

## TC Document

### I. Basic Information for TC

▪ Country/Region:	REGIONAL
▪ 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; Catano Guzman, Mariana (IFD/ICS); Kagelmacher, Dario Guillermo (IFD/ICS); Mahfouz, Giovanna L. (IFD/ICS); Muent Kunigami, Arturo (IFD/ICS); Negret Garrido, Cesar Andres (LEG/SGO); Rivera, Katia (IFD/ICS); Serale, Florencia (IFD/ICS)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Operation Supported by the TC:	n/a
▪ Date of TC Abstract authorization:	28 Jul 2020.
▪ Beneficiary:	Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago
▪ Executing Agency and contact name:	Inter-American Development Bank
▪ Donors providing funding:	OC Strategic Development Program for Institutions(INS)
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$150,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$0
▪ Disbursement period (which includes Execution period):	24 Months
▪ Required start date:	01/01/2021
▪ Types of consultants:	Consulting Firms and Individuals
▪ Prepared by Unit:	IFD-Institutions for Development Sector
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	CCB/CJA-Country Office Jamaica
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	The topic is prioritized in the Country Strategies for: Jamaica (2016-21) - (Strategic Objective 1 – Improving Public Sector Management); and Trinidad and Tobago (2016-2020) (Strategic Objective 1 – Strengthening Public Sector Institutions and Governance).
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Institutional capacity and rule of law

### II. Objectives and Justification of the TC

- 2.1 The objective of this Technical Cooperation (TC) is to support IDB member countries in the Caribbean in their efforts to boost their digital agendas, particularly in light of the COVID-19 health crisis. The specific objectives of this TC are: (i) conduct diagnostics in two CCB countries to assess progress during and impact of COVID-19 on the digital government agenda, and to create action plans for priority sectors; (ii) to provide technical assistance for the implementation of one priority action stemming from the action plans produced under (i); and (iii) to collect and disseminate lessons learned from these activities.
- 2.2 **Justification** The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted with unprecedented force and clarity the need for Caribbean countries to accelerate their digital government transition. In recent years countries in the region have made important progress in

certain areas of the digital agenda<sup>1</sup> and have laid the foundation for future progress, the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the many gaps that remain.

- 2.3 Between March and June 2020, restrictions implemented due to the increase in COVID-19 cases across the Caribbean, 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”<sup>2</sup>, across the Caribbean over 89% of government transactions are still carried out in person, with more than 30% of transactions requiring three or more visits to government offices, and an average of more than four hours to complete a single transaction; clearly this was incompatible with the restrictions imposed under COVID-19, as completing transactions in this context would have posed unacceptable health risks for both government officials and citizens. Consequently, and unsurprisingly, many services were shut down altogether in CCB countries: in Jamaica, for example, court hearings were suspended during the crisis<sup>3</sup> and so was the issuance of driver’s licenses<sup>4</sup>; in The Bahamas, vehicle licensing requirements were suspended<sup>5</sup>; 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<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.4 Secondly, while many CCB countries encouraged public officials to work remotely, and limited 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 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.
- 2.6 Throughout the Caribbean, the demand for support from the Bank in digital government projects has increased significantly during the COVID-19 crisis, in the areas of digital identity (Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago); Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills and digital literacy (The Bahamas, Guyana); ICT Authorities (The Bahamas); and digital services (Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago). This, in turn, underscores the need for assessments of how demand has evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic, for Governments to establish priorities, and for the

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the case of the electronic business registration in Jamaica, which projected the country to the top 10 globally for ease of establishing a new business. <https://jis.gov.jm/more-persons-using-electronic-business-registration-form/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://publications.iadb.org/en/wait-no-more-citizens-red-tape-and-digital-government-caribbean-edition>

<sup>3</sup> <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20200320/court-hearings-suspended-until-april-20-due-coronavirus>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/auto/no-new-licences-until-april\\_190712?profile=1052](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/auto/no-new-licences-until-april_190712?profile=1052)

<sup>5</sup> <https://thenassaeguardian.com/2020/04/22/vehicle-licensing-requirement-suspended/>

<sup>6</sup> By contrast, a country such as Estonia, in which all services are digitized, including the health system, was able to continue functioning almost unaffected. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/estonia-advanced-digital-society-here-s-how-that-helped-it-during-covid-19/>

Bank to understand how it can better support its partners. Because of that, the focus of the present TC is primarily on diagnostics and action plans; these however, differentiate significantly from different efforts conducted in the past, in that they focus mainly on the needs and lessons learned emerging from the COVID-19 crisis.

- 2.7 The Bank has an important trajectory, particularly in recent years, supporting CCB countries in their efforts to build and strengthen their digital government agenda<sup>7</sup>; the Bank has also supported the effort of CCB countries to strengthen their digital government capacity through an ad-hoc exchange programme with Estonia's e-Governance Academy (EGA – ATN/OC-16893-RG); the Bank is therefore uniquely positioned to support the countries of the Caribbean region in tackling the specific challenges for the digital government agenda post COVID-19.
- 2.8 Under this TC, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have been identified as beneficiaries. Both countries were able to manage the COVID-19 crisis and contain the number of cases and deaths. As of writing time, Jamaica had 10,888 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus and some 235 deaths, while Trinidad and Tobago had 6,233 confirmed cases and 113 deaths. As a comparison, neighboring Dominican Republic, with a population 10 times that of Trinidad and about 3 times that of Jamaica, had over 136,000 cases and more than 2,300 deaths. Both countries were singled out for relatively good management of the pandemic, with Jamaica being lauded by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) for its strong contact-tracing system<sup>8</sup>, and Trinidad and Tobago being highlighted for its “all of government” approach to the pandemic<sup>9</sup>. For both countries, however, containment of the virus came at a cost, not only in terms of decreased economic activity, growing unemployment, and sluggish tourism (Jamaica) and hydrocarbon demand (Trinidad and Tobago), but also as a disruption of public services.
- 2.9 In 2020, Jamaica ranked 114<sup>th</sup> worldwide under the UN E-Government Development Index, below both the global and regional average, while Trinidad and Tobago ranked 81<sup>st</sup>, near the global and regional average<sup>10</sup>. Delays in implementing E-Government strategies and digitizing public services became evident as the COVID-19 crisis hit these countries, affecting the delivery of public services that were largely in person, as reflected in the 2019 IDB study “Wait No more – Caribbean Edition”<sup>11</sup>.
- 2.10 While these gaps can only be filled with medium-long term investments and digital government strategies, this TC identified one sector in both Jamaica and Trinidad that, because of its characteristics, required swift support in the digital government area: the Justice sector in Jamaica and the Health sector in Trinidad and Tobago. These are sectors with significant room for improving the adoption of digital tools and strategies. They are also sectors with leadership and vision at a high-level, as well as a foundation of on which to build such tools and strategies, and a high potential for positive impact in the pandemic context.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example: 4437/OC-JA; 4374/OC-JA; 4400/OC-JA; ATN/OC-16836-JA; 4549/OC-BH; 4920/OC-BA; ATN/OC-17726-BA.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/jamaica-highlighted-for-best-practices-in-contact-tracing\\_207540?profile=1373](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/jamaica-highlighted-for-best-practices-in-contact-tracing_207540?profile=1373)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7410471/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Country-Information/id/174-Trinidad-and-Tobago>

<sup>11</sup> [https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Wait\\_No\\_More\\_Citizens\\_Red\\_Tape\\_and\\_Digital\\_Government\\_Caribbean\\_Edition.pdf](https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Wait_No_More_Citizens_Red_Tape_and_Digital_Government_Caribbean_Edition.pdf)

- 2.11 In Jamaica, the justice sector experienced a significant setback in the spring of 2020, as the country implemented restrictions to the movement of people<sup>12</sup>. However, digitization was already high on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)'s agenda before the pandemic, as shown by the National Conference on Technology in the Justice Sector<sup>13</sup>, organized by the MoJ in February of 2020. Similarly, progress had been achieved in some areas, particularly the Court of Appeals and case management. In Trinidad and Tobago, while the impact of COVID-19 was felt in the administration of the health sector, as in other areas, the Ministry of Health has already started the planning process for digitizing health records, a significant step for all countries, and ensuring the integration of health information management systems among the Regional Health Authorities, with an emphasis on personnel management, regulatory compliance and accounting. In both countries and sectors, the conditions are present to define digital roadmaps that include both short-term gains and medium-to-long term strategies.
- 2.12 **Strategic Alignment.** The TC is aligned with the Second Update to the Bank's Institutional Strategy (AB-3190-2), and particularly with the cross-cutting theme "Enhancing Institutional Capacity and the Rule of Law" under which the Strategy emphasizes the need to strengthen governance using technology to deliver better public services. Additionally, it is aligned with the Strategic Development Program for Institutions (GN-2819-1), and particularly with objectives: (i) improving the quality of institutions; and (ii) strengthening service delivery. This topic area is prioritized in the Country Strategies for: Jamaica (2016-21) - (Strategic Objective 1 – Improving Public Sector Management); and Trinidad and Tobago (2016-2020) (Strategic Objective 1 – Strengthening Public Sector Institutions and Governance).

### III. Description of activities and budget

To achieve the stated objective, the TC is articulated in three components:

- 3.1 **Component I: Diagnostics and Action Plans (US\$100.000).** Under this component, the IDB will provide support to two CCB countries in conducting diagnostics of digital gaps and drafting action plans in one priority sector. The diagnostics will focus also on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis, and the action plans will identify the most urgent measures to be implemented, including in the medium and short term. The focus on the COVID-19 impact on digital government will ensure that the diagnostics do not replicate, but rather complement and update any existing diagnostics that the countries may have undergone in recent years.
- 3.2 **Specific activities under this component are:** (i) a digital government diagnostic and action plan for the health sector in Trinidad and Tobago (US\$50.000); and (ii) a digital government diagnostic and action plan for the justice sector in Jamaica (US\$50.000).

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.loopjamaica.com/content/chuck-urges-persons-settle-legal-matters-despite-court-closure>

<sup>13</sup> <https://jis.gov.jm/justice-ministry-hosts-technology-conference/>

- 3.3 **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 two countries. The selection process will be competitive and based on the following criteria: (i) quality of the proposal submitted by the beneficiary government/ministry; (ii) transformative potential for the country's digital government environment; (iii) timeframe and budget fitting the TC resources and implementation timeline; (iv) alignment with other IDB activities and strategy in the country and the government's strategic priorities in this area; and (v) the extent to which the proposal tackles issues emerging from COVID-19, and can help reduce the impact of future pandemics.
- 3.4 Because the activity has not been identified yet and will be determined from the results of Component I, no details can be provided at this time, and therefore Terms of Reference are not included in this document. Examples of possible activities to be funded under this component include: (i) further diagnostics that deepen the general diagnostic and zoom in on one specific area; (ii) the preparation of terms of reference for a specific ICT application stemming from the main diagnostic; (iii) the design of the ICT unit of the beneficiary ministries, including its structure, functions and profiles; (iv) hiring of a consultancy to support the implementation of a specific ICT tool recommended under the diagnostic in Component I.
- 3.5 **Component III – Knowledge and Dissemination (US\$10.000).** This component will support the preparation of a technical note collecting the main lessons learned from Components I and II, resulting in a document that reflects on the impact of COVID-19 on the digital agenda in the Caribbean. Specifically, this component will support the preparation of one technical note<sup>14</sup> collecting the main lessons learned from Components I and II.
- 3.6 The total budget of the TC will be US\$150.000, financed with resources from Ordinary Capital of the Strategic Program of the Development Institutions (INS).

**Indicative Budget  
(In US\$)**

Activity/Component	IDB/INS	Total Funding
Component I: Diagnostics and Action Plans	100.000	100.000
Component II: Implementation Support	40.000	40.000
Component III: Knowledge and Dissemination	10.000	10.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>150.000</b>	<b>150.000</b>

#### **IV. Executing agency and execution structure**

<sup>14</sup> In the event that the technical note were to be published, intellectual property rights from the technical note and from all other products financed under this TC will be property of the Bank.

- 4.1 This Regional TC will be executed by the Bank through the Innovation in Citizen Services Division (IFD/ICS). The project team is led by Francesco De Simone (IFD/ICS) who will supervise the TC components from the Jamaica Country Office (CJA); the focal point in Trinidad and Tobago is Jason Wilks (ICS/CTT). No specific supervision costs are anticipated. All activities to be executed under this TC have been included in the Procurement Plan (see Annex IV) and will be contracted in accordance with Bank policies as follows: (a) AM-650 for Individual consultants; (b) GN-2765-4 and Guidelines OP-1155-4 for Consulting Firms for services of an intellectual nature; and (c) GN-2303-28 for logistics and other related services. Execution by the Bank is justified by the considerable Bank experience with implementing technical assistance programs in digital government in the Caribbean, and with the objective of ensuring close alignment with the main international best practices and standards in this area (see point (d) of Annex 10 of GN-2629-1, particularly bullet (iii)).
- 4.2 A letter of No Objection has been obtained for Trinidad and Tobago and is attached to this document. For Jamaica, a letter of request has been obtained from the Ministry of Justice, and the Project Team is in the process of obtaining the corresponding No Objection letter from the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The team understands that no activities can be undertaken in Jamaica until the No Objection letter has been obtained.

## **V. Major issues**

- 5.1 The team has identified the timeframe for completion of the diagnostics as the main challenge. Because the digital agenda develops and shifts quickly, and 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-19, and how those affect existing plans and strategies, rather than starting from scratch.
- 5.2 Digital projects frequently face risks related to sustainability, as advancements in technology, changes in leadership or priorities and other external factors can cause the results of investments made to be short-lived. In the case of this project, the potential for sustainability of project activities in the target countries and sector is considered high, because digital thinking is already embedded in the high-level strategies of the ministries involved, and because COVID-19 has brought about a sense of urgency and for the digital agenda, which makes changes in priorities unlikely.

## **VI. Exceptions to Bank policy**

- 6.1 This operation does not foresee any exceptions to Bank policy.

## **VII. Environmental and Social Strategy**

- 7.1 According to the results of the IDB "[Safeguards Policy Filter Report](#)", and the "[Safeguard Screening Form](#)", this operation is classified as Category "C", given the low impact on environmental and social issues.

**Required Annexes:**

[Request from the Client - RG-T3753](#)

[Results Matrix - RG-T3753](#)

[Terms of Reference - RG-T3753](#)

[Procurement Plan - RG-T3753](#)