key Considerations for Engagement

What to Prioritize

Actions that strengthen partnerships and drive impact, informed by global philanthropic leaders



Active Engagement

Maintain quarterly check-ins and provide timely support and network access to grantees.



Learning Loops

Define 2-3 priority strategic questions at the start of each grant to guide learning and shape the work. Share questions and findings with grantees and the philanthropic ecosystem.



Political Sensitivity

Recognize the inherent political sensitivity of AI accountability work. Ensure grantee independence and avoid influencing findings.



Grant Design

Prioritize institutional funding in this space. Adopt flexible, multi-year funding and leverage co-funding partnerships for sustained impact.



Reporting & Evaluation

Design minimal, meaningful reporting aligned with learning objectives. Focus on actionable insights that improve funding effectiveness.

What to Avoid

Common pitfalls to avoid, identified through cross-sector stakeholder interviews



Solutions before diagnosis

Avoid proposing solutions before deeply understanding the context and root causes.



Overemphasis on federal investments

Balance support across different levels and types of investment to enable a diverse ecosystem.



Scale over expertise

Prioritize depth, relevance, and quality over the number of initiatives or geographies.



Avoiding hard conversations with grantees

Engage in honest, respectful dialogue to surface challenges, align on goals, and strengthen impact.



Pilots without sustainability plans

Avoid funding pilots that lack a clear path to long-term viability and impact.



Only backing proven models

Avoid limiting support to only "safe" or proven approaches. Innovation is essential to driving system change.



The governance choices being made now will determine whether AI in Brazil's public sector generates lasting public value or reproduces and deepens existing institutional weaknesses.”

Acknowledgements

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Questions & Answers

