

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	REGIONAL/CCB - Caribbean Group
▪ TC Name:	Boosting the Post-COVID 19 Digital Agenda in the Caribbean
▪ TC Number:	RG-T3753
▪ Team Leader/Members:	DE SIMONE, FRANCESCO (IFD/ICS) Team Leader; MUENTE KUNIGAMI, ARTURO (IFD/ICS); SERALE, FLORENCIA (IFD/ICS); KAGELMACHER, DARIO GUILLERMO (IFD/ICS); CATANO GUZMAN, MARIANA (IFD/ICS); MAHFOUZ, GIOVANNA L. (IFD/ICS); RIVERA, KATIA (IFD/ICS); NEGRET GARRIDO, CESAR ANDRES (LEG/SGO)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	28 Jul 2020
▪ Beneficiary:	IDB Borrowing Member Countries in CCB
▪ Executing Agency:	INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$150,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$0.00
▪ Disbursement period:	24 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	IFD - Institutions for Development Sector
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	CCB/CJA - Country Office Jamaica
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Institutional capacity and rule of law

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 The COVID-19 crisis has made painfully clear that, while Caribbean countries have made strides in e-government, the road ahead is still long, and there is a need to considerably accelerate the pace of digitalization, particularly of services. The objective of this TC is to conduct a series of diagnostics and roadmaps of e-government digital capacity in 3 Caribbean countries, particularly in light of lessons learned from the health crisis, with the specific aim of identifying strategies and solutions to strategically accelerate the pace of digitization of the public sector.
- 2.2 The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted with unprecedented force and clarity the need for Caribbean countries to significantly accelerate their digital government transition. If in recent years countries in the region have made important progress in certain areas of the digital agenda and have laid the foundation for future progress, the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the many deep gaps that remain.
- 2.3 Between March and June 2020, when some of the strictest restrictions were in place, following the increase in COVID-19 cases across the Caribbean, the health crisis impacted the public sector of CCB countries in a variety of ways. First and foremost, there was a massive disruption in the provision of public services to citizens. As highlighted in the recent IDB study "Wait No More", across the Caribbean over 89% of government transactions are still carried out in person, with more than 30% of

transactions requiring 3 or more visits to government offices, and an average of more than 4 hours to complete a single transaction; clearly this was incompatible with the restrictions imposed under COVID-19, as completing transactions under in this context would have posed unacceptable health risks for both government officials and citizens. As a consequence, and unsurprisingly, many services were shut down altogether in CCB countries: in Jamaica, for example, court hearings were suspended during the crisis and so was the issuance of driver's licenses; in The Bahamas, vehicle licensing requirements were suspended; while various other countries saw important impacts on a variety of in-person services, including payment of taxes, functioning of the legal system, and issuance of certificates and documents, and similar.

- 2.4 Secondly, while many CCB countries encouraged public officials to work remotely and limited the physical presence in government offices to critical staff, it became evident early on that several governments in the region are not equipped for a scenario of extended – or even temporary in some cases – remote work: many systems cannot be accessed from outside of government offices; few staff have laptops, and many lack training on how to use systems remotely. This in turn represented a major incentive for governments to accelerate the digitalization process.
- 2.5 Finally, the crisis has highlighted weaknesses in some key of the key pillars necessary for digital government to develop and flourish, which will need to be tackled for other downstream activities to go digital. These include connectivity, which is quite uneven across and within countries in the region, interoperability among systems, skills and digital literacy, identity and digital signature, among others. As an example, in Jamaica the Government redoubled its efforts to establish a biometric national identity, seen as a key tool to ensure the delivery of key COVID-19 services and benefits to beneficiaries and the tracking of patients and people in isolation; in a significant development, the Jamaican parliamentary opposition supported an increase in budget for the National Identity System Project, a project they had previously opposed, in recognition of the key role this would play in the digital future of the country.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: Diagnostics and Action Plans (US\$90.000).** Under this component, the IDB will provide support to three CCB countries in conducting diagnostics of digital gaps and drafting action plans to identify priority areas. The diagnostics will focus specifically on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis, and the action plans too will identify specifically the most urgent measures to be implemented, including in the medium and short term.
- 3.2 **Component II: Implementation Support (US\$40.000).** Under this component, the IDB will support the implementation of one activity identified under the action plans of the three countries.
- 3.3 **Component III: Knowledge and Dissemination (US\$20.000).** This component will support the preparation of a technical note collecting the main lessons learned from the 3 diagnostics, resulting in a document that reflects on the impact of COVID-19 on the digital agenda in the Caribbean.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Total Funding
Component I. Diagnostics and Action Plans	US\$90,000.00	US\$90,000.00
Component II. Implementation Support	US\$40,000.00	US\$40,000.00
Component III. Knowledge and Dissemination	US\$20,000.00	US\$20,000.00

Total	US\$150,000.00	US\$150,000.00
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V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 This Regional TC will be executed by the Bank through the Innovation in Citizen Services Division (IFD/ICS).
- 5.2 The project team is led by Francesco De Simone (IFD/ICS) who will supervise the TC components. Procurement processes of contracts financed through this bank executed TC will be conducted in accordance with the correspondent Procurement Policies (GN-2765-1; GN-2303-20; AM-650).
- 5.3 All technical support at country-level will require a letter of request or a non-objection letter from the Government as appropriate. Letters of Requests will be processed through the liaison agency in each country and these letters must expressly request IDB to be the executing agency. It is expected that at least three countries of the CCB region will benefit from this TC. Informal expressions of interest have been received from Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The team is working to formalize the requests.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 The team has identified the timeframe for completion of the diagnostics as the main challenge. Because the digital agenda develops and shifts quickly, and also because of the elusive nature of COVID-19, any diagnostic and action plan that takes too long would be ineffective and risk becoming obsolete quickly. To prevent this risk, the team will focus on an agile design for the structure of the diagnostics; the purpose is not for those to be exhaustive, but rather to offer a quick snapshot of the main issues that have emerged during COVID, and how those affect existing plans and strategies, rather than starting from scratch.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this operation is "undefined".