

BELIZE'S NATIONAL DIGITAL AGENDA

2026-2030

PRESENTED BY THE
MINISTRY OF E-GOVERNANCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An overview of Belize's National Digital Agenda 2026–2030, a strategic roadmap put forth by the Ministry of E-Governance to promote all-encompassing digital transformation, is given in this executive summary.

Goals & Vision

The agenda aims to transform Belize's economy from an emerging digital environment to one that is resilient and driven by innovation. This new vision, which is based on lessons learned from the 2022–2025 strategy, places a higher priority on developing a collaborative culture, dismantling institutional silos, and more closely integrating with long-term national development goals like as "Horizon 2030."

Strategic Goals and Priorities

The agenda focuses on creating public value through four primary strategic enablers:

- **Governance and Coordination:** Establishing strong institutional frameworks and centralized leadership to avoid duplication and ensure coherence.
- **Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** Modernizing laws to promote technology neutrality, data protection, and electronic proceedings.
- **Digital Talent:** Developing skills within the public sector through specialized roles (e.g., Chief Data Officer) and training initiatives.
- **Digital Infrastructure and ICT Tools:** Implementing foundational tools such as national interoperability schemes, digital identification, and cloud services.

Current Status and Opportunities

Belize holds a moderate "C - Medium" rating in the World Bank's GovTech Maturity Index and ranks 141st in the UN's E-Government Development Index. Despite these rankings, several foundational strengths exist:

- **High Mobile Penetration:** At 85.7%, this provides a strong base for mobile-first services, especially in rural areas.
- **Internet Connectivity:** 70.4% internet penetration offers an enabling environment for broader digital inclusion.
- **Legislative Milestones:** The passage of the Digital Government Act (2022) and the development of the first National Data Strategy have laid the legal backbone for future progress.

Challenges to Address

The agenda identifies several systemic barriers that must be overcome:

- **Data Silos:** Disconnected systems that limit effective data utilization.
- **Skills Gap:** A deficit in advanced technical expertise in fields like AI, cybersecurity, and data analytics.
- **Operational Hurdles:** Complex procurement processes and a reliance on manual internal workflows.
- **Funding Sustainability:** Risks associated with a high reliance on external donor support.

Key Action Areas

Strategic pillars including digital innovation, digital economy, and digital security will direct transformation. The digitalization of more than 465,000 birth records and the introduction of online tax collection systems, which currently manage more than 90% of income, are two initiatives that have already demonstrated success. The Digital and IT Infrastructure Project Vetting Committee will oversee future investments to make sure they support the country's modernization and transparency goals.

2. INTRODUCTION - SHAPING BELIZE'S DIGITAL FUTURE: A COHESIVE AGENDA FOR 2026-2030

Belize's journey towards comprehensive digital transformation has seen mixed progress, characterized by notable advancements in specific areas and agencies, despite persistent, cross-cutting challenges. As the nation navigates the complexities of the modern digital landscape, the imperative to embrace digital solutions and transformation structures across the public service has increased in urgency. This push towards modern digital services is crucial for overcoming economic impacts, fostering resilience, and addressing long-standing systemic problems that have historically impeded socio-economic growth.

The previous National Digital Agenda 2022-2025, led by the then-newly established Ministry of Youth, Sport, and E-Governance, laid important groundwork for creating an enabling environment for digital government. While notable progress was achieved, recent consultations during the initial phase of developing the National Digital Agenda 2026-2030 indicated that awareness of these efforts varied across institutions. As a result, several initiatives were implemented independently, without full programmatic alignment or centralized coordination. These insights have provided valuable lessons, highlighting the importance of broader institutional and stakeholder engagement to ensure greater coherence and impact moving forward.

Despite these hurdles, digital transformation remains a high government priority, driven by the elevated Ministry of E-Governance's focus on modernizing public service and improving citizen access while serving as the country lead on crosscut governmental digital transformation. Significant digitalization projects are currently underway across various ministries and entities, signalling a growing institutional recognition of socioeconomic importance of digital transformation.

Moving forward, the National Digital Agenda 2026-2030 is grounded in these lessons learned, prioritizing collective strategic planning, systemic integration, and institutional leadership. This new vision seeks to break the silos and foster a collaborative culture, where digitalization becomes the enabling path to better lives for citizens, businesses, and public officers. It is crucial that this agenda is more deeply aligned with Belize's long-term national development plans, such as 'Horizon 2030'. By establishing a coordinated framework, Belize aims to achieve a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable digital for its government and society.

3. BELIZE'S DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT STATUS & OPPORTUNITIES

Belize's performance on international digital development indices underscores both the progress made and the critical areas requiring attention. In the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) published by the United Nations in 2024, Belize ranks 141st out of 193 countries, reflecting a medium level of e-government development but marking a decline of eight positions from the previous assessment. Similarly, in the E-Participation Index (EPI), Belize occupies the 148th position, though it has improved by nine spots, indicating incremental progress in citizen engagement through digital platforms.

In terms of cybersecurity, the International Telecommunication Union's Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) classifies Belize as Tier 4 – Evolving, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen national cybersecurity frameworks and implement protective measures. Regarding the readiness to adopt artificial intelligence in the public sector, Belize is placed 124th out of 188 countries in the Government AI Readiness Index by Oxford Insights, pointing to limited preparedness for integrating emerging technologies.

The World Bank's GovTech Maturity Index (2022) assigns Belize a "C – Medium" rating, indicating early-stage initiatives to enhance digital government technologies and services. Similarly, in the Digital Competitiveness Index (2024) by AVASANT, Belize is categorized as "Emerging," scoring 6.97 out of 30 in the Digital Services Ecosystem dimension. Furthermore, the Open Data Barometer (2020) gives Belize a score of 22.24, with particularly low performance in the "Impact" pillar (1.67), underscoring challenges in leveraging open data for socioeconomic benefits, this reflects the need for interoperability platform to clear silos and improve public access to government data.

Despite these rankings, Belize possesses foundational strengths that can catalyse digital transformation. Mobile penetration at 85.7%, the country has a strong base for mobile-first digital services, creating opportunities to expand low-bandwidth solutions such as USSD and SMS, particularly in rural communities. Additionally, internet penetration stands at 70.4%, a relatively high rate in the region, which provides an enabling environment for broader digital inclusion, although there is a need to enhance fixed internet speeds through fibre-optic expansion.

Despite these rankings, Belize possesses key strengths that can catalyze its digital transformation. Mobile penetration stands at 85.7%, providing a strong base for mobile-first digital services, especially in rural communities. Internet penetration at 70.4% also positions Belize favorably within the region, though fixed broadband speeds require enhancement through fiber-optic expansion. Additionally, Belize's moderate AI Readiness Score of 55.49/100 suggests that foundational infrastructure exists to support emerging technologies such as 5G, cloud services, and IoT, provided strategic investments continue.

Challenges Ahead

3. BELIZE'S DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT STATUS & OPPORTUNITIES

Notwithstanding these opportunities, Belize faces several challenges that must be addressed to achieve a fully digital government. First, the supply of e-government services remains limited, requiring the development of integrated, user-friendly platforms to improve accessibility and engagement. Low levels of citizen participation highlight the need for digital literacy campaigns that build trust and familiarity with online services.

The country also grapples with a digital skills gap, particularly in advanced fields such as AI, cybersecurity, and data analytics. Bridging this gap will require targeted partnerships with educational institutions, tech training programs, and private-sector actors to foster local expertise.

In the realm of policy and governance, Belize lacks comprehensive frameworks for AI and data governance, making it imperative to craft clear regulations and establish regulatory sandboxes that support innovation while ensuring safety and accountability. Additionally, the broader digital ecosystem remains underdeveloped, with limited investment and a small number of innovative firms. Initiatives such as startup incubators, digital adoption grants for SMEs, and fiscal incentives for foreign technology companies can help stimulate growth.

Finally, Belize continues to lag global benchmarks in ICT standards, adoption, and skills. Public-private partnerships will play a critical role in expanding affordable broadband access and implementing digital inclusion programs to close these gaps.

3.1 RECENT ACTIONS TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Despite persistent challenges, Belize has taken decisive steps to modernize its digital ecosystem and lay the foundation for an innovation-driven economy. These efforts reflect a strategic approach that combines policy reform, capacity building, and investment incentives.

One of the most significant milestones is the development of Belize's first National Data Strategy¹, spearheaded by then E-Governance and Digitalization Department and now Ministry of E-Governance, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This strategy establishes robust standards for managing, protecting, and leveraging data across government entities while promoting innovation and interoperability. Complementing this initiative, the government has embraced agile processes to accelerate service delivery and ensure a more citizen-centred approach to governance.

¹MPUELE Technical Report 2023/2024 <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Min-of-Pub-Utilities-Energy-E-Gov.-ATR-2023-2024.pdf>

At the legislative level, the passage of the Digital Government Act (2022)² formalized the structure and authority of Belize's e-governance framework, providing a legal backbone for digital transformation. Belize has also deepened its engagement in regional policymaking through active participation in the Organization of American States' Inter-American Framework on Data Governance and Artificial Intelligence (MIGDIA)³, signalling its commitment to adopting global best practices for AI and data governance.

Belize has also prioritized digital innovation and support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Through the EU-and IDB-funded program "Digital Innovation to Boost Economic Development in Belize," more than 250 MSMEs—including women-led businesses—are receiving digital transformation grants, advisory services, and training. To complement these efforts, the government is establishing a digital innovation incubation institute and a mobile incubator, providing mentorship opportunities and fostering entrepreneurial growth across the country⁴.

As Belize accelerates its digital transformation journey, cybersecurity has emerged as a cornerstone of its national strategy. Recognizing the increasing sophistication of cyber threats, the government has taken a series of decisive actions to build a secure and resilient digital ecosystem, with oversight and governance now led by the Ministry of E-Governance, ensuring that cybersecurity considerations remain fully integrated into the country's broader digital transformation agenda.

One of the most significant milestones was the launch of the National Cybersecurity Strategy (2020–2023)⁵. This strategy laid the foundation for strengthening the country's cyber resilience, focusing on three critical priorities: developing a national legal framework to address cybersecurity threats, enhancing incident response and critical infrastructure protection capabilities, and promoting education, awareness, and workforce development in cybersecurity. Implementation was coordinated through strong interagency collaboration, involving the Ministry of National Security, the Public Utilities Commission, the Central Information Technology Office, the Attorney General's Ministry, and an Inter-institutional Cybersecurity Task Force. The Government of Belize is committed to updating and extending this strategy beyond 2023, ensuring that it remains responsive to emerging risks and evolving technologies.

Belize has also prioritized regional and international cooperation as part of its approach. As a country, Belize is actively participating in platforms such as the EU–LAC Digital Alliance Cybersecurity Dialogue, where in February 2024 it reaffirmed its commitment to building resilient ecosystems, protecting critical infrastructure, and enhancing capacity through bi-regional collaboration. Belize partners with international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to strengthen knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives.

²Digital Government Act (2022) https://www.agm.gov.bz/uploads/laws/639771ad867b9_Act_No._24_of_2022_Digital_Government_Act_2022.pdf

³Inter-American Framework on Data Governance and Artificial Intelligence (MIGDIA) <https://www.oas.org/ext/en/democracy/inter-american-framework-on-data-governance-and-artificial-intelligence-migdia>

⁴EU and IDB Invest \$2 Million to Advance Digital Innovation in Belize - <https://www.greaterbelize.com/eu-and-idb-invest-2-million-to-advance-digital-innovation-in-belize/>

⁵National Cybersecurity Strategy – Towards a Secure Cyberspace 2020-2023. <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/belize-cybersecurity-strategy-2020-2023.pdf>

⁶Europe and Latin America & the Caribbean step-up cooperation on cybersecurity. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-and-latin-america-caribbean-step-cooperation-cybersecurity_en

The financial sector has received particular attention, given its central role in economic stability. In 2024, the Central Bank of Belize introduced stronger cybersecurity regulations for financial institutions⁷. These measures include mandatory, continuous updates to cybersecurity programs, the adoption of robust incident response plans, and alignment with both national and international cyber resilience standards. Additionally, the Central Bank has launched outreach initiatives to raise awareness among financial stakeholders and promote best practices.

Beyond regulatory efforts, Belize has recognized the importance of cultivating a cyber-aware society. Through national awareness campaigns, educational programs, and events such as the Digital Leadership Conference Belize 2024, the country has invested in developing leadership and technical skills in cybersecurity, equipping businesses and executives with the tools to manage digital risks effectively.

To attract larger-scale technology investments, the government has amended the Fiscal Incentives Act (2024)⁸, introducing targeted tax exemptions and special provisions for firms investing in digitalization and innovation. These reforms are designed not only to attract foreign investors but also to strengthen the competitiveness of local enterprises.

Belize is also promoting a culture of innovation through a public-private Innovation Pact, which encourages businesses to assess their innovation capacity and develop tailored growth strategies. Participation in regional initiatives, such as the Technology Extension Services program, further supports MSMEs in adopting digital tools and innovative practices, with a particular focus on empowering women entrepreneurs⁹.

As of May 2025, the Government of Belize took an important step to enhance the governance and sustainability of its digital transformation by establishing the Digital and IT Infrastructure Project Vetting Committee.¹⁰ This high-level body was created to provide structured oversight of national digital and IT projects, ensuring that resources are strategically allocated and initiatives align with the country's broader development priorities.

The committee's mandate extends beyond simple approval processes. It is responsible for setting technical and operational standards for digital infrastructure projects, reviewing implementation processes to ensure efficiency, and identifying potential risks that could hinder progress. Through these functions, the committee seeks to guarantee that every digital investment contributes meaningfully to Belize's long-term vision for modernization, efficiency, and transparency.

The creation of this committee, approved by Cabinet, signals a deliberate effort to strengthen institutional capacity and coordination across government agencies. It reflects a growing recognition that digital transformation cannot succeed without robust governance structures that monitor progress, enforce compliance, and foster accountability. The Vetting Committee's role complements the broader work of the Ministry of E-Governance. This unit will continue to lead the formulation of strategies and policies that guide Belize's digital future, including the modernization of government services and the integration of emerging technologies.

⁷Anti Money Laundering Highlights Notice No. 2 2024. https://www.centralbank.org.bz/docs/default-source/2.7-compliance/no.-2-of-2024--cbb-aml-highlights-final718beafc-daa6-423c-9ae7-bdce92fde69e.pdf?sfvrsn=d6cd3b20_3

⁸Fiscal Incentives Act (Amendment Bill 2024) <https://www.nationalassembly.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Fiscal-Incentives-Amendment-Bill-2024.pdf>

⁹ Innovation Pact - <https://www.beltraide.bz/innovationpact.html>

¹⁰Cabinet Approves Committee to oversee Digital and IT Infrastructure Projects <https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2025/05/22/cabinet-approves-committee-to-oversee-digital-and-it-infrastructure-projects/>

As part of its broader push toward evidence-based policymaking and digital transformation, the Government of Belize has endorsed the Second National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)—a five-year roadmap designed to modernize the country's national statistics system through 2028. Led by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) in coordination with various public sector entities, this strategy seeks to enhance the capacity, quality, and coordination of data production across government institutions.

By strengthening how data is collected, analysed, and disseminated, the NSDS supports improved decision-making processes and aligns with national priorities around transparency, accountability, and sustainable development. This move also reflects high-level political commitment to institutional modernization. The SIB—Belize's official statistical agency since its establishment in 2007—will play a key role in driving this initiative, reinforcing its central role in the country's evolving digital ecosystem.

Taken together, these initiatives mark a turning point in Belize's digital journey. While the country still lags global benchmarks, these reforms and investments demonstrate a clear commitment to bridging systemic gaps in governance, infrastructure, and innovation. With sustained effort and inclusive policymaking, Belize is well-positioned to transition from an emerging digital environment to a resilient, innovation-driven economy under this revised National Digital Agenda 2026–2030.



4. PREPARING THE AGENDA

4.1 METHODOLOGY

The formulation of the New National Digital Agenda 2026-2030 for the Government of Belize has been meticulously crafted through a comprehensive methodological approach, designed to ensure a realistic and effectively costed five-year implementation plan. It began with a comprehensive assessment of the progress and lessons learned from the previous Digital Agenda (2022–2025) and the development of this new iteration. This initial phase focused on evaluating what had been achieved until date, identifying gaps, and defining future priorities to ensure the new agenda builds on a strong and informed foundation.

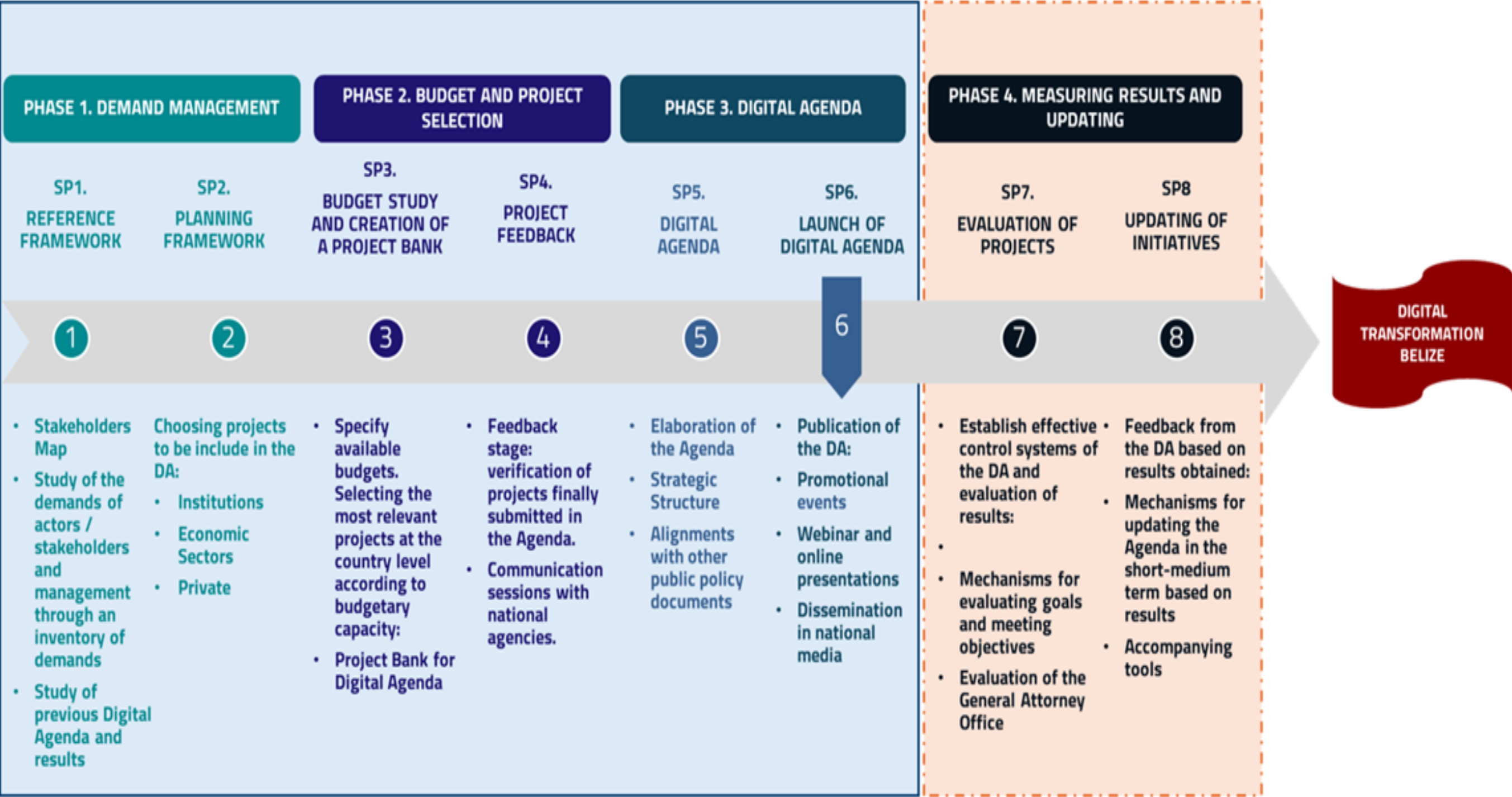
The process started with a series of consultations and structured interviews involving 13 key government stakeholders that were assigned projects and digital initiatives in the context of the past Digital Agenda. These discussions were designed to measure progress and capture a holistic view of Belize's digital transformation journey which centred on four critical areas:

- **Awareness and progress** on projects under the 2022–2025 Digital Agenda.
- **Current digital initiatives** underway across ministries and agencies.
- **Challenges and gaps** encountered in implementing digital transformation strategies.
- **Future priorities and emerging needs** as identified by stakeholders themselves.

This process delivered critical insights into the state of digitalization across ministries, statutory bodies, and public agencies, providing a clear and contextualized understanding of progress, challenges, and opportunities. It also served as a pivotal moment for the newly elevated Ministry of E-Governance to reinforce its role as the national lead on digital transformation, strengthening its position as the central coordinating authority. Equally important, the consultations fostered a participatory approach, giving institutions a platform to voice their perspectives and contribute meaningfully to shaping the strategic direction of the new agenda.

As part of this assessment, special attention was given to the evaluation of results from the previous agenda. This included extensive stakeholder engagement to track project performance and assessing institutional engagement with digital initiatives. Structured interviews allowed for an in-depth review of progress at the entity level, highlighting the degree of alignment with national goals.

In addition to reviewing past initiatives, the assessment also considered the broader digital ecosystem to ensure the next agenda responds to emerging realities. Institutions not originally included in the 2022–2025 agenda, but now recognized as strategically important, were mapped into the planning process. This inclusive approach ensures that the National Digital Agenda 2026–2030 will reflect a system-wide vision, integrating a broader range of actors to drive Belize's digital transformation forward.



As previously mentioned, and as part of this participatory process, consultations were conducted with 13 key institutions through a combination of virtual and in-person meetings. The engagement of these ministries and entities ensured that the development of the new National Digital Agenda would reflect diverse perspectives and is grounded in the practical realities of implementation.

INSTITUTIONS FROM THE NATIONAL DIGITAL AGENDA 2022-2025 (TOTAL 13)		Mandate – Functions
1	Attorney General's Ministry + Vital Statistic Unit (VSU)	Responsible for legal affairs and the Civil Registry and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system.
2	Central Information Technology Office (CITO)	Manages government IT infrastructure, hosting, and the SmartStream financial system.
3	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise	Focuses on agricultural development, food security, and enterprise support.
4	BELTRAIDE	The national investment and trade promotion agency.
5	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology	Oversees education, cultural initiatives, and technological advancement.
6	Ministry of Economic Development	Manages economic development initiatives and public sector investment programs.
7	Ministry of Health & Wellness	Responsible for public health systems and healthcare services.
8	Ministry of Human Development	Oversees social protection programs and services for vulnerable populations.
9	Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, & Logistics	Manages telecoms, logistics (Post Office), energy, and water utilities.
10	Ministry of Public Service & Governance and NEMO (National Emergency Management Organization)	Responsible for public service management, human resources, and disaster risk management.
11	Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Sports and Diaspora Relations	Develops and promotes tourism and engages with the diaspora.
12	Public Utilities Commission (PUC)	Regulates public utilities, including telecommunications and electricity.
13	Ministry of E-Governance	The newly elevated ministry responsible for the overall digital agenda and strategic development.

Table 1- Interviewed Institutions from the National Digital Agenda 2022-2025

In addition to these, interviews were conducted with other additional 10 stakeholders that included government institutions, statutory and non-statutory agencies whose work is closely linked to Belize's digital ecosystem. Although these institutions were not part of the previous agenda's scope and therefore not included in the progress assessment, their perspectives were highly valuable. Their contributions enriched the analysis with broader insights and helped identify strategic opportunities to ensure that the upcoming agenda reflects a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to digital transformation across government. These additional stakeholders included:

NEW INSTITUTIONS, STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY AGENCIES		Mandate – Functions
1	Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD)	Government authority responsible for tax collection and administration in Belize.
2	Belize Companies Registry (BCCR)	Responsible for business registry for both domestic and international business entities in Belize.
3	Central Bank of Belize	The country's monetary authority whose mandate centres on promoting monetary stability, supporting economic growth, and fostering a sound, efficient financial system.
4	Central Execution Unit Office	Oversees, coordinates, and manages the implementation of major loan-funded projects, especially those financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).
5	Belize Customs & Excise Department	Government agency responsible for the administration and enforcement of customs and excise laws in Belize.
6	Economic Development Council	Official government mechanism for dialogue and collaboration between the public and private sectors.
7	Election & Boundaries Department (EBD)	Administrative body responsible for managing the electoral process in Belize.
8	Belize Immigration Department	Officially part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, is responsible for managing migration, border control, and nationality services.
9	Social Security Board (SSB)	Statutory corporation administers the country's Social Security Fund, providing social protection benefits and managing contributions from employers and employees.
10	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Government ministry responsible for managing Belize's international relations, foreign policy, and foreign trade.

Additionally, the process of elaborating the new National Digital Agenda, involved gathering vital input on current digital priorities, ongoing projects, and estimated budgetary needs through a short survey circulated via the Ministry of E-Governance, which complemented insights gleaned from extensive consultations. The primary outcome of this diligent effort is a reinforced leadership role for the Ministry in guiding digital transformation, addressing past fragmentation by consolidating national priorities into a coherent vision.

The image shows a digital questionnaire form titled "Belize National Digital Agenda for 2025-2030 - Questionnaire". The form is presented in a clean, professional layout with a blue header for the "MINISTRY OF E-GOVERNANCE". The main content area is white with blue accents. It includes an introductory paragraph from the Ministry of E-Governance and the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), explaining the purpose of the survey and the deadline for submission (Monday August 11th, 2025). To the right of the introductory text are four distinct question blocks, each with a red asterisk indicating a required response. These blocks ask for: 1) Top three major digital transformation projects for the next five years, 2) Flagship or ongoing digital projects worth continuing or expanding, 3) Other institutions that would need to engage with these projects, and 4) Whether the organization has a budget allocated for these projects. Each question block includes a placeholder for the answer and a "Your answer" label.

MINISTRY OF E-GOVERNANCE

Belize National Digital Agenda for 2025-2030 - Questionnaire

The Ministry of E-Governance jointly with the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), is currently updating the Belize National Digital Agenda for 2025-2030.

We seek your input to ensure the strategy reflects the priorities, opportunities, and challenges of your institution/organization.

Please complete the questionnaire concisely.

Your responses will help us identify realistic, impactful projects for national digital transformation.

Deadline for submission: Monday August 11th, 2025

What are your top three major digital transformation projects or priorities for the next five years that will have a substantial impact? *
(Please provide project names and short descriptions)
Your answer

Do you have any flagship or ongoing digital projects that could be considered champions worth continuing or expanding? *
(Please specify why they are significant)
Your answer

What other institutions within Belize would need to engage with these projects for them to be successful, and why? Please be very specific in your answers. *
Your answer

Does your organization currently have a budget allocated for these projects? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Figure 1. Questionnaire for Belizean Institutions on Digital Progress and Foresight.

The results demonstrate a strong and strategic commitment to digital transformation across Belize's key government institutions, including Customs, the Police Department, the Central Bank, and ministries such as Tourism, Public Service, and Foreign Affairs. Over the next five years, these institutions are prioritizing the modernization of core operational systems, with flagship initiatives such as the modernization of the Automated System for Customs Data ASYCUDA World for Customs and the Integrated Revenue Information System (IRIS) for Tax. At the same time, a significant emphasis is being placed on improving public service delivery through initiatives such as nationwide e-invoicing, online registration systems, and expanded digital payment solutions.

Many of these initiatives will require close inter-institutional collaboration to succeed, reflecting the integrated nature of digital government. While major projects such as ASYCUDA World Modernization and the Electronic Single Window already have secured funding, others remain in the pipeline and will require additional investment to realize their full impact. Taken together, these efforts reflect Belize's determination to harness technology to strengthen efficiency, improve compliance, and deliver faster, more transparent, and more accessible services to citizens and businesses. These will be further discussed along the document.

4.2 CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS AND INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT ON PROGRESS

The progress assessment revealed several systemic barriers that have historically hindered digital advancement. Chief among these are pervasive data silos and interoperability gaps, where disconnected systems impede collaborative efforts and limit the effective utilization of crucial data. Furthermore, many ministries continue to rely on manual internal workflows, often lacking even fundamental internal digitization. A significant challenge identified was the absence of a unifying national digital policy, leaving a void in strategic leadership for digital transformation across the public sector. Operational hurdles included lengthy and complex procurement processes, which invariably slow down the implementation of essential digital initiatives. Moreover, the sustainability of funding presented risks, with many projects overly reliant on external donor support and lacking robust long-term financial plans. Critically, a digital skills gap within the public sector, characterized by a deficit in technical expertise and capacity, constrained both the adoption of new technologies and the fostering of innovation. Experience also highlighted limited awareness and fragmented implementation of previous digital agendas, with projects often executed in silos, devoid of alignment or coordination, and a discernible lack of ownership and weak inter-ministerial collaboration. The e-Governance unit itself was under-resourced, which further limited its outreach capabilities.

Despite these formidable constraints, a promising trajectory of emerging progress and significant opportunities has become evident. Several ongoing projects, particularly in vital statistics, health records, and agricultural data, demonstrate strong institutional buy-in and the capacity for scaling with improved coordination. There is a palpable and growing appetite for innovation and reform across the public service. These valuable insights, derived from both challenges and successes, have directly informed the strategic planning of the 2026-2030 Digital Agenda, guiding the development of a more coherent, inclusive, and sustainable transformation strategy.

Illustrative of this forward momentum are several success cases that, while not always explicitly guided by previous digital agendas, underscore the inherent capacity and potential within the government:

- The **Attorney General Ministry** has made remarkable strides in the **digitization of Vital Statistics Records (CRVS)**, with over 465,350 birth records scanned and indexed, and a fully digital workflow planned. This initiative serves as a foundational pillar for the National e-ID and e-Government, enabling online applications for certificates, even for the diaspora.
- The **Ministry of Health & Wellness** has advanced the **development of Electronic Health Records and Data Exchange**, launching a Clinical Data Exchange Platform (CDEP) that links key health information systems for enhanced interoperability. This supports goals such as disease prevention, cost reduction, and telemedicine expansion to rural areas.

- The **Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology** is actively **expanding Digital Education Programs**, including nationwide STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math), and digital literacy initiatives like the Itz' at STEAM Academy and partnerships that provide robotics and computer science kits to schools. Programs like "Lead Like a Girl" and U-Space Digital Hubs foster digital skills among youth, with a vision for universal device access and inclusion.
- The **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security & Enterprise** is **modernizing Agriculture Information Systems** through tools for farmer support, data management, and market access, including upgrading the Farmer Registry and piloting an e-wallet for aid distribution.

Beyond these, entities operating with greater autonomy have achieved significant digital advances:

- The **Belize Tax Service (BTS)** implemented a **Revenue Management System (RMS)** and the **Iris Belize taxpayer portal**, leading to over **90% of tax collections occurring online**. This centralizes tax account access, significantly increasing timely filing and payment. Despite lacking a formal standalone digital strategy and facing integration challenges with other departments, BTS aims to integrate land tax, pilot e-invoicing, and explore AI for fraud detection.
- The **Belize Companies & Corporate Registry (BCCR)** launched the **Online Business Registry System (OBRS)**, a comprehensive digital platform that manages the full entity lifecycle and has earned **two WSIS digital champion awards**, positioning Belize as a regional leader in registries. While encountering challenges in institutional and legal readiness, the BCCR is focused on onboarding all entity types, enhancing data analytics, and promoting an "as-once policy" to reduce redundant requests.

These collective insights, successes, and identified systemic barriers have provided the critical foundation for the New National Digital Agenda 2026-2030, ensuring it is both ambitious and firmly grounded in the realities of Belize's digital landscape.

4.3 REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR GUIDING THE NEW NATIONAL DIGITAL AGENDA

The preparation of the Belize National Digital Agenda 2025–2030 has been guided by a comprehensive reference framework that ensures alignment with global, regional, and national priorities. This framework provides both the strategic vision and practical orientation necessary to design an agenda that responds to Belize’s unique needs while remaining consistent with international best practices.

At the international level, the Agenda draws on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recommendations from international organizations, and global performance indicators that benchmark progress in digital transformation.

At the regional level, it considers frameworks such as CEPAL’s eLAC, the SICA Digital Agenda, CARICOM’s digital initiatives, and references from organizations like RED GEALC and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which provide models for regional cooperation and digital innovation.

At the national level, the Agenda builds on existing government plans, sectoral strategies, and national development frameworks, while also integrating perspectives from the social and private sectors. These inputs ensure that the Belizean context—its institutions, people, and economic sectors—is at the centre of the design process.

By combining these international, regional, and national inputs, the reference framework serves as both a foundation and compass for the Belize National Digital Agenda. It guarantees that the Agenda is not only forward-looking and inclusive but also coherent with broader development goals, fostering a digital ecosystem that supports sustainable economic growth, innovation, and improved quality of life for all Belizeans.



Figure 2. International Reference Frameworks and Recommendations for Digital Agendas in the Region

4.3.1 INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE FRAMEWORKS

It is crucial to draw upon international reference frameworks and the experiences of other regions and organizations in digital transformation. This exercise allows to leverage best practices, anticipate challenges, and aligns the national strategy with global efforts toward a more connected, efficient, and inclusive digital future.

Here is an analysis of relevant international documents, grouped by their originating organizations, highlighting key insights for Belize's digital agenda:

INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP (IDB)

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group has produced comprehensive guides and frameworks that are highly relevant to our national digital agenda, given their focus on Latin America and the Caribbean.

IDB Digital Transformation Vision

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group has developed a Digital Transformation Vision to guide countries in their digital transformation process. This framework lays out a set of strategic areas of intervention to guide a coherent digital transformation of countries in the region based on the deployment and strengthening of an enabling framework that sets the foundation for the digital transformation in economic sectors.

As the following figure shows, the enabling framework includes digital infrastructure and ICT tools to ensure connectivity, digital talent to strengthen skills across society, legal framework to set the regulations on digital transformation, and governance to create strong and resilience institutions leading digital transformation.

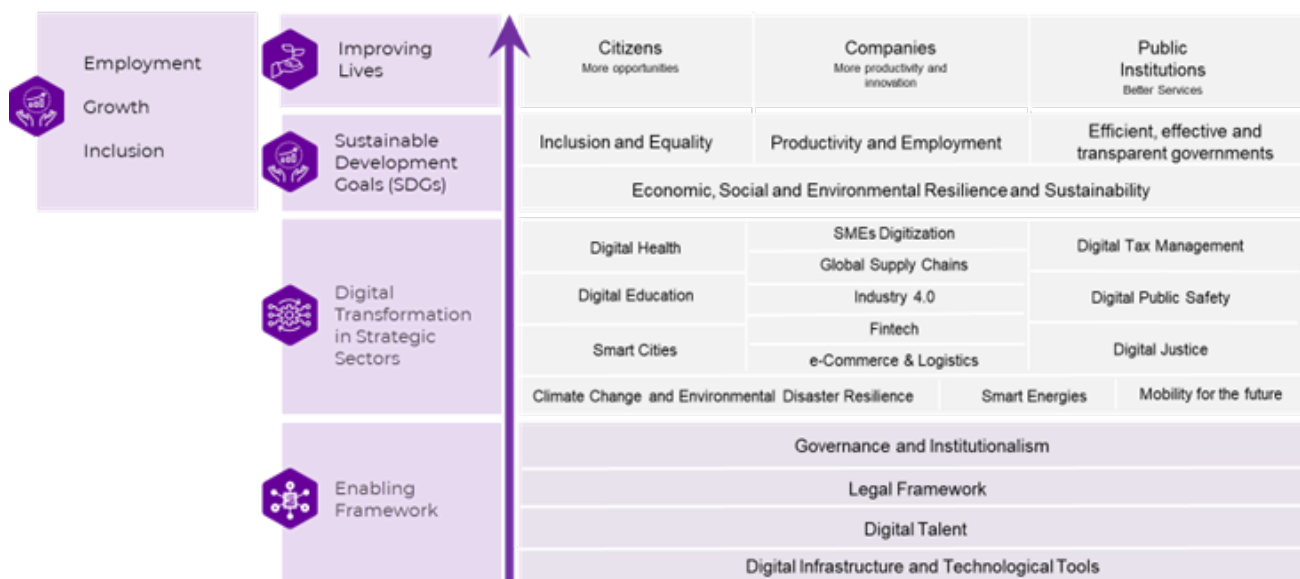


Figure 3. IDB Digital Transformation Vision

The framework highlights the need to strengthen the enabling environment to support digital transformation in strategic sectors such as includes social services (education, health, social protection, employment services); digital transformation of infrastructure services (energy, transport, water and sanitation); smart cities; technologies and rural development; resilience to climate change and disaster risk management; digitization of MSMEs and value chains; digitization of integration and trade; and digital finance (Fintech).

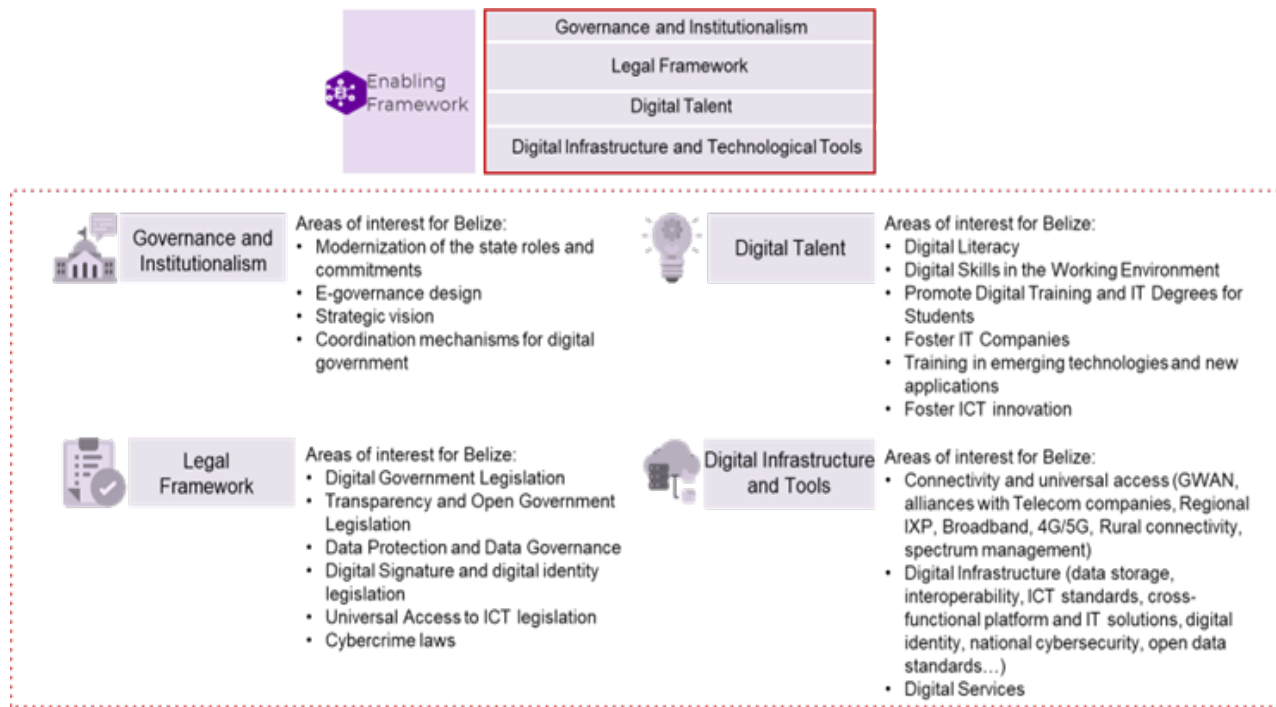


Figure 4. Enabling framework areas of interest for Belize

Considering Belize's digital maturity and weakness, it is necessary to focus on developing a strong enabling framework in the next four years to create the foundation for the future sectorial transformation. Therefore, in building the Digital Agenda, we have focused on improving governance, updating the legal framework, creating digital talent, and implementing digital infrastructure and ICT Tools.

IDB Government Digital Transformation Guide

A key reference is the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group's "Government Digital Transformation Guide," which has been described as an encyclopaedia of digital government. This guide provides a holistic, citizen-centred approach to digital transformation and offers practical lessons highly relevant to Belize's national context.

The Guide emphasizes that successful digital transformation requires action across five interconnected areas: governance and institutional frameworks, legal and regulatory frameworks, digital talent and change management, infrastructure and technological tools, and new digital processes and services. Belize's agenda integrates these dimensions to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach.

Central to the IDB framework is the need for strong, centralized leadership to avoid duplication, maximize efficiencies, and coordinate a coherent national strategy across all levels of government. The Guide also identifies essential components of a robust national digital strategy, including:

- clearly defined objectives and metrics,
- a detailed roadmap with actions and timelines,
- a unified technology strategy,
- transparent and strategic procurement processes,
- proactive communication and change management,
- strong cybersecurity and risk management measures, and
- continuous monitoring and evaluation.

The IDB also stresses the importance of common and reusable digital tools such as national interoperability schemes, digital identification and signatures, and cloud services. These shared resources improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance the citizen experience by enabling consistent and user-friendly services across government.

To support this transformation, regulatory modernization is necessary to update outdated legal frameworks, promote technology neutrality, enable electronic proceedings, and reduce administrative burdens. Equally important is the development of digital talent within the public sector through training, the recruitment of new expertise, and the establishment of specialized leadership roles such as Chief Information Officer, Chief Data Officer, and Chief Information Security Officer.

The Guide further highlights the role of public–private collaboration, particularly in technology projects, viewing procurement not only as an expense but as an investment that can attract private sector expertise, drive innovation, and ensure shared responsibility.

Above all, the IDB framework reinforces that digital transformation must be “by and for the citizens.” This means designing services around user needs, providing citizens with opportunities to build digital skills, and creating channels for active engagement and feedback.

Finally, the Guide identifies critical digital public infrastructure that underpins successful transformation. These include secure data centres, government cloud platforms, interoperability systems, digital IDs and signatures, electronic notifications, digital registers, national digital archives, administrative directories, and comprehensive national data systems such as open data platforms, scorecards, and georeferenced databases. These insights provide a clear and practical foundation for Belize’s National Digital Agenda, ensuring that the country’s digital transformation is comprehensive, citizen-centric, and aligned with global best practices.

Artificial Intelligence Framework for the Inter-American Development Bank Group

In addition to its work on digital government, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group has developed a comprehensive Artificial Intelligence (AI) Framework that sets out a strategic approach for harnessing AI as a driver of development and economic growth across Latin America and the Caribbean. This framework is particularly relevant to Belize as the country considers how emerging technologies can accelerate national development and improve quality of life.

The IDB positions AI as a catalyst for growth and innovation, with the potential to tackle complex challenges such as climate change, enhance competitiveness, and improve public service delivery. For Belize, this means identifying priority sectors where AI can deliver measurable development impact.

The Framework is structured around three strategic pillars:



Governance: Establishing strong regulatory, ethical, and institutional frameworks to ensure transparency, accountability, and trust in AI.



Data and Infrastructure: Building the digital infrastructure and data ecosystems necessary to support AI adoption, while addressing gaps in digitization and ensuring data availability, quality, and interoperability.



People: Developing human capital by fostering AI-related skills, preparing the workforce for the digital economy, and promoting inclusion so that all citizens can benefit from AI-driven progress.

A key feature of the IDB's approach is its ability to partner with governments, private sector actors, and startup ecosystems to foster innovation and create enabling environments for AI. Belize can leverage these opportunities by building collaborations that combine public policy, investment, and entrepreneurial activity.

The Framework also emphasizes the importance of fair and ethical AI. Through initiatives such as fAIrLAC, the IDB promotes responsible AI practices that safeguard against misuse, ensure equitable access to benefits, and mitigate risks of bias or exclusion. This perspective is essential for Belize as it seeks to integrate AI into its development path while protecting citizens' rights.

Finally, the IDB acknowledges that many countries in the region remain at an early stage of developing robust data ecosystems, with significant amounts of information still in paper-based formats. For Belize, this highlights the need to accelerate digitization efforts and establish clear institutional arrangements for managing and governing data.

ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

OECD Recommendations on Digital Government Strategies

According to the OECD, there is an important distinction between Electronic Government (the use of ICT and the Internet to improve the performance of the Administration), and Digital Government (use of digital technologies to add value to society), which opens the ecosystem to society (Administration, Companies, Citizens, NGOs, ...) and includes the commitment to innovate in the purchase of technology.



Source: Based on the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies (OECD, 2014_[2]).

Figure 5. OCDE vision of digital government

To step into digital government and digital transformation, it is first necessary to consolidate the efforts in e-Government. Therefore, governments must carry out self-assessments to identify their stage of maturity and progress to achieving digital government. To support this transition, the OECD has come up with several recommendations on how governments can create public value using ICT across institutions (2020). These recommendations must be used as a guideline when designing digital government strategies. It includes openness and engagement, governance and coordination, and capacities to support implementation.

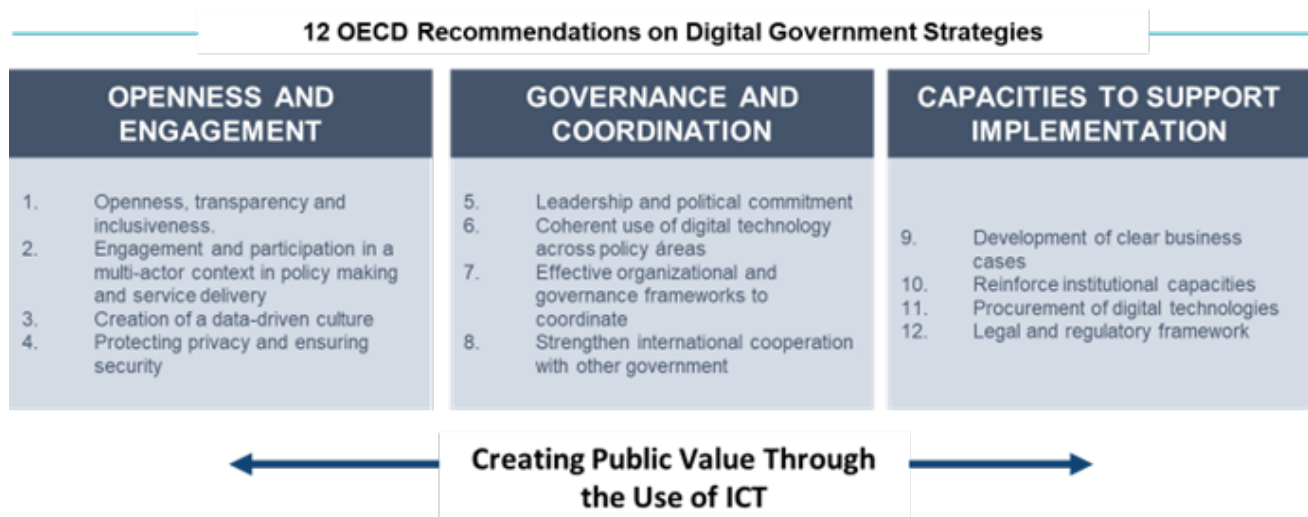


Figure 6. OECD recommendations on digital government strategies

The OECD identifies three core pillars that should guide digital government strategies:

- **Openness and Engagement to Secure Public Trust:** Governments must prioritize transparency, accountability, and citizen collaboration, while also address risks of data misuse and ensure trustworthy data governance.
- **Governance and Coordination:** Effective frameworks, strong political commitment, and inter-ministerial coordination are essential to avoid duplication and ensure coherence across sectors and levels of government.
- **Capacities to Support Implementation:** Success requires developing digital skills within the public sector, optimizing business processes, ensuring adaptable legal and regulatory frameworks, and adopting structured approaches to risk management, performance measurement, and evidence-based policymaking.

The OECD also highlights the importance of international cooperation, encouraging governments to strengthen cross-border collaboration, share knowledge, and coordinate digital strategies to better serve citizens and businesses in an increasingly interconnected world.

OECD Government at a Glance 2025

The OECD's Government at a Glance 2025 provides additional evidence-based insights, emphasizing the role of digitalization in driving efficiency and accountability in public administration. For Belize, several key findings are particularly relevant:

- **Efficiency Gains:** Digital tools, data, and artificial intelligence are proven drivers of greater efficiency and responsiveness in government operations.
- **Benchmarking Performance:** The average OECD score on the Digital Government Index (DGI) stands at 0.61, highlighting that even advanced economies face challenges in achieving fully integrated digital governments. Belize can use this metric as a reference point to track its own progress.
- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Core elements such as digital identity, interoperability frameworks, and data-sharing systems are essential to achieving an inclusive and efficient digital government.
- **Open Data for Transparency and Innovation:** Although open data is critical to innovation and accountability, OECD data shows that high-value datasets are still limited, with only 47% made publicly available on average. This presents Belize with an opportunity to position itself as a leader in open data practices in the region.

- **Innovation in Public Procurement:** Many OECD countries are adopting digital tools to automate procurement and improve efficiency, with 21 out of 35 surveyed nations already implementing innovative technologies in this area. Belize can significantly strengthen its public sector by following similar practices.

Taken together, the OECD's recommendations and benchmarks provide a strategic framework for Belize to modernize governance, strengthen citizen trust, and align its digital transformation with global best practices, while tailoring solutions to its national context.

CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM (SICA)

Regional Digital Agenda of SICA (2024-2026)

The Regional Digital Agenda of SICA (2024–2026) provides a framework for coordinated digital development across Central America, offering Belize a direct regional context for its own digital transformation journey. The agenda reflects a shared commitment by SICA member states to address opportunities and challenges collectively, strengthening the region's competitiveness and digital resilience.

A central theme of the SICA Agenda is regional collaboration, emphasizing that countries benefit from working together on digital initiatives. For Belize, this creates opportunities to leverage ongoing programs, align national priorities with regional strategies, and deepen partnerships with neighbouring states.

The SICA Agenda establishes shared priorities that resonate strongly with Belize's own needs, including cybersecurity, data protection, cross-border electronic signatures, and Artificial Intelligence. These areas reflect global best practices while ensuring regional cohesion and interoperability.

To guide implementation, SICA defines five strategic areas of work for an inclusive, equitable, and secure digital transformation:

- **Digital Security** – strengthening resilience against cyber threats.
- **Digital Economy** – promoting competitiveness, trade, and innovation through digital platforms.
- **Digital Innovation** – fostering technological advancement and entrepreneurship.
- **Digital Interoperability** – ensuring that government systems and services can operate seamlessly across borders.
- **Digital Governance** – building transparent, accountable, and citizen-centered digital institutions.

The Agenda also underscores the importance of strategic alliances and joint negotiation with technology providers, international partners, and public-private collaborations. By acting collectively, SICA member states—Belize included—can accelerate transformation, optimize costs, and secure better conditions for technology acquisition and capacity-building.

The SICA Regional Digital Agenda 2024–2026 also highlights cybersecurity as a cornerstone of regional digital resilience, with a strong emphasis on the creation of national and regional Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs/SCIRT). These teams form the operational backbone for detecting, containing, and responding to cyber threats, while fostering cross-border collaboration and intelligence sharing among member states. For Belize, this regional framework provides a clear reference point to strengthen national cybersecurity capacity, harmonize protocols, and ensure more resilient and secure digital public services.

Taken together, the SICA framework offers Belize not only a regional roadmap for digital development but also a platform for collaboration and joint innovation, ensuring that its digital transformation efforts are reinforced by the strength and scale of regional integration.

ELAC — ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Digital Agenda eLAC (2026)

The eLAC2026 Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean sets out a comprehensive regional vision that links digital transformation to the region's broader goals of inclusive, sustainable, and productive development. It underscores the role of digital technologies as enablers for overcoming persistent structural challenges and advancing equitable growth.

At its core, eLAC2026 identifies the importance of addressing the region's "three development traps": low growth capacity, high inequality and limited social mobility, and weak institutional capacities. For Belize, this highlights the need to position digital transformation as a strategic response to national development challenges.

The Agenda is structured around three strategic axes that provide a clear framework for action:

- **Meaningful Connectivity and Digital Infrastructure** – expanding access and improving quality of digital networks.
- **Governance and Digital Security** – strengthening institutional frameworks, regulatory systems, and cyber resilience.
- **Innovation, Emerging Technologies, and AI for Sustainable Development** – leveraging frontier technologies to drive growth and resilience.

Complementing these axes are three thematic pillars that define the areas of greatest impact:

- **Productive Development** – supporting SME digitization, e-commerce, and competitiveness.
- **Well-being** – improving access to essential services such as education, health, and social protection through digital tools.
- **Transformation of the State** – modernizing government processes, building institutional capacity, and strengthening data governance.

A distinctive feature of eLAC2026 is its focus on ethical and responsible AI development, emphasizing frameworks that safeguard human rights, equity, privacy, and transparency, while fostering innovation. The Agenda also highlights digital inclusion and accessibility, ensuring that persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups can fully participate in and benefit from digital transformation.

Concrete regional targets for 2026—such as doubling 5G coverage, reaching 70% fixed broadband penetration, and achieving average internet speeds of 100 Mbps—offer Belize practical benchmarks to guide its own connectivity and infrastructure goals.

Finally, eLAC2026 incorporates a robust governance and monitoring system, including multi-level follow-up mechanisms, technical observatories, and policy labs, designed to ensure accountability and effective policy implementation. For Belize, this underscores the value of adopting structured monitoring tools to track and guide the progress of this new National Digital Agenda 2026-2030.

CARICOM

The AI Spectrum: From Simple Algorithms to Super Intelligence

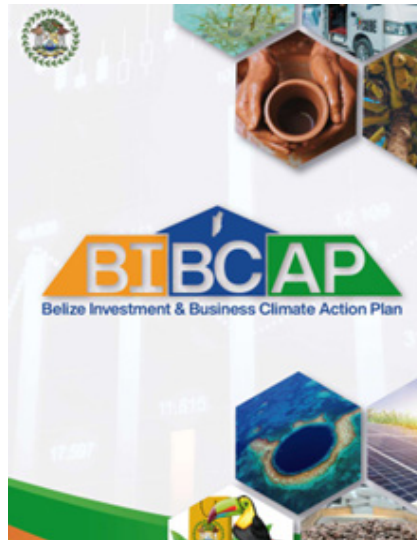
The CARICOM perspective on Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides valuable regional considerations for Belize as both a Caribbean and Central American nation. The document “The AI Spectrum” highlights the need to prepare Member States for AI adoption in ways that strengthen competitiveness, inclusivity, and resilience.

For Belize, CARICOM’s approach underscores the importance of holistic AI readiness. This involves advancing workforce development and digital literacy, enhancing cybersecurity, and investing in digital infrastructure, while also promoting research, development, and deployment of AI-driven solutions tailored to regional needs.

Equally critical is CARICOM’s focus on inclusive AI, ensuring that AI-powered tools and services are accessible across all communities. The framework stresses that AI integration should safeguard cultural identity and economic integrity, while equitably extending the benefits of innovation to all citizens. For Belize, this regional perspective reinforces the principle that AI adoption must be people-centred, culturally relevant, and aligned with long-term sustainable development goals.

4.3.2 NATIONAL POLICIES AND PLANS

Belize Investment and Business Climate Action Plan (BIBCAP)



The Belize Investment and Business Climate Action Plan (BIBCAP) is a comprehensive national strategy that positions Belize as a competitive investment hub in Central America and the Caribbean by 2030. It identifies nine policy pillars that integrate complementary strategies such as MSME development, export competitiveness, and innovation.

Key Insights from BIBCAP for Belize's National Digital Agenda 2025-2030:	
Alignment with National Economic Goals	The Digital Agenda must directly support BIBCAP's overarching vision of fostering a resilient and dynamic economy , particularly through MSME growth, export competitiveness, and strategic investment attraction.
Digital Enablers for Business	BIBCAP highlights specific actions requiring digital solutions, such as enabling MSMEs to participate in e-commerce ecosystems . The Digital Agenda should provide the necessary infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and digital platforms to make this possible.
Data-Driven Policy and GIS	The plan emphasizes the importance of data collection and analytics for policy formulation, and the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping businesses. Belize's Digital Agenda should therefore prioritize robust national data systems and GIS-enabled platforms for decision-making.
Legal and Regulatory Framework for ICT	BIBCAP calls for the development of an appropriate ICT legal framework , including updated e-commerce legislation and support for businesses that supply or use ICT solutions. The Digital Agenda has a direct mandate to modernize and implement such legal and regulatory frameworks.
Innovation and Creative Industries	The plan identifies the National Creative Industry / Orange Economy Strategic Plan

	as a priority, emphasizing innovation and global competitiveness. Digital platforms and creative technology solutions will be central enablers for these industries.
Attracting Digital Talent	BIBCAP proposes programs to attract highly skilled international digital nomads . To support this, the Digital Agenda should ensure reliable digital infrastructure, efficient online government services, and an innovation-friendly ecosystem .
Strengthening Trade and Market Intelligence	The plan seeks to establish market intelligence systems and leverage the Belizean diaspora for skills and market intelligence transfer. The Digital Agenda can support this with advanced digital data systems, diaspora engagement platforms, and analytics tools .

The Economic Development Council (EDC), through consultations made during the preparation of the National Digital Agenda, highlighted BIBCAP Pillar 2 as a foundation for Belize's digital transformation. This pillar focuses on the delivery of government services, ethical government, e-government, e-commerce, and innovation. Within this, three critical activities have been identified for Belize's Digital Agenda:

- 1. Establishment of a centralized e-government platform** to streamline government services and ensure interoperability across ministries.
- 2. Development of a secure, efficient online payment system** to facilitate digital transactions for government services, businesses, and citizens.
- 3. Capacity building in digital skills and literacy** across all government entities, ensuring that public servants are equipped to deliver in a digital-first environment.

By aligning with BIBCAP and EDC's priorities, Belize's National Digital Agenda can:

- Act as a catalyst for business competitiveness and innovation.
- Modernize government services and regulatory frameworks.
- Strengthen MSME participation in e-commerce and global markets.
- Attract talent and investment through robust digital infrastructure.
- Ensure that digital transformation directly contributes to national economic resilience and sustainable growth.

Belize National Development Framework (Horizon 2030)



Horizon 2030 articulates a long-term vision for Belize as a country of peace and tranquillity, where citizens enjoy a high quality of life and sustainable development is the foundation of progress. It identifies persistent weaknesses in public sector planning and governance, such as centralization, lack of inter-sectoral collaboration, and weak monitoring and evaluation processes—areas where digital transformation can be a decisive enabler of change. Some of its key insights for Belize’s National Digital Agenda:

1. Overarching Vision Alignment

The National Digital Agenda 2026–2030 must be firmly anchored in Horizon 2030’s vision of sustainable development, quality of life, and an empowered populace. Digital transformation should be positioned not as a standalone policy, but as an instrument to realize the nation’s long-term development aspirations.

2. Addressing Governance Deficiencies

Horizon 2030 highlights fragmented planning, centralization, and the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation. The Digital Agenda can directly address these through:

- **Inter-sectoral digital platforms** for collaboration across ministries and agencies.
- **Digital M&E frameworks** to systematically track national development progress.
- **Community-anchored digital tools** that democratize planning and enhance citizen participation.

3. Economic Resilience and Knowledge Sector Development

Horizon 2030 prioritizes economic resilience, productivity, and the development of new growth sectors, particularly the “Knowledge Sector.” Digital transformation is central to realizing this by:

- Building an **innovation-driven digital economy**.
- Enhancing **ICT-enabled productivity** across sectors.
- Attracting **investment and talent** to knowledge-intensive industries.

4. Technology for Productive Enterprises

The framework envisions that “Belizeans are capable of using state-of-the-art technology which they incorporate into productive enterprises.” The Digital Agenda must support this by ensuring:

- **Access to digital tools and infrastructure** for businesses.
- **Digital training programs** for entrepreneurs and MSMEs.
- **Policy and regulatory support** for innovation-driven enterprises

5. Human Resource Development

Horizon 2030 emphasizes a national human resource development strategy and stronger investment in education to close capacity gaps. The Digital Agenda can accelerate this by:

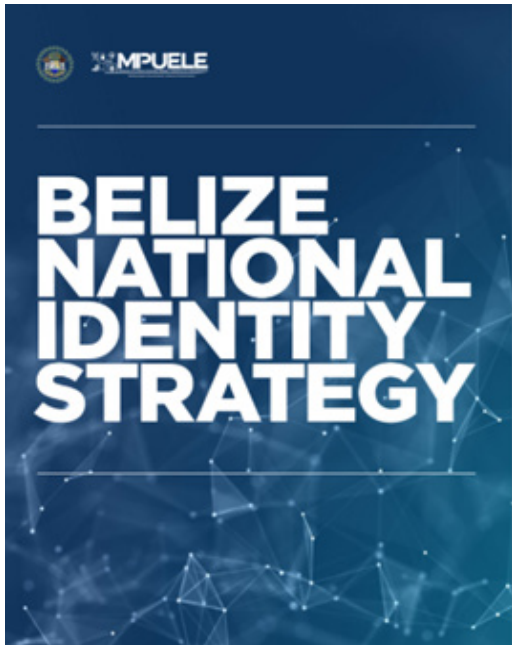
1. Integrating **digital skills training** into national education systems.
2. Promoting **STEAM disciplines** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), aligning with priorities also identified in BIBCAP.
3. Preparing Belize’s workforce for a **knowledge-based and digital-first economy**.

6. Environmental Sustainability and Green Transformation

The framework underscores protecting Belize’s natural environment and promoting green energy. Digital technologies can contribute by:

- Implementing **digital environmental monitoring systems**.
- Developing **green ICT initiatives** that support renewable energy and reduce environmental footprints.
- Leveraging **data-driven platforms** for sustainable resource management and climate resilience.

Belize National Identification Strategy



The development of a National Identification (ID) System has been identified as the single most critical enabler of Belize's digital transformation. Currently, Belize relies on fragmented identity mechanisms such as the Social Security Card, which creates barriers to interoperability, trust, and efficiency across government and the economy. The National ID blueprint therefore positions a Digital ID Solution as the foundation for modernizing public administration, improving citizen experiences, and strengthening transparency in service delivery.

A robust National ID would address the longstanding challenge of a fragmented identity ecosystem by introducing a unified and reliable framework for identification. This reform is not only about establishing a card or digital credential; it is about creating a system that

enhances the quality of identity data, increases assurance around identity claims, and unlocks the ability to deliver secure online services across sectors.

The blueprint also underscores the importance of embedding privacy-and-security-by-design principles from the outset. This includes obtaining express consent for data use, defining clear rules for biometric data collection, and ensuring comprehensive cybersecurity protections. Equally critical is the establishment of a legal and institutional framework capable of governing data management, preventing identity theft, and aligning existing legislation with the requirements of a digital society.

Beyond legal and security considerations, the proposal envisions the creation of an interoperability layer—a secure mechanism for information exchange across government agencies, inspired by global best practices such as Estonia's X-Road. This system would finally enable seamless communication and data-sharing between institutions, strengthening efficiency and coherence across the state.

Accessibility is also at the heart of the National ID strategy. To ensure no citizen is left behind, the plan calls for widespread enrolment centres and the use of mobile registration units in rural and hard-to-reach areas. This approach reflects a commitment to bridging the digital divide, ensuring the benefits of digital transformation extend to all Belizeans. Moreover, the digitalization of the civil registry—covering vital events such as births, marriages, and deaths—is seen as an essential foundation for building trust, curbing corruption, and promoting equality.

Importantly, during the consultations held for the preparation of the National Digital Agenda, the establishment of a National ID consistently emerged as a recurrent theme. Stakeholders across government, civil society, and the private sector strongly emphasized its transformative potential, recognizing it as a reform with innumerable benefits for the Belizean people and for the efficient functioning of government itself.

In sum, the National ID System is not a stand-alone initiative but a cornerstone of the National Digital Agenda. It is the gateway to interoperability, transparency, inclusion, and trust, and it represents one of the clearest opportunities for Belize to leap forward in its digital journey.

National Cybersecurity Strategy 2020-2023



The National Cybersecurity Strategy 2020–2023 laid the foundation for Belize’s efforts to create a safe, secure, and trusted digital environment. Developed through broad consultation across government, the private sector, academia, and civil society, the strategy recognized that cybersecurity is a shared responsibility essential to the nation’s economic growth, social inclusion, and overall digital transformation. At the time, Belize’s cybersecurity maturity was in its early stages, reflecting the global challenge of a shortage in skilled cybersecurity professionals.

This strategy has served as a critical baseline for the cybersecurity component of the National Digital Agenda, documenting the country’s initial priorities, achievements, and lessons learned. Its vision—to ensure that Belize’s cyberspace is safe and trusted—remains directly aligned with the broader national goal of advancing digital governance and fostering innovation while safeguarding citizens and institutions.

Key areas of focus under the strategy included the development of a robust legal framework, investment in education and workforce development, and strengthening the nation’s capacity to respond to cyber incidents while protecting critical infrastructure. Legal and regulatory initiatives focused on reviewing existing frameworks related to digital evidence and data protection, and exploring alignment with international conventions such as the Budapest Convention and regional CARICOM treaties. At the same time, significant attention was given to human capital development, with initiatives aimed at addressing skills gaps through education, awareness, and training programs to build a resilient national cybersecurity workforce.

Equally important was the strategy’s commitment to raising public awareness. Communication campaigns and sensitization initiatives sought to empower citizens with knowledge of safe digital practices, reinforcing trust and confidence in the country’s digital environment.

As Belize continues to advance its digital transformation, the 2020–2023 strategy provides a critical reference point but requires updating to reflect both the evolving cyber threat landscape and structural changes in governance. Oversight of cybersecurity is now under the Ministry of E-Governance, highlighting its integration into broader national digital governance. Moving forward, the updated strategy will strengthen these foundations, incorporating new priorities, institutional frameworks, and regulatory responsibilities to ensure Belize’s cyberspace remains secure, resilient, and prepared for the opportunities of the digital age.

5. VISION FOR THE AGENDA: SHAPING BELIZE'S DIGITAL FUTURE

Belize's Digital Agenda outlines a strategic roadmap to modernize public administration and enhance service delivery for citizens, businesses, and public officers. It establishes the foundation for a comprehensive digital transformation—ranging from infrastructure and connectivity initiatives to programs that foster innovation and the application of emerging technologies.

This transformation emphasizes three core areas: expanding the use of digital tools in government processes, building digital skills across society, and improving citizen-centred service delivery. At its heart, the vision promotes breaking down institutional silos and fostering a collaborative culture, positioning digitalization as the key driver of improved quality of life and sustainable development.

“SHAPING BELIZE’S DIGITAL FUTURE”



The National Digital Agenda 2026-2030 – Shaping Belize’s Digital Future



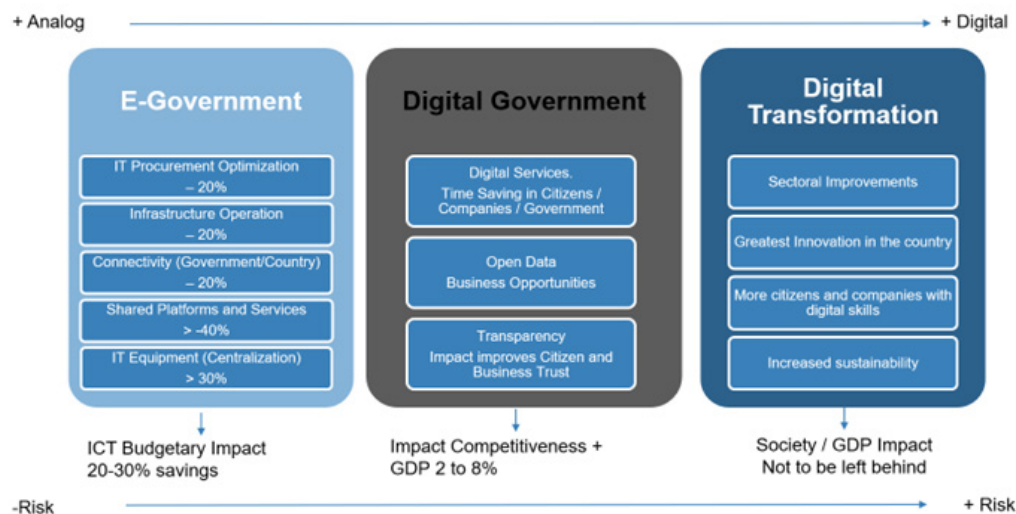
Vision a digitally advanced and inclusive Belize where technology delivers efficient, transparent, and citizen-focused services, fosters innovation, and creates equitable opportunities for all.



Mission is to create public value through digital transformation by simplifying services, building trust, strengthening infrastructure, and empowering people and businesses with the skills and tools to thrive in the digital age.

Belize is poised to embark on a transformative journey with the National Digital Agenda 2026-2030, a strategic framework designed to propel the nation into a new era of digital prowess, efficiency, and inclusivity. This agenda envisions a future where digital advancements permeate every facet of society, from government operations to citizen engagement and economic development.

The overarching goal is to foster a “Greatest Innovation in the country”, ensuring more citizens and companies acquire essential digital skills, leading to increased sustainability and a significant positive impact on competitiveness and GDP growth, estimated at 2% to 8%. Furthermore, the Agenda aims to achieve substantial ICT Budgetary Impact, with potential savings of 20-30% through optimized IT procurement, infrastructure operation, enhanced connectivity, shared platforms, and centralized IT equipment. This strategic shift is crucial for Belize to avoid being left behind in the rapidly evolving global digital landscape, mitigating risks associated with an analogue-heavy approach while embracing the benefits of a digitally integrated society



Key Outcomes Envisioned by the Digital Agenda:

The agenda's outcomes are structured around three core areas:

- **E-Government:** Focused on operational efficiencies within the public sector, this includes:
 - **20% optimization** in IT Procurement.
 - **20% efficiency gains** in Infrastructure Operation.
 - **20% improvement** in Government/Country Connectivity.
 - Achieving **40% reduction** through Shared Platforms and Services.
 - **30% centralization** of IT Equipment.
- **Digital Government:** Aims to enhance public service delivery and governance, leading to:
 - **Significant Time Savings** for Citizens, Companies, and Government through Digital Services.
 - Creation of **Business Opportunities** via Open Data initiatives.
 - Increased **Transparency**, which collectively improves Citizen and Business Trust.
- **Digital Transformation:** Drives broad sectoral improvements across the nation, fostering innovation and sustainable growth.

6. STRATEGIC GOALS

The Digital Agenda 2026-2030 builds on lessons learned from previous efforts, addressing challenges such as varied awareness, fragmented implementation, pervasive data silos, and a lack of unifying national digital policy. It is designed to foster significant innovation, enhance digital skills, and drive sustainability, with an estimated positive impact on competitiveness and GDP growth. These three high-level strategic goals will guide the comprehensive digital transformation over the next five years:

1. Building a Robust, Secure, and Interoperable Digital Foundation for National Governance:

This goal focuses on establishing the essential institutional, legal, and technical frameworks, alongside secure digital infrastructure, to ensure transparent, effective, inclusive, and accountable digital transformation across Belize. It involves reinforcing national technology governance, modernizing legal and regulatory frameworks, and enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and coordination to overcome systemic barriers like data silos and interoperability gaps identified in the past. This foundation is crucial for supporting future sectoral transformation and includes the implementation of a national interoperability framework, modern data centres, and a revised cybersecurity strategy.

2. Transforming Government Operations and Service Delivery into Citizen and Business-Centred Digital Experiences:

This goal aims to modernize how government utilizes digital technologies to deliver public services and optimize internal operations, focusing on greater efficiency, accessibility, and inclusion. It encompasses streamlining and digitalizing services, expanding one-stop-shop portals, and deploying a secure National ID system with e-signature integration to significantly reduce bureaucracy and improve citizen and business trust. The objective is to foster an interconnected, open, and inclusive government that rethinks its processes to meet user needs and citizen expectations, moving away from past fragmented approaches.

3. Cultivating a Digitally Empowered, Innovative, and Inclusive Society

This goal emphasizes fostering a public sector culture of innovation and agility, while building digital skills across all levels of government and society to ensure equitable participation and sustainable development. It seeks to promote a national digital culture by expanding skills programs for public servants, MSMEs, farmers, youth, and the elderly, and responsibly adopting emerging technologies like AI and blockchain through ethical frameworks and innovation labs. This aims to bridge the digital divide, generate job opportunities, and enable collaboration, supporting the private sector's business transformation for economic recovery and ensuring all Belizeans benefit from digital progress.



7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following core principles underpin the implementation of the Digital Agenda for the development of a digital government, ensuring alignment and coherence across government and society, drawing on lessons from varied institutional awareness and the need for stronger coordination:

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01 Citizen & Business-Centric Design - Develop services based on the explicit needs and expectations of citizens and businesses, ensuring user-friendly, accessible, and inclusive digital solutions. This principle is central to the mission of improving quality of life and fostering public trust.
- 

02 Systemic Integration & Interoperability -- Prioritize the establishment of common platforms, data-sharing standards, and an interoperability framework to offer seamless and coordinated services across all government entities, effectively breaking down institutional silos. This prevents duplication and maximizes efficiencies identified as crucial for the agenda.
- 

03 Robust Digital Governance & Accountability -- Establish strong institutional, legal, and strategic frameworks to guide digital transformation with transparency, effectiveness, and accountability. This includes reinforcing national technology governance, ensuring data protection, digital rights, and conducting regular audits to build trust in digital systems.
- 

04 Data-Driven Decision Making & Openness -- Generate public value through the strategic use of data in planning, implementing, evaluating, and monitoring public policies, and promote open data initiatives to foster transparency, innovation, and business opportunities. This addresses the previous challenges of leveraging data for socioeconomic benefits.
- 

05 Enhanced Security & Resilience -- Drive the adoption of robust standards and tools to mitigate emerging cyber threats, protect critical infrastructures, and strengthen capacities for rapid response and recovery to unexpected events or crises in the digital world. Cybersecurity is recognized as a cornerstone of the national strategy.
- 

06 Innovation & Agility --- Foster a public sector culture of continuous improvement, experimentation, and agile delivery, encouraging new value creation for stakeholders and promoting a mindset of organizational readiness to embrace digital change. This includes establishing digital innovation labs and GovTech accelerators.
- 

07 Digital Skills & Inclusion --- Design strategies and implement comprehensive programs to close the digital divide, equip public servants and citizens with essential digital skills, and ensure equitable access and benefits for all groups, including underserved communities and vulnerable populations. This addresses the existing digital skills gap in the country.
- 

08 Sustainable & Responsible Technology Adoption --- Explore and adopt emerging technologies like AI, blockchain, and IoT in a targeted and ethical manner, prioritizing frameworks that safeguard human rights, equity, privacy, and transparency, and aligning with global best practices for responsible innovation.
- 

09 Multi-Sector Collaboration & Partnerships --- Strengthen collaboration across government, the private sector, academia, civil society, and international partners to leverage expertise, coordinate efforts, and ensure a cohesive and impactful digital transformation. This is essential for overcoming past fragmentation and fostering shared responsibility.
- 

10 Efficiency & Value for Money -- Optimize resource allocation, reduce operating costs, and increase productivity through digital tools, shared platforms, and strategic procurement processes, ensuring that digital investments contribute meaningfully to Belize's long-term vision for modernization and transparency

8. ENABLERS, PILLARS AND PROJECTS

The National Digital Agenda 2026-2030 – Shaping Belize’s Digital Future is structured around **Strategic Enablers** and **Strategic Pillars**, which collectively define its framework for comprehensive digital transformation as follows:

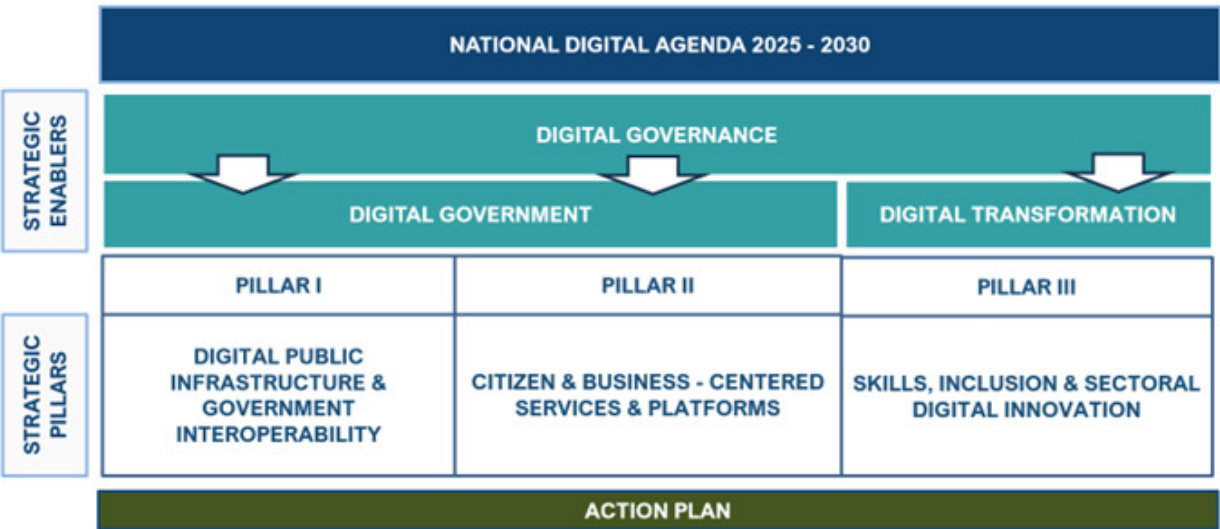


Figure 7. NDA 2026-2030 Focus and Strategy

8.1 STRATEGIC ENABLERS: THE FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR DIGITAL CHANGE

These **Strategic Enablers** are not standalone “projects” but rather foundational initiatives, cross-cutting programs, and continuous improvement processes. They are essential for the success and sustainability of all other digital efforts and the wider digital ecosystem. Under the oversight and responsibility of the Ministry of E-Governance as the Digital Country Lead, these enablers are defined as objectives with specific actions. They define the essential frameworks, operational advancements, and adaptive capabilities necessary for the Belizean Government to guide, implement, and sustain comprehensive digital change within the public sector and across society. They address governance structures, service delivery mechanisms, and cultural-technological preparedness for a responsive, efficient, and innovative digital future.

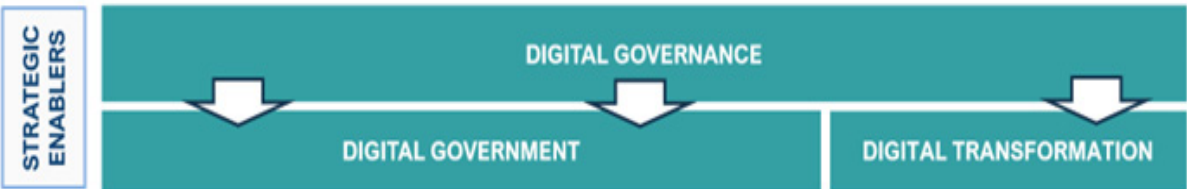


Figure 8. NDA Strategic Enablers

The three Strategic Enablers are:

1. DIGITAL GOVERNANCE:

ENABLER 1 – DIGITAL GOVERNANCE	
Focus:	Establish the institutional, legal, and strategic framework to guide digital transformation in a transparent, effective, inclusive, and accountable manner. This includes ensuring data protection, digital rights, and cybersecurity resilience, promoting competition and innovation through regulations, and fostering trust in digital systems.
Objectives & Actions:	<u>Reinforce National Technology Governance:</u> • Strengthen the vetting committee to align all tech projects with national priorities, create a strong IT procurement governance • Consolidate IT Departments where possible, • Set clear standards and evaluation criteria for software development, cybersecurity and full compliance with Belize laws. • Conduct regular audits for accountability. <u>Modernize Legal & Regulatory Frameworks:</u> • Update essential laws (e.g., Digital Government Act, 2022, Data Protection, Electronic Evidence), and its implementation • Enact privacy and security frameworks, • Adopt/operationalize the Revised National Cybersecurity Strategy. <u>Enhance Monitoring, Evaluation & Coordination:</u> • Strengthen multi-sector coordination (government, private sector, academia, civil society), • Harmonize indicators to measure impact, • Implement robust digital/data governance for secure information sharing and policy design. • Implement a Communication Strategy for Digital Change that creates synergy. <u>Ensure Sustainable Financing:</u> • Develop blended finance models (public, aid, private), • Coordinate cooperation and finance from Multilaterals and Agencies, • Leverage Universal Access Funds and service fees for long-term sustainability

2. DIGITAL GOVERNMENT:

ENABLER 2 – DIGITAL GOVERNMENT	
Focus:	Transforming how government utilizes digital technologies to deliver public services and optimize internal operations for greater efficiency, accessibility, and inclusion. This involves user-friendly, interoperable, and secure e-government platforms, broadband connectivity for all citizens (especially underserved communities), citizen-centred design, and harnessing emerging technologies like AI and IoT for improved service delivery.
Objectives & Actions:	<u>Modernize Government Processes & Services:</u> • Streamline and digitalize services for efficiency, transparency, and participation. • Simplification of government services • Expand one-stop-shop portals for citizens and businesses. • Deploying a secure National ID (biometric & mobile) with e-signature integration. <u>Enhance Digital Infrastructure & Interoperability:</u> • Implement a national interoperability framework and data-sharing standards. • Establish new data centres and modernizing existing ones, integrating them with the National ID and data exchange platforms. • Build citizen-facing and horizontal platforms on modern cloud infrastructure. <u>Boost Operational Efficiency & Automation:</u> • Reduce paperwork through cloud solutions, AI, and analytics. • Publish and leveraging open data for transparency and innovation. • Strengthen institutional capacity and governance via digital tools.

2. DIGITAL GOVERNMENT:

ENABLER 3 – DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	
Focus:	Fostering a public sector culture of innovation, agility, and organizational readiness to fully embrace digital change. This includes building digital skills across all levels of government and society, encouraging experimentation and agile delivery, driving cross-sector innovation through partnerships, and supporting the ethical adoption of emerging technologies to address social and economic challenges.
Objectives & Actions:	<u>Cultivate Culture of Innovation & Readiness:</u> • Promote an agile, innovation-driven public sector mindset. • Implement ministry-level internal digital plans to replace manual processes. • Strengthen government IT capacity by recruiting, retaining, and upskilling talent. • Establish robust IT units, project management, and strategic planning capabilities. <u>Adopt Emerging Technologies Responsibly:</u> • Explore AI, blockchain, and IoT in targeted public services. • Create ethical AI frameworks prioritizing rights, equity, and transparency. • Pilot AI in areas like fraud detection, agriculture, education, and policy research. • Launching Digital Innovation Labs and GovTech accelerators. <u>Enhance Digital Skills & Inclusion:</u> • Expanding skills programs for public servants, MSMEs, farmers, youth, and the elderly. • building AI skills through research, education, and training. • updating curricula and training teachers for the digital era. • Integrating a gender perspective to ensure accessibility for all groups.



8.2 STRATEGIC PILLARS & PROJECTS: CORE ACTION AREAS FOR COMPREHENSIVE TRANSFORMATION

Complementing the Enablers, the Strategic Pillars represent the core strategic areas of action and the specific project bank within each area, collectively comprising the framework for comprehensive digital transformation.



Figure 9. NDA Strategic Pillars

The three Strategic Pillars are:

1. ***Pillar I: Digital Public Infrastructure & Government Interoperability:***

<i>PILLAR 1 -DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE & GOVERNMENT INTEROPERABILITY</i>	
Aim:	Build secure, reliable technical digital public infrastructure and enable large-scale, dependable interoperable digital services, while also enhancing connectivity across the nation. This pillar is fundamental to creating the underlying digital backbone for Belize. It establishes the technical foundations and secure environment needed for digital services and platforms to function reliably at scale.
Objectives & Actions:	<u>Build Secure, Reliable Technical Digital Public Infrastructure:</u> Develop robust, scalable, and resilient digital foundations that ensure privacy, security, and high availability. This involves adopting best-in-class cybersecurity practices, redundant architectures, and governance frameworks that inspire trust and withstand future technological and societal needs. <u>Enable Large-Scale, Dependable, Interoperable Digital Services:</u> Facilitate digital solutions that work seamlessly across sectors and platforms, enabling data and service interoperability while maintaining reliability and user-centric design. This means creating systems that can scale to national or global usage without performance degradation, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility. <u>Enhance Connectivity:</u> Expand affordable, high-speed internet and last-mile connectivity to bridge digital divides, particularly in underserved regions. Promote universal access through innovative infrastructure solutions (such as satellite, fibre, and community networks), ensuring everyone can fully participate in the digital economy and public services.
<u>PILLAR I – PROJECT BANK</u>	

1. Full Rollout & Integration of National ID System

JUSTIFICATION:

The full implementation and integration of a National ID System is a top-priority project for Belize's New National Digital Agenda (2025-2030) due to its pivotal role in **achieving efficient, inclusive, and secure digital governance**. Currently, **Belize lacks a unified national identity system**, which creates a range of systemic challenges that hinder digital development and the provision of public services.

1. **Addressing Identity Fragmentation and Lack of Uniqueness:** Belize relies on a fragmented ecosystem of "functional identity systems," such as the Social Security Board (SSB) card and passports, which often act as de facto identifications. However, these systems present critical deficiencies:

- **Lack of Uniqueness:** There is a possibility of duplicate records for the same person due to the absence or misuse of biometrics for deduplication in most current systems. For instance, the SSB has acknowledged cases of double registration in error. The existing systems in Belize generally do not use biometrics to confirm identity, which significantly reduces their level of assurance.
- **Data Quality Concerns:** There are concerns about the quality of Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) data, the primary source for birth certificates, which can affect identity accuracy. Inaccurate death reporting and name changes (e.g., due to marriage) can lead to difficulties in updating records or creating duplicate entries.
- **Insecure Credentials:** Current de facto IDs (SSB card, voter's card) do not meet international best practices for security (e.g., not polycarbonate, not electronic documents - eID).

A National ID System with a unique National Identity Number (NIN) and the integration of biometrics (such as 10 fingerprints) for deduplication is essential to establish a robust, unique, secure, and accurate identity from birth to death. The new system will aim for universal coverage from birth to death.

2. **Enabling Digital Transformation and Public Service Interoperability:** The absence of a unique citizen identifier is a major impediment to improving e-governance. Belize ranked low in the UN E-Government Development Index (136th out of 193 countries in 2020) and the Online Service Index (168th in 2020). This is attributed to the lack of interconnectivity and data sharing among government agencies and the lack of unique citizen identifiers.

- **Key Priority:** The National Digital Agenda for Belize 2022-2025 has already identified the "National Identity Solution" (Program 3) as a key program. Digital identification has become the government's number one priority due to the need for stronger online authentication mechanisms and is a de facto requirement for all online services.
- **Interoperability:** The project would establish an interoperability framework for unified and secure data exchange between organizations, acting as a "gateway" to validate identity verification requests. This would overcome the current manual verification processes, which are inefficient and prone to errors. There is currently minimal interoperability between identity agencies.

3. **Enhancing Inclusion, User Experience, and Trust:** The current system presents barriers to inclusion, especially in rural areas and for access to financial services.

- **Financial Inclusion:** The Central Bank of Belize has identified that 17% of the population lacks the necessary documentation for identity verification, hindering financial inclusion and the development of digital wallets. A robust National ID is essential to support these initiatives, as digital wallet processes involve remote ID verification.
- **User Experience:** The project aims to improve the user experience with identification, making government services more accessible and reducing the time and money citizens and businesses spend on procedures requiring identity verification.

- **Trust and Transparency:** By providing a secure and verifiable identity, the system will increase transparency and trust in government while reducing fraud and corruption. Security and privacy safeguards will be implemented "by design". Workshop participants highlighted "Increasing inclusion" and "Improving transparency and trust in government" as crucial goals.

Leveraging Existing Initiatives and the Legal Framework: There are ongoing projects at the SSB (fingerprint biometrics) and the Ministry of Immigration (e-passports with 10 fingerprints) that incorporate biometrics, as well as the digitization of the VSU. The National ID will integrate and coordinate these initiatives into a cohesive national strategy. Furthermore, recent laws such as the Data Protection Act 2021 and the Public Sector Data Sharing Act 2021 provide a legal foundation that needs to be adapted and strengthened specifically for the National ID system. A strong legal and regulatory framework is a success factor for ID systems.

This project emphasizes in its nature the clear benefits it brings to citizens. By providing a convenient, straightforward, and time-saving digital alternative that is also more cost-effective than paper-based processes, the project directly improves daily life for the public. Prioritizing these advantages ensures that government services become more accessible, efficient, and citizen-centric, reinforcing the overarching goal of making life easier for everyone.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Complete deployment including biometric and mobile ID components.
- Integration with all relevant National ID Ecosystem stakeholders
- Deep integration with services, enabling proxy payments and secure onboarding of marginalized groups.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIPS:

- **Core Government Agencies:**

Attorney General's Ministry (Vital Statistics Unit - VSU) | Social Security Board (SSB) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Trade | Elections and Boundaries Department (EBD) | Belize Tax Service (BTS) | Central Information Technology Office (CITO) | Department of Transport | Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) |

- **Data & Statistical Agencies:**

Statistical Institute of Belize |

- **Financial Sector & Related Agencies:**

Central Bank of Belize | Companies Registry | Banks and Telephone Companies |

- **International Partners & Technical Providers:**

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) | United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | Organization of American States (OAS) | Biometric System Suppliers (e.g., Fulcrum Biometrics/Fujitsu, CBN/Innovatrics) | Telecom Companies (Belize Telemedia Limited / Digicell, Smart Telecom Limited / SMART) | International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) |

- **Civil Society & Communities:**

Civil Society Organizations | NGOs / Telecentres / Public Libraries

2. Design & Implement a Government Interoperability Framework & Platform

JUSTIFICATION:

Interoperability remains a cornerstone for building a truly connected and efficient digital government. Belize has already laid an important legal and institutional foundation through the **Digital Government Act, 2022** and the **National Digital Agenda 2022–2025**, which mandated secure data exchange, inter-agency collaboration, and the use of shared horizontal platforms. The Ministry of E-Governance has been entrusted with advancing these priorities, and progress has been achieved in developing standards, piloting shared services, and aligning with international best practices.

However, despite these advances, several limitations persist. Current studies and assessments highlight that while the framework is legislatively defined, implementation maturity remains uneven across agencies, with siloed systems, limited integration, and capacity gaps still hindering seamless data exchange and service delivery. To move beyond foundational efforts and ensure that interoperability fully supports citizen-centric services, Belize now requires a **next-generation interoperability framework and the deployment of a government-wide interoperability platform (horizontal platform)**.

The new **Digital Agenda 2025–2030** provides the opportunity to consolidate, modernize, and expand interoperability efforts. This project responds directly to the lessons learned from the first agenda cycle and aims to:

1. **Redesign the interoperability framework** to incorporate emerging technologies, updated international standards, and secure-by-design principles.
2. **Deploy a national interoperability platform (horizontal platform) to serve as the shared infrastructure for e-ID, digital payments, e-service portals, and secure data exchange.**
3. **Standardize data governance and exchange protocols** to guarantee reliable, secure, and citizen-focused digital interactions.
4. **Strengthen institutional collaboration mechanisms**, supported by clear compliance requirements and monitoring structures.
5. **Build long-term capacity among public servants** to sustain interoperability through training, guidance, and knowledge-sharing.

Incorporating this project into the new agenda will enable all other digital government initiatives. Without seamless information sharing and a unified platform, services remain fragmented, duplication of effort persists, and citizens face barriers to accessing integrated digital services. A modernized interoperability framework, paired with a robust platform, will unlock the full potential of e-government, foster trust in digital services, and ensure that Belize remains aligned with global best practices and international development.

In short, this project addresses the critical gap between legislative intent and practical implementation by providing both a governance framework and the **horizontal platform infrastructure** needed to make interoperability a reality. It ensures that the Digital Agenda 2025–2030 delivers on its promise of a truly connected, collaborative, and citizen-driven digital government.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Establish legal and policy frameworks to govern secure data exchange, protect privacy, and apply the “once-only” principle across government.
- **Design and implement the national interoperability platform (interoperability bus) as the government’s horizontal integration layer.**
- Create common data dictionaries, APIs, and exchange standards to enable seamless integration across ministries.
- Phase roll-out of the platform: begin with core agencies (Civil Registry, Tax, Health, Education), then scale to all ministries.

- Build institutional capacity through training, change management, and adoption support for ministries and technical teams.
- Introduce monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track platform usage and impact (e.g., number of services connected, transactions processed, and user adoption rates).

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP: Whole of Government

- **International Partners & Regional Cooperation:** UNDP | IDB

3. *Adopt & Implement a National Cybersecurity Framework*

JUSTIFICATION:

Belize's digital transformation has accelerated in recent years, driven by expanding connectivity and the rollout of e-government services. However, this increasing digital integration has also **exposed the country to escalating cyber risks**, with current cybersecurity capacity assessments showing **low maturity levels** and fragmented governance structures.

To ensure the success of the **New National Digital Agenda (2025–2030)**, cybersecurity must be recognized not only as a support function, but as a **foundational enabler of trust, resilience, and sustainable growth**.

Main considerations:

1. Responding to Evolving Cyber Threats:

- Internet penetration in Belize has grown rapidly, surpassing **50% of the population by 2018**, expanding opportunities but also increasing vulnerabilities.
- Reported cybercrimes include phishing, credit card/ATM fraud, cyberbullying, revenge porn, and identity theft.
- The **Police Information Technology and Cyber Unit (PITCU)** continues to report significant incidents, reflecting Belize's exposure to the global surge in cybercrime.
- Cybersecurity is now considered the **"fifth domain of defence"** (alongside land, sea, air, and space), requiring robust protection mechanisms.

2. Addressing Gaps and Low Maturity:

- Assessments (CMM 2016, 2018) rated Belize between **"start-up"** and **"formative"** levels across all five cybersecurity dimensions.
- The **National Cybersecurity Strategy (2020–2023)** highlighted critical deficiencies, including:
 - Lack of a comprehensive legal framework for cybercrime.
 - Challenges in prosecuting cyber offenses.
 - Absence of minimum-security standards for critical infrastructure.
- A new framework is urgently needed to move from strategic intent to **full implementation**.

3. Protecting Critical Infrastructure and Essential Services:

- Sectors at risk: **energy, food security, banking/finance, communications, health, transportation, and national security**.
- Attacks on these sectors could compromise not just data, but the **safety, wellbeing, and trust of citizens**.
- Regional studies confirm destructive attacks are occurring in Latin America and the Caribbean, with many organizations still lacking dedicated cybersecurity budgets.

- A framework will establish **incident response protocols and critical infrastructure protection (CIP)** measures.

4. **Enabling Economic Growth and Public Trust:**

- A **secure cyber environment** is essential to unlock the potential of Belize's digital economy.
- Citizens and businesses require confidence in e-government and e-commerce services.
- A robust framework will:
 - Encourage technology adoption and innovation.
 - Improve national competitiveness.
 - Uphold fundamental rights, such as privacy and freedom of expression online.

5. **Establishing Clear Governance under the Ministry of E-Governance:**

- Previous strategies emphasized a **whole-of-nation approach**, but governance was fragmented.
- With oversight now centralized under the **Ministry of E-Governance**, there is a unique opportunity to:
 - **Drive implementation** through a single point of leadership.
 - **Define clear roles** across government, private sector, academia, and civil society.
 - **Ensure policy cohesion**, embedding "security by design" in all digital projects.
 - **Facilitate cooperation**, acting as Belize's national and international point of contact.

6. **Building National Capacity and Regional Cooperation:**

- The project will directly address the **global shortage of cybersecurity professionals**, focusing on:
 - Workforce development.
 - Education and awareness initiatives.
 - Training for public servants and citizens.
- Regional and international collaboration (e.g., **SICA CSIRT initiative**) will enhance technical, operational, and legal capabilities through shared resources and expertise.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Formalize adoption and define clear governance roles with the new oversight of Ministry of E-Governance.
- Maintain regional cybersecurity collaboration.
- Establish a Security Operations System (SOC).
- Establish SICA's Computer Security Incident Response Team SCIRT in Belize and cooperate for Central American Region

Leading Institution: Ministry of E-Governance

Co-leading Institution: Central Information Technology Office (CITO)

PARTNERSHIP:

• **Core Government Agencies:**

Attorney General Ministry | Central Information Technology Office (CITO) | Ministry of National Security (MNS) / National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) | Belize Police Department (BPD) / Police Information Technology and Cyber Unit (PITCU) |

- **Regulatory Bodies & Sectoral Oversight:**

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) | Central Bank of Belize |

- **Critical Infrastructure Owners and Operators:**

Ministries with responsibility for: Tourism, Immigration, Health, Transport, Communication, and Energy, as their systems and data are considered critical.

- **Legal & Justice System:**

Judiciary (Supreme Court) / Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions | Registrar General |

- **Academia & Workforce Development:**

Ministry of Education, Science & Technology | Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry | Universities | Belize Association of ICT Professionals / Association of Computing Machinery Student Chapter |

- **International Partners & Regional Cooperation:**

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) | Organization of American States (OAS) / Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) | Council of Europe | SICA (Central American Integration System) / SICA CSIRT.

4. *Building a New, Robust, Secure, and Cybersecure Governmental Data Centre (Connectivity Plan)*

JUSTIFICATION:

The creation of a **new government-owned data centre**, alongside the modernization of the existing facility, is a core component of **Belize's National Digital Infrastructure Plan (2025)**. This plan, supported by **the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, serves as the strategic roadmap for achieving the goals of the National Digital Agenda 2025–2030, which prioritizes secure, resilient, and inclusive digital transformation.

By addressing critical infrastructure gaps, this project lays the foundation for improved service delivery, enhanced data security, operational efficiency, and Belize's emergence as a regional digital hub.

Key considerations:

1. Integral to Belize's National Digital Infrastructure Plan:

- Identified as **one of three critical building blocks**, alongside fibre-optic deployment and international connectivity.
- Explicitly designed to **address digital infrastructure gaps** and maximize Belize's digital potential.
- Envisions both a **new robust data centre** and **modernization of the existing facility**, ensuring continuity and resilience.

2. Supporting the National Digital Agenda with IDB Backing:

- The past iteration of the **Belize National Digital Agenda 2022–2025**, elaborated with IDB support, outlined three objectives:
 - Transform government operations.
 - Foster a digital society.
 - Lay the foundations for future transformation.
- This project directly contributes to all three objectives by delivering the infrastructure required for modernization and citizen impact.
- The IDB continues to provide regional **guidance and toolkits** for broadband expansion and digital services.

3. Enhancing Government Operations and Public Services:

- Provides **reliable, safe, and secure infrastructure** to deliver efficient e-government services.
- Ensures **privacy and confidentiality** of citizen data.

- Advances a **Government Cloud (G-Cloud)** model to centralize storage, computing resources, and software services.
- Improves **efficiency and cost-effectiveness** of service delivery across ministries.

4. Ensuring Data Security, Sovereignty, and Regulatory Compliance:

- A government-owned facility guarantees **control over sensitive national data**.
- Enables **tailored security protocols** to meet Belize's specific needs.
- Ensures compliance with **national data protection laws and sector-specific regulations**.
- Avoids risks of **jurisdictional conflicts** and exposure to foreign laws when using public cloud providers.
- Provides the secure infrastructure necessary to manage and process **large volumes of data for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced analytics**, enabling innovation while maintaining full sovereignty and compliance.

5. Achieving Long-Term Cost Savings and Efficiency:

- Centralization brings:
 - Optimized resource allocation.
 - Reduction of duplicated services across agencies
 - Economies of scale.
- Avoids **vendor lock-in** and unpredictable cloud pricing.
- International benchmarks (e.g., **El Salvador**) show potential annual savings of **up to \$4.3M USD** through consolidation and reduced cyberattack costs.

6. Futureproofing and Building Resilience

- Ensures flexibility and independence from external providers' commercial priorities.
- Strengthens resilience against:
 - Natural disasters.
 - Operational failures.
 - Cybersecurity risks.
- International cases (**Japan, Ecuador**) highlight how data centres supported **continuity of services during crises**.

7. Driving Economic Growth, Job Creation, and Digital Hub Status

- Stimulates **job creation for skilled IT professionals**.
- Boosts local technology industries and contributes to **GDP growth**.
- Positions Belize as a **regional Digital Hub for the Caribbean**, attracting investment.
- International precedents (**India, Kenya**) confirm the potential for broad socio-economic impact.

8. Complementary Infrastructure Initiatives:

- Includes the **deployment of a Data Private Network (DPN)** connecting government offices in Belize City and Belmopan.
- Incorporates redundancy and inter-city connectivity to enhance reliability.
- Complements the **modernization of the existing data centre**, creating a comprehensive, secure national infrastructure ecosystem.

While the creation of a new government-owned data centre and the modernization of the existing facility represent a transformative step for Belize's digital future, **the ambition of this project requires careful attention to financial sustainability and operational resilience**. Beyond the initial investment, long-term success will depend on securing adequate resources for day-to-day operations, continuous maintenance, and timely technology upgrades to keep pace with evolving standards. Establishing clear funding models, cost-recovery mechanisms, and partnerships with regional and international stakeholders will be essential to ensure that the data centre remains both technically robust and economically viable. By embedding financial sustainability into the execution strategy, Belize will safeguard its investment, guarantee continuity of services, and maximize the long-term benefits of this critical national infrastructure.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Tier III-standard facility to safeguard data privacy & sovereignty.
- Connect 55 government buildings via a secure Data Private Network.
- Potential to host an Internet Exchange Point for cost savings & better service.

LEADING INSTITUTION: CITO

CO-LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP:

- **Core government agencies:**

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) | **Relevant Ministries and Departments** (Primary users and beneficiaries of the new data centre and "government cloud" services) | Inter-institutional Cybersecurity Task Force |

- **International Partners & Regional Cooperation:**

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) |

- **Industry Stakeholders / Private Sector:**

Telecom entities | Internet Service Providers (ISPs) | Academia and Civil Society |

5. *Public Service Digital Transformation:*

JUSTIFICATION:

The **Public Service Digital Transformation** project is a cornerstone initiative that will be included in Belize's upcoming **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**, building on the foundations laid under the **National Digital Agenda 2022–2025** and the **Digital Government Act, 2022**. While initial steps have already been taken, this new agenda cycle provides an opportunity to scale, institutionalize, and fully realize the transformation of government operations, ensuring a modern, resilient, and citizen-centred public service.

1. **Strategic Alignment and Vision:**

The **2022–2025 National Digital Agenda** established the vision of a digitally inclusive society, focusing on ICT infrastructure, horizontal platforms, and improved digital services. The **2025–2030 Agenda** will now take this vision further by embedding **Public Service Digital Transformation** as a central enabler of government modernization.

This project represents more than a technological upgrade—it is a **strategic transformation of governance** designed to:

- Enhance efficiency and transparency in government operations.
- Empower citizens through faster, more accessible services.
- Foster innovation and participative governance across ministries.

2. **Core Components and Integration:**

At the heart of this transformation is the **NeoPeople HR System**, which will replace fragmented tools like SmartStream, MyGOB, and the MPS Job Portal with a fully integrated platform. NeoPeople will encompass:

- Time and performance management.
- Payroll, benefits, and assets management.
- Claims and request handling.
- Document management and correspondence routing.

By digitizing recruitment, post creation, and HR workflows, the system will ensure that all public service processes are streamlined, efficient, and interoperable. Importantly, this integration will position NeoPeople as a **core horizontal platform of the new Agenda 2025–2030**.

3. Enhancing Public Service Delivery:

Digitizing the administrative backbone of government will strengthen the capacity of the public service, enabling:

- Faster and more transparent recruitment.
- Secure, centralized data for better decision-making.
- Consistent performance management and accountability.
- Improved citizen-facing services by freeing up administrative capacity.

This shift lays the groundwork for **service delivery reforms** that the new Agenda 2025–2030 prioritizes.

4. Governance, Compliance, and Trust:

Anchored in the **Digital Government Act, 2022**, the project ensures compliance with data protection and accountability frameworks. By institutionalizing standardized processes across ministries, it creates trust in public administration—an explicit priority carried forward into the **2025–2030 Agenda**.

5. Partnerships and Capacity Building:

The project leverages support from **international partners** such as UNDP and the IDB, ensuring both technical capacity and financial sustainability. It also emphasizes **training and capacity development**, equipping public officers with digital skills and fostering a culture of innovation. This aligns directly with the **capacity-building pillar of the new Agenda**.

6. Socio-Economic Impact:

A digitally transformed public service is essential for **economic growth, social inclusion, and competitiveness**. Streamlined HR and administrative systems will reduce bureaucratic burdens, improve trust, and enhance citizen and business interaction with government—core outcomes that the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030** seeks to achieve.

KEY ACTIONS:

- NeoPeople HR System (integrating SmartStream, MyGOB, Job Portal).
- Document Mgmt. & Correspondence Routing Module
- Deployment of an Electronic Records Management System (ERMS).
- Full HRdigital transition.
- Digitization of HR processes to improve efficiency, reduce paper use, and streamline operations.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of the Public Service, Governance & Disaster Risk Mgmt.

CO-LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP: Governance (data capture) | CITO | MPS | MOF | Accounting Officers

6. *National Government Payment Gateway*

JUSTIFICATION:

The establishment of a **National Government Payment Gateway** is a strategic priority for Belize's digital transformation. It directly supports the policy goals of the **Belize Investment and Business Climate Action Plan (BIBCAP)** and advances the vision of the upcoming National Digital Agenda 2025–2030. More than a technological upgrade, this initiative is about modernizing how citizens and businesses interact with government—making transactions easier, more secure, and more inclusive.

Driving E-Governance and Online Services

The BIBCAP makes clear that improving the delivery of government services is central to strengthening trust and attracting investment. Under Pillar 2, government committed to **"bring the Government closer to national and international investors"** through innovation and better service delivery. A centralized payment gateway is the tool that makes this commitment tangible. By enabling citizens and businesses to make payments online, the government takes a decisive step toward full e-governance. It directly fulfils Task 2.4.2—Enable online payments for public services, a deliverable that will now be consolidated and scaled as part of the 2025–2030 Agenda.

Reducing Bureaucracy and Supporting Business

For entrepreneurs and MSMEs, one of the most burdensome aspects of dealing with government is the complexity of administrative procedures. Payments—whether for permits, licenses, or registrations—are often slow, manual, and fragmented. The new gateway simplifies this entire process. It will cut down the time and costs of compliance, directly contributing to the BIBCAP goal of reducing the time to formalize a business by 80%. By integrating payments into a single digital platform, government helps micro and small businesses formalize operations more easily, which in turn supports growth, competitiveness, and economic inclusion.

Empowering MSMEs and Building a Digital Economy

The gateway is also a catalyst for e-commerce adoption. For many MSMEs, engaging digitally with government will be their first experience with online payments. A trusted, transparent, and accessible government platform lowers barriers and builds confidence in digital transactions. This complements the BIBCAP's call under Task 2.2.1 to encourage MSMEs to take advantage of e-commerce opportunities, creating a ripple effect for broader digital participation. It also aligns with efforts under Pillar 8 to expand digital payment options for small suppliers, showing how government transformation can directly empower the private sector.

Expanding Financial Inclusion and Fintech Innovation

Digital payments are not just about efficiency—they are about inclusion. Many Belizeans and small businesses remain outside the formal financial system. By creating a standardized, widely available payment gateway, the government opens a pathway into the digital financial ecosystem. This supports Pillar 3 of the BIBCAP, which emphasizes expanding financial services through innovative Fintech solutions. The gateway itself becomes a model of such innovation, fostering confidence in digital finance and laying the groundwork for further Fintech-enabled services.

Supporting Tax Reform and Compliance

Modernizing Belize's taxation system is another area where the payment gateway becomes indispensable. Under Pillar 4, BIBCAP calls for online GST registration and payments. A government-owned payment gateway is the secure backbone that makes this reform possible, improving compliance, streamlining collections, and making life easier for businesses. In doing so, it strengthens government revenue systems while enhancing transparency and trust.

Key Actions:

- Build a secure, centralized payment gateway to handle all government collections.
- Connect directly to Central Bank settlement systems.
- Enable multiple payment channels (cards, bank transfers, mobile money).
- Deploy a government-issued digital wallet for seamless transactions.
- Replace government Integrated Cashier System.

Leading Institution: Ministry of Finance (Treasury)

Co-leading Institution: Ministry of E-Governance & Central Bank

Partnership:

Belize Tax Service (BTS) | All Government Ministries and Public Agencies |

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

2. Pillar II: Citizen & Business-Centred Services and Platforms:

PILLAR 2 -CITIZEN & BUSINESS CENTRED – SERVICES & PLATFORMS

Aim:	Improve the quality, information, and user experience of public services, delivering seamless, accessible, and responsive solutions for citizens and businesses. This also includes establishing robust platforms and backends to improve digital services, ensuring that digital government is truly citizen centric.
Objectives & Actions:	<u>1. Improve Quality, Information & User Experience of Public Services</u> Enhance the way citizens and businesses interact with government by providing accurate, timely, and user-friendly digital services. This means ensuring that public platforms are easy to navigate, consistently updated with relevant information, and designed with inclusivity and accessibility in mind. <u>2. Deliver Seamless, Accessible & Responsive Solutions for Citizens & Businesses</u> Design services that feel intuitive and “frictionless,” reducing the need for repeated data entry or navigating multiple systems. Ensure accessibility for all—including people with disabilities, rural populations, and non-digital natives—while offering responsive support channels that adapt quickly to user needs and feedback. <u>3. Robust Platforms and Backends to Improve Digital Services</u> Strengthen the technical backbone of public systems by investing in scalable, secure, and interoperable architectures. This involves adopting modern cloud, API-driven, and data management solutions that ensure reliability, cybersecurity, and efficient integration across agencies, enabling smoother, faster, and more resilient service delivery.

PILLAR II – PROJECT BANK

1. National Electronic Window for Trade

JUSTIFICATION:

The development of a **Single Trade Window (STW)** and a **Single Investment Window (SIW)** represents a critical step in Belize’s journey toward modernization, competitiveness, and digital transformation. This project, supported by the **Inter-American Development Bank (BL-L1040, “Trade and Investment Facilitation Program for Belize,”** US\$8 million, approved in September 2022), directly advances the goals of the upcoming **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**. It brings coherence to trade and investment

procedures, reducing bureaucracy and costs for businesses, while embedding these services into the future government e-portal for a unified citizen and business experience.

Strengthening Trade Facilitation and Competitiveness

The **Single Trade Window** simplifies import and export processes by integrating licensing, certification, and permitting into a single digital channel. With additional European Union co-financing (US\$2 million), the scope has been expanded to include a **Goods Declaration Module** and a **Risk Management Module**, developed in coordination with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade and the Department of Customs. These enhancements will modernize Belize's trade ecosystem, reduce clearance times, and increase predictability for businesses engaging in international trade. By digitizing and streamlining procedures, Belize moves closer to international best practices, strengthening its competitiveness in regional and global markets.

Supporting Investment and Private Sector Growth

Alongside trade facilitation, the project introduces a **Single Investment Window**, a preliminary platform for digitalizing investment-related services. Coordinated closely with the team of the complementary program (BL-L1039), the SIW ensures that investment processes are not duplicated but rather seamlessly integrated into the broader government e-portal. This integration will simplify investor interactions with government, promote transparency, and reduce the time and cost of doing business in Belize. For micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as well as foreign investors, the SIW lowers barriers to entry, creating a more attractive and supportive business environment.

Alignment with the National Digital Agenda 2025–2030

While these initiatives were launched under the framework of previous reforms, their full impact will be realized in the **2025–2030 Agenda**. The Agenda prioritizes **horizontal platforms and e-services** that bring government closer to citizens and businesses. By embedding the STW and SIW into the government's e-portal, Belize ensures that these systems do not operate in silos but instead serve as integrated components of a broader digital ecosystem. This approach also aligns with the **Digital Government Act, 2022**, which mandates interoperability, efficiency, and citizen-centric design in all government systems.

Economic and Governance Impact

The benefits of these Single Windows extend well beyond technology. For government, they provide better oversight and risk management in trade and investment operations. For businesses, they eliminate duplications, reduce bureaucratic delays, and lower compliance costs. For the economy, they foster competitiveness, increase transparency, and strengthen investor confidence—key objectives of both the BIBCAP and the new **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**. BL-1040 Electronic Single Window (ESW): is estimated to reduce trade costs by 20% and time by 30% (by 2026).

KEY ACTIONS:

- Simplify & Digitize investment procedures leveraging the **IDB Trade & Investment Facilitation Program (BL-L1040)**.
- Centralized, digital platform that allows traders, exporters, and relevant government agencies to electronically submit, process, and approve all trade-related documentation through a single access point.
- Integrate all key border management, customs, and trade regulatory agencies into a single online platform.
- Enable end-to-end electronic processing for import/export permits, certificates, and licenses.
- Ensure interoperability with existing government and private-sector systems (e.g., customs, port authorities, logistics).
- Implement secure digital payment processing for fees and duties (via integration with the national payment gateway).
- Enhance promotion tools & SME Support

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of Foreign Affairs | MFEDI | BELTRAIDE | Supplies Control | BAHA | Customs | Forestry | Fisheries | DOE | CITO | BPA | Transport | BBS | Postal Service | Central Bank | SIB |

2. Expansion and Digital Modernization of Civil Registry & Vital Statistics (CRVS)

JUSTIFICATION:

The "Expansion and Digital Modernization of CRVS" project is a cornerstone initiative for Belize's digital transformation, particularly within the Attorney General's Ministry. Building on prior digitization efforts and as part of the larger **Digital Belize operation (BL-L1039, "Digital Innovation to Boost Economic Development in Belize," US\$10 million, approved November 9, 2022)**, this project addresses persistent inefficiencies, improves citizen access to services, and strengthens data integrity. It also lays a foundation for broader integration with upcoming government digital systems, positioning it as a strategic priority for the National Digital Agenda 2025–2030.

Progress to Date and Current Status:

Significant advancements have been made in the digitization of vital records:

- All 465,350 birth records have been digitized, scanned, and indexed using DocuWare.
- Data quality is carefully monitored, achieving a 92% accuracy rate, with further research ongoing to resolve unclear fields.
- The CRVS application is currently in testing and updates, ready to host the migrated records.
- This initiative has been carried out in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), laying a strong foundation for the next phase of digital modernization.

The CRVS system is also explicitly identified as a key activity within BL-L1039, alongside the development of an interoperability platform, an e-Portal for government services, and the reengineering and digitization of government-to-business services, demonstrating its integration into a coordinated government-wide digital transformation strategy.

Why Expansion and Modernization Are Critical:

Despite progress, several challenges highlight the need for further modernization:

- **Persistent Manual Processes:** Vital events for 2025 and beyond are still processed manually. Digitization of these processes will eliminate paper-based workflows and improve efficiency.
- **Limited Access for Belizeans Abroad:** Citizens in the diaspora currently faces cumbersome, in-person procedures to obtain certificates. Online access is essential for global accessibility.
- **Cultural and Adoption Challenges:** Transitioning to a fully digital system requires stakeholder adaptation, particularly among marriage officers and other key officials.
- **Internal Unit Digitization Needs:** Other departments within the Attorney General's Ministry, including Legal Advice, Legislative Drafting, and Intellectual Property, remain largely manual, underscoring the need for a broader digital transformation.
- **Fragmented Tribunal Systems:** Current tribunal operations lack digital integration, limiting accessibility and efficiency.
 - Strategic Objectives and Expected Benefits
 - The project aims to deliver tangible improvements in government operations and citizen services:
- **Improved Service Delivery:** The CRVS will issue both e-certificates and physical certificates, enabling Belizeans, especially abroad, to apply for and receive vital documents digitally.
- **Enhanced Data Integrity and Efficiency:** Fully digital workflows will replace manual processes, reduce errors and improve record accuracy.

- **Strategic Integrations:**

- Collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Social Security, and Immigration Department will enable direct digital data entry.
- Integration with the upcoming National ID project will provide a unified identifier linking vital events to broader government services.

- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Online services for the diaspora ensure equitable access, improving government responsiveness and citizen satisfaction.
- **Foundational for Broader Digital Transformation:** As a key component of BL-L1039, CRVS is integrated with other initiatives including the government e-Portal, interoperability platform, and government-to-business services, making it a model for other Attorney General units and government departments.

Alignment with the National Digital Agenda 2025–2030

The CRVS project builds on achievements from the previous National Digital Agenda while positioning Belize for the next phase of digital modernization:

- It forms part of Digital Belize (BL-L1039), a flagship program supporting digital transformation across public and private sectors.
- Supports Attorney General Ministry priorities, including digitization of internal units and tribunal systems.
- Reinforces interoperability with other government systems, including the National ID project, enhancing efficiency and accuracy across departments.
- Aligns with national legislation such as the Data Protection Act and amendments to the Electronic Evidence Act, ensuring a robust legal framework for digital services.
- Contributes directly to citizen-centric service delivery, digital governance, and operational efficiency, key pillars of the 2025–2030 Agenda.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Modernize and fully digitize Belize's civil registration systems, enabling secure, accessible, and integrated management of vital records for improved public service delivery and policy planning.
- Complete birth record migration to the digital system.
- Expand digital coverage to death, marriage, adoption records and deed poll records.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Attorney General Ministry

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of E-Governance | Central Executing Unit | Ministries of Health, Immigration, and Foreign Affairs | Social Security Board SSB | Marriage Officers, Hospitals, and Tribunals.

3. Establish a Digital Services Platform

JUSTIFICATION:

The establishment of a fully operational, citizen-facing **Digital Services Platform** is a critical component of Belize's ongoing digital transformation and a cornerstone of the National Digital Agenda 2025–2030. While Belize has made significant progress in digital initiatives, including pilot e-services and early-stage portals, the reality is that the country has not yet achieved a fully integrated platform for seamless, end-to-end government services. Most government services remain partially paper-based or accessible only through in-person visits, highlighting the urgent need for a unified, national e-government platform.

Past efforts, such as those under **Digital Belize (BL-L1039, "Digital Innovation to Boost Economic Development in Belize")**, have laid a strong foundation by introducing key initiatives, including the digitization of the Civil Registry and Vital Statistics system (CRVS), the development of an interoperability platform, and the design of an e-Portal for government services. However, these efforts remain

fragmented, and the next phase of digital transformation requires consolidating these systems into a single, cohesive platform that serves both citizens and businesses efficiently.

The proposed platform directly supports **Pillar 2 of the Belize Investment and Business Climate Action Plan (BIBCAP)**, which focuses on delivering government services ethically, advancing e-governance, and fostering e-commerce and innovation. By enabling the government to offer streamlined, online services, the platform will significantly reduce bureaucratic delays, improve transparency, and enhance accessibility, particularly for citizens living abroad. It will also integrate critical systems, such as CRVS and the forthcoming national ID program, creating a foundation for secure and accurate citizen identification and data sharing across government agencies.

In addition to enhancing service delivery, the platform is essential for fostering private sector growth and MSME development. By digitalizing government-to-business services and providing online payment capabilities, the platform simplifies administrative processes, reduces costs and time for compliance, and encourages broader participation in e-commerce. This approach aligns directly with Belize's vision for a digitally inclusive society and its objectives for economic development and investor engagement.

The Ministry of E-Governance would ensure coordinated implementation, effective management, and ongoing evolution of the platform. This central oversight guarantees that the platform is not only technically robust but also fully aligned with national policy objectives and the broader strategic goals of the National Digital Agenda 2025–2030.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Consolidate access to public services across ministries/agencies.
- Expand into health and other high-demand services.
- Improve user interface, accessibility, and back-end integrations.
- Deploy shared enablers within the platform, including:
 - Single Sign-On (SSO) and digital authentication.
 - National digital payments gateway.
 - Integration with National Digital ID, Civil Registry, and e-Service Portal.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP: Whole of government | Interamerican Development Bank (IDB)

4. Digitization of Post Office Operations

JUSTIFICATION:

The **Digitization of Post Office Operations** is a strategic initiative central to Belize's ongoing digital transformation and the modernization of public services under the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**. Far beyond a simple upgrade, this project is essential to ensure that the Belize Post Office (BPO) remains relevant, efficient, and responsive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, while aligning with the government's broader e-governance objectives.

The BPO has already laid important foundations for digital modernization. The **Domestic Speed Mail Digitization Project**, launched in 2024, integrates AI and GPS for real-time tracking across all 16 branches, enabling automated notifications via SMS for both senders and recipients. Additional initiatives, such as chatbot support, digital payment options, improved resource management, and delivery logistics enhancements, demonstrate the Post Office's commitment to modernization. These initiatives form part of a broader ministerial vision to modernize national postal infrastructure, supported by staff training, data collection efforts, and consultant recommendations to optimize operational workflows.

Despite these advances, the BPO faces significant challenges that make further digitization imperative. Market competition continues to intensify, and customers express concerns regarding affordability, transparency, and reliability of services. Full digital integration will directly address these concerns by streamlining processes, improving service predictability, and enhancing customer control through digital channels. Beyond customer experience, operational efficiency will be markedly improved through comprehensive digitization, including optimized logistics planning, a digital branch map, and better internal data management to inform decisions and continuous service improvements.

Another critical rationale for the project is the need for **national digital cohesion and interoperability**. Current efforts across government ministries reveal silos and non-integrated systems, which hinder service delivery and create duplication. The Ministry of Public Utilities has emphasized that future digitalization initiatives, including postal services, must integrate into a broader national e-government portal. By designing the BPO's systems with interoperability in mind, this project ensures that postal operations contribute to a unified, efficient, and citizen-centric digital ecosystem, supporting the goals of the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Implement digital tracking and management systems for mail and parcels.
- Enable online service requests and payments (e.g., postage, P.O. box rentals).
- Upgrade internal operations through automation and data analytics for route optimization and efficiency

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, & Logistics | Belize Post Office (BPO)

CO-LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP: European Union | IDB | World Bank |

5. Expansion and Modernization of the Belize Tax System

JUSTIFICATION:

The modernization of Belize's tax system represents one of the most significant steps in the country's digital transformation agenda. Building on the foundations of the **Integrated Revenue Information System (IRIS)**, this project will expand the Belize Tax Service's digital capacity through three interconnected priorities: the nationwide rollout of **electronic invoicing (e-invoicing)**, the full deployment of an expanded **IRIS platform**, and the **integration of artificial intelligence** to strengthen compliance and service delivery. Together, these efforts will transform how taxes are administered and paid in Belize, while directly supporting the objectives of the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**.

A first and central component of the project is the introduction of **e-invoicing**, a nationwide system that will enable the real-time transmission and validation of tax documents. This step is vital for improving compliance, reducing fraud, and laying the groundwork for innovations such as pre-filled tax returns. The Belize Tax Service has already prioritized this initiative, with a pilot scheduled for July. Once rolled out, e-invoicing will generate unprecedented volumes of data, requiring advanced analytical tools and AI integration to ensure that the system not only captures transactions efficiently but also provides actionable insights for policy and enforcement.

The second major component involves the **expansion of IRIS**, which has already proven to be a cornerstone of Belize's tax modernization. Branded as *Iris Belize*, the platform currently provides taxpayers with 24/7 access to e-filing, e-payments, registration, and account management. Since its launch in 2021, it has transformed tax administration: more than 90% of collections now come through online transactions, filings and payments have become timelier, and payments are seamlessly integrated with the banking system. Building on this success, the next phase will extend IRIS capabilities to include risk-based auditing, debt management automation, and predictive analytics. Equally important, IRIS will

become more interoperable, linking tax administration with other national data platforms and government systems, including SmartStream, Customs (ASYCUDA), and the Online Business Registry. A key step in this integration will be the onboarding of land tax collections, moving Belize closer to a single unified tax platform.

The third component is the **adoption of artificial intelligence** within tax administration. The Belize Tax Service already uses data analytics to detect non-compliance and assess revenue risks. The next step is to embed AI-driven tools for fraud detection, taxpayer profiling, predictive modelling, and automated case selection. This transition will fundamentally shift the way audits are conducted, moving officers away from reviewing physical documents to leveraging sophisticated, data-driven tools. AI will also allow the BTS to make “gold” out of its data, enabling better policy design, stronger compliance monitoring, and faster, more personalized taxpayer services. Experts and consultants have already proposed pilot projects in this area, with the Ministry of E-Governance positioned as a strategic partner to ensure scalability and alignment with the national agenda.

Taken together, these initiatives amount to far more than an upgrade of existing systems. They represent a **holistic modernization of Belize's tax administration**, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and compliance while reducing administrative burdens for taxpayers. The project also directly contributes to Belize's wider digital government objectives, ensuring interoperability across ministries and strengthening the foundation for a unified, citizen-centric digital ecosystem.

By expanding IRIS, rolling out e-invoicing, and integrating artificial intelligence, the Belize Tax Service will position itself at the cutting edge of digital governance in the region. The expansion and modernization of BTS is therefore not only a technical necessity but a strategic opportunity—one that will shape the country's fiscal sustainability, improve the ease of doing business, and reinforce public trust in government through modern, efficient, and transparent services.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Integrate land tax into the IRIS Belize platform.
- Pilot and roll out e-invoicing nationwide.
- Deploy AI tools for fraud detection and advanced analytics.
- Align tax services with the National Digital ID for secure verification.
- Nationwide E-Invoicing System
- Iris Phase 4 – Risk based auditing, predictive analytics, tax onboarding.
- AI Compliance – fraud detection, automated case selection.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Belize Tax System (BTS)

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of E-Governance | Ministry of Finance | Lands & Surveys | CBA & Municipalities | Customs | SIB | SSB | BELIPO | FIU | BCCI

6. Strengthen Belize Companies & Corporate Registry (OBRS)

JUSTIFICATION:

The strengthening of the **Belize Companies & Corporate Registry (OBRS)** is a strategic priority for advancing Belize's digital government. More than just a registry, the OBRS has already become one of the country's most successful digital platforms, positioning Belize as a regional leader in corporate digitalization and laying the groundwork for more cohesive, efficient, and data-driven public administration. This project seeks to build on that success, ensuring the Registry's continued evolution as a cornerstone of Belize's digital ecosystem and a key enabler of the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**.

Belize has already distinguished itself in this area. The OBRS, created through the merger of international and local registries and modernized legislation, has received international recognition—including two WSIS digital champion awards. **It is widely regarded as a frontier platform within CARICOM and**

Latin America. Strengthening it now means leveraging a proven foundation to deliver even greater integration, resilience, and value for citizens, businesses, and government alike.

At its core, the Registry is the authoritative source of legally binding information for all registered entities—from incorporation to dissolution—covering companies, LLCs, NPOs, trusts, and NGOs. Courts, banks, government agencies, and the private sector depend on this data daily. Consolidating and expanding the OBRS ensures that this vital national asset remains accurate, accessible, and fit for purpose in an increasingly digital economy.

The project will also advance a pressing national priority: greater **data cohesion and interoperability across government systems**. Although OBRS already connects with the Belize Tax Service for taxpayer verification, the Social Security Board for identity validation, and banks for payment services, many other institutions still operate in silos, with inconsistent adoption of “as-once” data-sharing principles. Strengthening OBRS will directly support a single national blueprint for interoperability, moving Belize closer to a “one journey” experience for citizens and business owners, while eliminating duplicative data requests and fragmented processes.

In addition, the Registry’s expansion will bring all remaining entity types onto the platform, streamlining compliance and simplifying service delivery for a wider range of organizations. OBRS already functions as an automated compliance monitor, adjusting entity statuses in real time based on filings. A strengthened platform will allow the Registry not only to enforce compliance more effectively but also to educate businesses—particularly local enterprises—on their responsibilities in a transparent, user-friendly way.

Another important dimension of this project is its contribution to **data analytics and policymaking**. The Registry is evolving from simply storing information to generating actionable insights. By investing in advanced analytics, OBRS will move beyond static reporting to real-time data visualization and correlation, producing dashboards and infographics that can guide national policy, support economic planning, and inspire further innovation in digital applications.

Sustainability and security are also central. Unlike many other platforms, the Registry’s transformation has been entirely self-funded, creating a sustainable model for maintenance and future growth. It already operates with robust cybersecurity protocols—multi-layer protections, two-factor authentication, redundancies, and staff training. Strengthening OBRS will further bolster security and align it with national standards for system development, ensuring it remains resilient against evolving threats.

In sum, strengthening the Belize Companies & Corporate Registry is not just about improving a successful system. It is about consolidating Belize’s position as a digital leader in the region, eliminating silos across government, empowering businesses with streamlined services, and creating a data-rich foundation for smarter policymaking. By doing so, the project will contribute directly to the goals of the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**, ensuring that Belize’s corporate data infrastructure remains a catalyst for digital transformation, economic growth, and good governance.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Achieve full integration, enhance efficiency, and improve service quality for businesses and corporate entities.
- Onboard all remaining entity types into the Online Business Registry System (OBRS).
- Enhance data analytics capabilities for better oversight and decision-making

LEADING INSTITUTION: Belize Companies & Corporate Registry (OBRS) | The Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCR)

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of E-Governance | Belize Tax Service (BTS) | Social Security Board (SSB) |

7. CRR Criminal Records Registry

JUSTIFICATION:

The **Criminal Records Registry (CRR)** marks a major milestone in Belize's effort to modernize justice services and strengthen citizen-centred governance. Introduced in 2025 through collaboration between the Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries and the Ministry of E-Governance, the CRR has already transformed the way Belizeans access Police Records of Conduct. By allowing applications, payments, and document delivery to take place entirely online—with real-time SMS and email updates—the system has replaced a traditionally slow, manual process with a faster and more transparent alternative. At the same time, inclusivity has been safeguarded by maintaining in-person assistance at nine police stations across the country.

Building on this foundation, the next phase of development aims to **consolidate the CRR as a comprehensive, fully national platform**. Expanding the digital system will allow it to evolve beyond its initial scope and support broader justice-sector modernization, while also incorporating feedback from early use to improve reliability and user experience. Strengthening payment options is a priority, as broader digital payment channels will make the service more accessible to citizens across socioeconomic groups and geographic areas, reducing barriers and ensuring equitable access to justice services.

Equally important is the planned **integration of the Government of Belize Integrated Centralized System (GICS)** into districts not yet connected. Extending the CRR into these locations will create true national coverage, bringing consistent access to all citizens regardless of where they live. This integration will also enhance the interoperability of the CRR with other government platforms, reinforcing the broader vision of building a cohesive e-government ecosystem that avoids duplication, strengthens efficiency, and ensures that citizen data follows a "single journey" across ministries.

The modernization of the CRR carries implications that go well beyond administrative efficiency. Police Records of Conduct are often required for employment, education, and international opportunities. By making the process faster, secure, and transparent, the CRR strengthens public trust in government services, reduces opportunities for inefficiency, and gives citizens greater confidence in their interactions with the state. For the police service, digitalization frees up resources for other security priorities and provides a stronger data infrastructure for future reforms.

Ultimately, the expansion of the Criminal Records Registry is about embedding fairness, transparency, and inclusivity into Belize's justice system. It aligns squarely with the objectives of the **National Digital Agenda 2025–2030**, ensuring that the benefits of digital transformation are felt not just in urban centres or select ministries, but across the country and in areas that most directly affect people's everyday lives.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Expanding the already digital evolve of the Criminal Record of Conduct Online System
- Adding other means of payment.
- Expand and modernize the entrance and exit of travelers in Belize - capturing of travelers information.
- Rollout of the GICS to district locations that currently aren't on the GICS System.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries | Belice Police Department

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of E-Governance | CITO

3. Pillar III: Skills, Inclusion & Sectoral Digital Transformation (Innovation):

<u>PILLAR 3 -SKILLS, INCLUSION & SECTORIAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION (INNOVATION)</u>	
Aim:	To promote inclusive & equitable digital transformation, develop digital skills & foster innovation across sectors, and embed a culture of change in both public and private spheres. This pillar emphasizes human capital development and the widespread adoption of digital practices across society.
Objectives & Actions:	<u>Promote Inclusive & Equitable Digital Transformation</u> Ensure that digital progress benefits everyone, leaving no community or sector behind. This means addressing the digital divide by making technologies affordable, accessible, and relevant to diverse groups—including women, youth, rural populations, and marginalized communities—so all can participate in and shape the digital economy. <u>Develop Digital Skills & Foster Innovation Across Sectors</u> Invest in lifelong learning and training programs that equip citizens, businesses, and public servants with the skills needed for a digital-first future. At the same time, create environments that encourage experimentation, entrepreneurship, and cross-sector collaboration—supporting innovation in areas like fintech, Health tech, Agri-tech, and green technologies. <u>Embed Culture of Change in Public & Private Spheres</u> Encourage adaptability, openness to new technologies, and continuous improvement across institutions and enterprises. This involves updating governance frameworks, rewarding innovation, and fostering leadership that embraces digital-first thinking—so both public agencies and private organizations are agile and resilient in the face of rapid change.
<u>PILLAR III – PROJECT BANK</u>	
1. Health Sector Digital Transformation Program	
<u>JUSTIFICATION:</u>	
The Health Sector Digital Transformation Program is a cornerstone initiative to modernize Belize's healthcare system, enhance efficiency, and ensure equitable access to services. It directly supports the Belize Health Sector Strategic Plan (BHSSP) 2025–2034, which envisions “a healthy and empowered population supported by an equitable, efficient, and high-quality health system responsive to people’s needs”. The program addresses systemic challenges such as fragmented data systems, limited digital governance, unequal access to care (particularly in rural areas), and the absence of secure interoperability frameworks.	
<u>Strengthening Interoperability and Data Integration:</u> - The Belize Health Information System (BHIS) already holds full electronic health records across public facilities.	

- The **Clinical Data Exchange Platform (CDEP)**, launched on HL7 FHIR standards, has achieved initial integration with the National Health Insurance (NHI) system and begun testing links with the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) database.
- Expanding interoperability to include private sector systems and full CRVS integration will create a single, consolidated view of patient health data, vital for decision-making, monitoring, and continuity of care.
- This action fulfils Strategic Objective 1.5 of the BHSSP, which calls for a *“National Digital Health Governance Framework to foster interoperability and integration”*.

2. **Empowering Citizens Through a Patient Health Portal:**

- Currently, no national portal exists for citizens to access medical records, book appointments, or interact with the health system digitally.
- A secure patient health portal would empower Belizeans to manage their health, directly supporting the BHSSP principle of promoting citizen participation in health.
- Hosting this service within the broader government e-portal and National ID/Digital Wallet framework ensures consistency, avoids duplication, and expands citizen-centric services.
- Expanding Access Through Telemedicine
- Belize faces an uneven distribution of health professionals, leaving rural communities underserved.
- Telemedicine is identified in both the BHSSP and ongoing IDB-funded initiatives as a key innovation to address inequitable access.
- Expanding telehealth services will provide remote consultations and specialized care, bridge geographic gaps and strengthening management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- Clear performance indicators in the BHSSP include the *“percentage of tele-consultancies at primary and secondary levels”* and the *“number of telemedicine services implemented nationwide”*.

3. **Establishing a Regulatory Framework for Digital Health:**

- While CDEP is operational, there is no regulatory framework governing its use, integration, and security.
- A dedicated **Digital Health Regulatory Framework** is essential for data privacy, cybersecurity, compliance with international standards, and building public trust.
- This directly advances Strategic Objective 1.5 of the BHSSP, which requires a *“regulatory framework for digital health focusing on interoperability and telehealth”*.

4. **Enhancing Governance and Vendor Management:**

- The Ministry of Health & Wellness (MOHW) has created a **Digital Health Steering Committee** to oversee governance, standards, and cybersecurity.
- Strengthening governance through a **Digital Vendor Management System** (to regulate technology partners and procurement) will ensure sustainable, secure, and transparent implementation.

Program Impact and Alignment:

- **Improved Service Delivery:** Citizens will gain equitable access to healthcare, with rural populations benefiting from telemedicine and urban populations from digital self-services.
- **Evidence-Based Planning:** Integrated health data will support more accurate monitoring, resource allocation, and policy design.
- **System Resilience:** Regulatory and governance frameworks will secure the health system against cyber risks and ensure data integrity.
- **Alignment with the National Digital Agenda:** By consolidating health data, enabling patient-facing services, and promoting interoperability, this program directly contributes to the revised National Digital Agenda 2025–2030 and its focus on citizen-centric, secure digital transformation.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Expand Clinical Data Exchange Platform CDEP integration with Belize Health Information System BHIS, National Health Insurance System NHI, CRVS & private sector

- Launch a patient health portal for secure online access to medical records.
- MOHW permit system.
- Implement telemedicine services to improve rural Access.
- Enact a regulatory framework for CDEP to ensure security & compliance
- Establish a Digital Vendor Management System.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of Health & Wellness

PARTNERSHIP:

• **Government agencies:**

Ministry of E-Governance | Attorney General Ministry (Vital Statistic Unit) | Belize Health Information System (BHIS) | Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) | National Health Insurance (NHI) System |

• **International/Regional Organizations:**

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) | Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) | European Union (EU) | COMISCA

2. *Agriculture Sector Digital Modernization Program*

JUSTIFICATION:

The **Agriculture Sector Digital Modernization Program** is a strategic priority for Belize's national digital agenda, recognizing agriculture as both a cornerstone of the economy and a critical driver of sustainable, inclusive growth. The program leverages robust partnerships with the FAO, World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) while consolidating existing digital initiatives led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise (MoA). It builds on demonstrated successes, with a clear roadmap to scale digital solutions that strengthen productivity, resilience, and farmer empowerment.

1. **Building on BAIMS as the National Agriculture Data Backbone:**

- The **Belize Agriculture Information Management System (BAIMS)**, operational since 2018, already provides digitalized surveys for 15 priority crops and supports market information services.
- Ongoing upgrades, financed by the IDB and FAO, expand BAIMS with improved user access, e-IDs, early warning systems, and integration with Earth Observation data for crop monitoring and disaster response.
- The World Bank's CRESAP project further strengthens BAIMS through a dedicated GIS unit and advanced spatial analysis, with support from the European Space Agency.
- Strengthening BAIMS as a unified data platform will reduce fragmentation, improve efficiency, and enable real-time, evidence-based policy and planning in agriculture.

2. **Enhancing Farmer Engagement and Digital Access:**

- A Farmer Helpdesk and market price platforms are under development, enabling two-way communication for disaster reporting and real-time access to price, weather, and early warning information.
- The Agri Academy Platform, launched in 2025, modernizes agricultural extension services through interactive training modules and expert digital guidance, particularly targeting underserved communities.
- Mobile applications such as the Smart Grow App and BAPIS already facilitate transactions, cane payments, and access to credentials, underscoring farmer readiness for digital adoption.

3. **Driving Innovation Through AI, GIS, and Climate-Smart Tools:**

- Plans for AI-based pest identification will enable virtual extension services that improve crop protection, resilience, and yields.
- Expanded GIS and mapping capabilities support land-use planning, soil mapping, and climate adaptation, with clear benefits for both export and domestic crop planning.

- These innovations directly support national goals of boosting agricultural productivity while improving disaster preparedness and environmental sustainability.

4. **Advancing Financial Inclusion Through Digital Tools:**

- The E-Wallet Pilot Program demonstrated success in distributing aid to farmers, proving both the feasibility and the appetite for digital financial solutions in rural communities.
- Expanding this into a nationwide rollout will promote financial inclusion, streamline subsidy delivery, and strengthen resilience among farmers.

5. **Strengthening Capacity and International Collaboration:**

- Capacity building remains a priority, with a new digital training site under development by FAO and additional support from the FAO's 1000 Digital Villages initiative to extend training and rural services.
- These programs position Belize not only to modernize its agricultural sector but also to align with global digital agriculture best practices.

Program Impact and Alignment

- **Empowered Farmers and Rural Communities:** Access to real-time data, digital training, and financial tools strengthens livelihoods and resilience.
- **Data-Driven Agriculture:** Integrated systems like BAIMS and GIS provide the backbone for evidence-based decision-making and climate-smart planning.
- **Alignment with the National Digital Agenda:** By modernizing agriculture and ensuring interoperability across systems, this program reinforces agriculture as a pillar sector in Belize's digital transformation, fully aligned with the 2025–2030 national agenda.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Launch Farmer Helpdesk & market price platforms for real-time information access
- Deploy AI-based pest identification to improve crop protection
- Enhance GIS & mapping systems for better land-use planning and resource management
- Expand E-Wallet Pilot Program into full roll-out given success.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise

PARTNERSHIP:

- **Government agencies:**

Ministry of E-Governance | Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) |

- **International/Regional Organizations:**

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) | World Bank (CRESAP project) | IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) - funded RRB project | European Space Agency.

- **Others:**

Farmers Associations

3. ***Tourism Sector Digital Enhancement Program***

JUSTIFICATION:

The **Tourism Sector Digital Enhancement Program** represents a strategic opportunity to advance Belize's national digital agenda by modernizing one of its most vital industries. Tourism is a cornerstone

of the economy, yet it faces critical challenges in data collection, stakeholder service delivery, and inclusion of smaller vendors in the digital ecosystem. The program builds on significant progress by the **Belize Tourism Board (BTB)** and aligns with the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations' stated priorities for value chain strengthening, integration, and sustainable industry growth.

1. Strengthening Data Collection with a Marketing Intelligence System (MIS) and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA):

- The tourism sector struggles with fragmented and outdated data collection. Digital surveys at airports were paused for updates; the **Visitor Expenditure Modular Survey (VIMS)** reverted from digital to manual due to low participation; and disparate sources like airline tracking data remain uncoordinated. This weakens planning, marketing, and the ability to link tourism with other sectors like agriculture.
- Establishing a **Marketing Intelligence System (MIS)** would consolidate fragmented data, while a **Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)** would provide a robust framework for measuring the sector's economic contribution.
- Improved data systems would directly address the documented weaknesses and fulfil the recognized need to make data gathering more **digital, reliable, and accessible**. This would support evidence-based decision-making, strengthen competitiveness, and align with national priorities for data-driven governance.

2. Supporting BTB Digital Licensing and Grants to Streamline Stakeholder Services:

- The BTB has successfully transitioned **licensing for tour operators and hotels** to an entirely paperless digital platform. Similarly, its **MSME grant programs** are managed through an online platform, which has even been adopted by other IDB-supported programs. Hotel tax collection has also been digitalized, replacing manual processes.
- Build on this strong foundation by **enhancing BTB's digital portals** to expand user adoption, improve user experience, and integrate additional services for tourism stakeholders.
- These platforms demonstrate proven digital leadership in the sector. Strengthening and expanding them will increase efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, while reinforcing Belize's image as a modern, digitally enabled tourism destination.

3. Expanding Digital Payment and Inclusion for Tourism Vendors:

- The sector is heavily private-sector-driven, involving travel agents, tour operators, and diverse value chain actors (transportation, food and beverage, eco parks). However, many smaller vendors remain excluded from formal digital payment systems.
- Develop and promote **digital payment solutions** for tourism vendors, facilitating secure transactions, vendor inclusion, and streamlined operations across the tourism value chain. This could be integrated with government-wide e-signature adoption and financial inclusion initiatives.
- Although no dedicated platform exists today, introducing digital payments will enhance vendor participation, modernize the sector's financial ecosystem, and support the Ministry's goal of **strengthening tourism value chains**. It will also align with broader national efforts to expand financial inclusion and e-transactions.

Program Impact and Alignment:

- **Data-Driven Tourism:** A robust MIS and TSA will provide policymakers and industry leaders with reliable, accessible, and actionable information to drive marketing, investment, and diversification.
- **Streamlined Services:** Expanded BTB digital licensing, grants, and tax systems will reduce bureaucracy, empower stakeholders, and reinforce trust in government services.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Digital payments will allow small vendors to better integrate into the tourism economy, ensuring that benefits are more equitably distributed across the value chain.
- **Alignment with National Digital Agenda 2025–2030:** By addressing data gaps, strengthening interoperability, and enabling inclusion, the program directly supports the national priority of embedding digital transformation across key economic sectors, while building on progress made during the **2022–2025 agenda**.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Strengthen digital data collection with a robust Marketing Intelligence System (MIS) and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)
- Support BTB digital licensing and grants to streamline services for tourism stakeholders.
- Digital Payment & Inclusion for tourism vendors.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Sports & Diaspora Relations / BTB

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of E-Governance | SIB | Ministry of Natural Resources | Banks | E-wallet providers

4. Education Sector Digital Acceleration Program

JUSTIFICATION:

The **Education Sector Digital Acceleration Program** represents a decisive step forward for Belize's future, aiming to ensure that every learner, teacher, and institution is equipped to thrive in an increasingly digital world. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology (MoEST) has already laid strong foundations, but the next phase requires scaling, integration, and innovation to meet the ambitions of the **2025–2030 National Digital Agenda**.

Belize has already demonstrated its capacity to innovate in education. The ITSAT STEAM Academy, launched in 2023 and now in its second academic year, has proven the value of specialized training in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Plans are underway to replicate this model in six additional high schools through the *Skills for the Future Program*, underscoring its relevance and success. At the same time, digital literacy is being cultivated from the earliest years, with Code.org partnerships already reaching 62 primary schools, providing computer science curricula and robotics kits. Community-based initiatives such as the "Lead Like a Girl" campaign and the establishment of seven U-Space Digital Hubs extend opportunities to young women and underserved groups, helping to reduce gender gaps in technology. Together, these initiatives form a strong base, but their expansion is essential if Belize is to close its national digital skills gap and prepare a future-ready workforce.

Access to devices is equally critical. The Ministry's strategic move to adopt Chromebooks as the standard device has been reinforced by donations, including 5,000 units from Taiwan and contributions from the diaspora. Guided by data from the Belize Education Management and Information System (BEMIS), distribution has been targeted to schools participating in digital learning initiatives, with the aim of covering 15 percent of the student population. Yet, the digital divide remains a pressing challenge. Accelerating device distribution is fundamental to ensuring equity, so that no student is left behind in accessing digital curricula, STEAM learning, or online resources.

Internally, the Ministry has already made strides in improving efficiency through platforms such as BEMIS, which collects and analyses data on school enrolment and academic performance. These insights have informed strategic decisions such as targeted device allocation. Still, the system remains limited: parents and students cannot yet access their own data, and integration with broader national systems has not been achieved. Expanding BEMIS into a more open, interoperable, and analytics-driven platform will not only enhance transparency and communication but also allow for better planning and more efficient use of resources.

The Ministry is also experimenting with the potential of artificial intelligence in education. Early steps include a pilot with Avatar Buddy, a U.S.-based provider, and the launch of the "AI-powered 501 Historian" feature on the Access 501 portal. These pilots show how AI can enrich learning experiences and support teachers with new tools. But to truly harness AI's potential, Belize needs a coherent scaling strategy—one that integrates AI into classrooms and curricula, personalizes learning pathways, and positions students to compete in an AI-driven economy.

Taken together, these initiatives form a coherent vision: an education system that is inclusive, innovative, and efficient. Scaling STEAM programs ensures a pipeline of digital talent. Expanding device access

closes the digital divide. Upgrading internal systems strengthens governance and decision-making. And accelerating AI pilots pushes Belize to the forefront of educational innovation.

Education is not only a sectoral priority; it is the foundation of the entire digital transformation. A digitally skilled population is essential to advancing national initiatives in health, agriculture, tourism, and governance. By accelerating digital transformation in education, Belize secures the human capital necessary to sustain and amplify progress across all sectors of its national digital agenda.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Scale STEAM and digital skills programs for all education levels
- Accelerate student device distribution to bridge the digital divide. Upgrade internal operations through automation and data analytics for route optimization and efficiency.
- Expand AI education pilots to innovate teaching and learning approaches.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of E-Governance | Academic Institutions

5. Expand Digital Skill & Inclusion Program:

Justification: Expanding digital skills and inclusion in Belize is essential to ensure equitable participation in and benefits from the growing digital economy. Despite significant progress, with 72.4% internet penetration and 82.2% mobile cellular connections as of early 2025, approximately 27.6% of the population remains offline, highlighting persistent digital divides especially affecting rural, elderly, and marginalized groups. Closing this gap requires targeted digital literacy and advanced skills training across all societal segments, including public servants, MSMEs, farmers, youth, elderly, and excluded populations.

The Government of Belize's Digital Innovation to Boost Economic Development Program, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with co-funding from the European Union, incorporates Digital Bootcamps that cover critical topics such as digital government, digital economy, and cybersecurity. These initiatives actively enhance the competencies of professionals and entrepreneurs, fostering economic resilience and innovation.

Community-based platforms such as Digital Connect Centres (DCCs) play a pivotal role by providing accessible digital training, internet access, and support services in underserved areas, promoting digital inclusion nationwide. Additionally, the planned launch of the E-Governance Academy will institutionalize capacity-building for public officials essential for efficient digital service delivery.

This multi-institutional effort, led by the Ministry of E-Governance in partnership with the Central Executing Unit Office, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise, aligns with Belize's National Digital Agenda 2022-2025 strategy and with this new iteration. It embodies the government's commitment to building a digitally competent, inclusive society capable of leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.

Key Actions:

- Ensure all segments of society can participate in and benefit from the digital economy.
- Provide digital literacy & advanced digital skills training.
- Leverage on Digital Bootcamp initiatives for professionals under covering topics like digital government, digital economy and cybersecurity under the **Digital Innovation to Boost Economic**

Development in Belize of IDB Funded Program. Targeting public servants, MSMEs, farmers, youth, elderly, and excluded groups.

- Use community hubs (e.g., Digital Connect Centres DCCs, U-Spaces) for digital access and training.
- Launch E-Governance Academy.

Leading Institution: Ministry of E-Governance

Partnership: Central Executing Unit Office | Ministry of Education Culture, Science & Technology | Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise |

6. *Establish an Artificial Intelligence Strategy*

JUSTIFICATION:

The establishment of a **National Artificial Intelligence Strategy** marks a strategic opportunity for Belize to harness AI as a driver of public sector efficiency, innovation, and inclusive economic growth, while ensuring that adoption is guided by ethical safeguards and secure governance frameworks.

Although Belize does not yet have a standalone AI strategy, important foundations have already been laid. AI policy considerations are embedded within the **National Digital Agenda 2022–2025**, and the Government has signalled clear commitment through its endorsement of **the Santiago Declaration on AI Ethics** and participation in international cooperation initiatives. Furthermore, work is underway on the country's first Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy, which explicitly recognizes AI as a cross-cutting theme for sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and public service delivery. These developments demonstrate momentum but also highlight the urgency of establishing a coherent national strategy to guide AI's responsible integration.

Institutional and sectoral actions underscore the importance of this project. The Ministry of Education and Science has already identified AI as a transformative tool for STEAM education, data-driven decision-making, healthcare delivery, and agricultural innovation, actively showcasing these opportunities at regional forums such as the OAS. Similarly, Belize's Global Digital Services Investment Policy and Strategy highlights AI's role in the BPO sector and Orange Economy, with applications ranging from software development to digital arts. However, without a national strategy, AI adoption risks remaining fragmented, limiting its potential impact and raising challenges in security, ethics, and interoperability.

International benchmarks confirm both Belize's readiness and the gaps that must be addressed. The Oxford Insights Government AI Readiness Index places Belize on a trajectory of progress, recognizing advances in digital governance, institutional capacity, and data infrastructure. At the same time, the country lacks dedicated laws, standards, and guidelines to regulate AI adoption. Addressing this policy gap is crucial to ensure trust, accountability, and equitable access as AI systems become embedded in governance and society.

The proposed project will therefore prioritize:

- The creation of a national AI Taskforce to coordinate cross-sectoral initiatives, align policies, and guide implementation.
- The establishment of ethical and secure AI adoption frameworks, building on Belize's commitment to international principles while tailoring standards to national realities.
- The design of a comprehensive AI strategy, integrating sectoral priorities into a single national vision that balances innovation with security, transparency, and citizen trust.

By taking this step, Belize positions itself to not only adopt AI responsibly but also to shape its use as a catalyst for better governance, improved public service delivery, and economic transformation. The AI Strategy will serve as a unifying framework to consolidate ongoing initiatives, align with global best practices, and ensure that Belize's national digital agenda for 2025–2030 includes a forward-looking plan for one of the most transformative technologies of our time.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Harness AI to improve public service delivery, governance, and sectoral innovation while maintaining ethical safeguards.
- Creation of an AI Taskforce
- Establish ethical & secure AI adoption frameworks.

LEADING INSTITUTION: Ministry of E-Governance

PARTNERSHIP: Whole of Government

7. Customs Integrated Digital Infrastructure & Trade Interoperability Program

JUSTIFICATION:

The modernization of Belize's Customs Department is both urgent and strategically essential for improving revenue collection, trade facilitation, and border security. The **Customs Integrated Digital Infrastructure & Trade Interoperability Program** directly responds to long-standing operational bottlenecks, outdated technology, and the pressing need for a future-ready customs environment that supports efficient governance and economic growth.

At the heart of this transformation is the **upgrade of the ASYCUDA platform**, the backbone of customs operations since 2008. The obsolete system creates incompatibilities with modern security protocols and limiting integration with key partners such as the Central Bank. Its outdated warehouse module also exposes risks in revenue collection, while its restriction to PDFs and image uploads prevents the exchange of structured data formats like XML or JSON. Given that ASYCUDA processes over **\$670 million annually in government revenue**, its upgrade is not just a technical improvement but a critical safeguard for fiscal stability and national competitiveness.

Equally important is the introduction of a **Border Control Passenger Processing System (BoCoPs)**. While Belize already uses an electronic passenger declaration at the international airport, this tool is little more than a digital form and lacks the intelligence to assess passenger risk. A modern BoCoPs system would allow customs to conduct **risk profiling before arrival**, enabling officers to focus on high-risk travellers while expediting clearance for low-risk passengers. This balance between security and efficiency is vital to managing growing passenger volumes and alleviating bottlenecks at airports and border points.

To strengthen enforcement, the program also prioritizes a **centralized Case Management System** for smuggling-related investigations. Smuggling has been identified as a significant and rising challenge, yet current case management is fragmented and inefficient. A unified digital system will allow officers across the country to input, share, and track case data in real time, supporting enforcement units and legal teams with reliable intelligence. This will directly enhance resource allocation, strategy, and the overall effectiveness of anti-smuggling efforts.

Another critical component is the deployment of **data visualization and revenue forecasting dashboards**. Although ASYCUDA generates a large volume of data, its reporting functions lack the sophistication needed for deeper analysis. By equipping the Customs Department with modern dashboards, the program will unlock the potential of business intelligence and data science, enabling more accurate revenue projections and evidence-based decision-making. This not only strengthens fiscal management but also provides staff with the digital tools and training required to keep pace with evolving analytical demands.

Finally, the program addresses the need for a modern, accessible digital presence through a **new website and digitized tariff services**. The current site is outdated and fails to meet the expectations of today's stakeholders. A dynamic, interactive platform is already being developed to expand online services, improve transparency, and make critical information more accessible. Importantly, the inclusion of tariff digitization tools will allow traders and the public to look up duties and perform calculations online—streamlining processes that currently consume time and resources.

Taken together, these initiatives form a comprehensive modernization agenda that positions the Customs Department as a leader in digital governance. By upgrading core infrastructure, strengthening security and enforcement, and enhancing transparency and user services, the **Customs Integrated Digital Infrastructure & Trade Interoperability Program** will deliver measurable improvements in efficiency, revenue protection, and public trust, while laying the foundation for deeper integration into Belize's wider digital agenda.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Upgrade of ASYCUDA Platform
- Border Control Passenger Processing System (BoCoPs) for risk profiling
- Case Management System to centralize anti-smuggling efforts
- Visualization dashboards for revenue forecasting
- New website and digitized tariff services

LEADING INSTITUTION: Belize Customs & Excise Department

PARTNERSHIP: Ministry of Finance, Directorate General for Foreign Trade DGFT, CITO, Immigration, BAHA, Bureau of Standards, Police & Coast Guard, Private sector stakeholders

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING E-GOVERNANCE

These recommendations focus on the institutional, legal, and strategic frameworks needed for transparent, effective, and accountable digital transformation.

• **Modernize Comprehensive Legal and Regulatory Frameworks**

- Update core laws, including Data Protection and Electronic Evidence, and enact broader privacy and security frameworks.
- Adopt and operationalize the revised National Cybersecurity Strategy. The previous strategy (2020–2023) must be updated to reflect the evolving threat landscape and its new governance under the Ministry of E-Governance.
- Advance legal reforms identified in the Belize Investment and Business Climate Action Plan (BIBCAP), including e-commerce legislation and support for ICT businesses.
- Implement the National Identification Strategy by embedding privacy-and-security-by-design principles and establishing legal and institutional frameworks for data governance.

• **Reinforce National Technology Governance and Oversight**

- Strengthen the Digital and IT Infrastructure Project Vetting Committee to ensure all projects align with national priorities, applying clear standards and evaluation criteria, with regular audits for accountability.
- Consolidate IT departments where feasible to increase efficiency and reduce duplication, consistent with recommendations from the IDB framework.
- Establish a reference model for Digital Maturity in the government entities and a national level

• **Enhance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Coordination**

- Strengthen multi-sector coordination across government, private sector, academia, and civil society, supported by robust digital and data governance mechanisms for secure information sharing and policy design.
- Establish collaborative mechanisms for monitoring the Digital Agenda, including an “allied club” of Ministers and a leading team of Chief Executive Officers. Revise the Digital Agenda objectives and project bank every two years.
- Define baselines and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely) goals for all projects to enable effective monitoring and progress tracking.

• **Ensure Sustainable Financing**

- Develop blended financing models (public, aid, and private) and coordinate resources from multilateral institutions and development agencies to ensure long-term sustainability and reduce reliance on external donor support.
- Develop a pricing strategy or business model for services rendered by the eGovernance ministry (Data Center, Connectivity, Cybersecurity, Digital Signatures for government officials, etc).

• **Enhance International and Regional Cooperation on Digital Governance**

- Proactively engage with international partners to secure technical assistance, funding, and capacity-building support for advanced AI and digital governance initiatives.
- Leverage global and regional frameworks systematically, such as the IDB's, OECD recommendations, SICA's Regional Digital Agenda, and eLAC2026, all of which emphasize strong governance.

• **Establish Robust AI and Data Governance Frameworks**

- Develop a unified national AI policy and comprehensive legal and regulatory frameworks for AI and data governance to ensure transparency, accountability, and trust. This reflects Belize's participation in the Organization of American States' Inter-American Framework on Data Governance and Artificial Intelligence (MIGDIA) and aligns with the IDB's AI Framework pillar on "Governance."
- Prioritize ethical considerations, embedding safeguards for human rights, equity, privacy, and transparency, while enabling innovation.
- Create regulatory sandboxes to encourage responsible AI experimentation while ensuring safety and accountability.



10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

These recommendations focus on transforming how government operates and delivers public services using digital technologies.

• ***Modernize Government Processes and Services with AI Integration***

- Streamline and digitalize services to improve efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation, expanding one-stop-shop portals for both citizens and businesses. This will reduce bureaucracy and ensure that public services meet user needs.
- Look for simplification of government services, and legislation, taking advantage of interoperability services
- Explore and pilot the use of AI in priority public services where measurable development impact can be achieved, such as fraud detection (as already envisioned by the Belize Tax Service), agriculture, education, and policy research.

• ***Deploy a Secure National Digital ID System***

- Implement a secure National Digital ID—biometric and mobile-enabled—with integrated e-signature capabilities. This system is recognized as the single most critical enabler for Belize's digital transformation, providing a reliable framework for identification and supporting seamless online service delivery.
- Prioritize the digitalization of the civil registry (births, marriages, and deaths) as a fundamental step to build trust in the National ID and ensure its effective use across government services.

• ***Enhance Digital Infrastructure and Interoperability as AI Enablers***

- Develop a national interoperability framework and standardized data-sharing mechanisms to eliminate pervasive data silos.
- Establish new data centres and modernize existing ones, integrating them with the National ID system and national data exchange platforms.
- Build citizen-facing and cross-government platforms on modern cloud infrastructure to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- These measures directly support the IDB's "Data and Infrastructure" pillar for AI adoption, which emphasizes the creation of robust infrastructure and resilient data ecosystems.

• Boost Operational Efficiency and Automation

- Reduce reliance on paperwork by expanding the use of cloud solutions, AI, and advanced analytics. The OECD underscores that digital tools, data, and AI are key to enhancing efficiency and responsiveness in government operations.
- Publish and utilize open data to improve transparency and stimulate innovation, addressing Belize's current underperformance in open data impact.
- Strengthen institutional capacity and governance structures through the strategic application of digital tools.

• Strengthen Data Ecosystems for Evidence-Based Policymaking

- Accelerate the digitization of government processes and establish clear institutional arrangements for managing and governing data. This effort builds on Belize's first National Data Strategy and the Second National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).
- Position data as a strategic national asset, ensuring that it informs policy decisions and supports more efficient, evidence-based governance.

• Involve the Private Sector in Digital Infrastructure Deployment

- Create opportunities for private firms to actively participate in the implementation of the Digital Agenda, including through public-private partnerships aimed at deploying digital infrastructure in underserved and rural areas.
- Promote technology procurement models that treat digital infrastructure as an investment capable of attracting private sector expertise and resources.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

These recommendations focus on fostering a culture of innovation, agility, and organizational readiness within the public sector, while also building digital skills and capabilities across society.

• ***Cultivate a Culture of Innovation and Readiness***

- Promote an agile, innovation-driven public sector mindset, breaking down silos and encouraging collaboration across ministries. This reflects the guiding principle of “Innovation.”
- Implement ministry-level internal digital plans to systematically replace manual processes, addressing the current challenge of many ministries still relying on outdated workflows.
- Launch Digital Innovation Labs and GovTech accelerators with active multi-sector participation to encourage experimentation and agile delivery of emerging technologies.

• ***Bridge the AI and Digital Skills Gap and Foster Human Capital Development***

- Expand accessible, high-quality training programs for public servants, MSMEs, farmers, youth, and the elderly, addressing Belize’s digital skills gap, particularly in advanced areas such as AI, cybersecurity, and data analytics.
- Build AI-specific skills through research, education, and training, updating curricula and equipping teachers for the digital era. This aligns with Horizon 2030’s focus on human resource development and STEAM disciplines.
- Integrate a gender perspective to ensure inclusivity and equitable benefits, in line with CARICOM’s regional focus on inclusive AI.

• **Strengthen Government IT Capacity**

- Recruit, retain, and upskill specialized talent in areas such as AI and data, while establishing new leadership roles including Chief Data Officer. This responds to the current under-resourced e-Governance unit and the shortage of technical expertise across ministries.
- Establish robust IT units within ministries, with strengthened project management and strategic planning capabilities.

• **Involve the Private Sector and Social Agents in Innovation and Skills Development**

- Create opportunities for private firms and social actors to contribute to the Digital Agenda, particularly in the design and delivery of training programs aimed at closing the national digital skills gap.
- Leverage public-private-academia partnerships to foster innovation, support startup ecosystems, and create enabling environments for AI adoption. This approach is central to economic recovery and to strengthening MSME participation in the digital economy.



BELIZE'S NATIONAL DIGITAL AGENDA

2026-2030



**MINISTRY OF
E-GOVERNANCE**



**PRESENTED BY THE
MINISTRY OF E-GOVERNANCE**

**2ND FLOOR ARNOLD ENTERPRISES/THE ARNOLD GROUP LTD BUILDING
#54 HUMMINGBIRD HIGHWAY,
CITY OF BELMOPAN**