IMPROVING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES THROUGH INNOVATION AND LOCAL NETWORKS

2019 - 2021

THE TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS

OAS | More rights for more people

First edition 2021

Contents and editing: **Rodrigo Iriani, Jorge Umaña, Andrea López and Angie Arranz.**
Creativity and Design: **Marco Ortega Vega**
Special thanks to: **All donors and partners involved in the projects.**

Release date, **October 2021**

CONTENTS

PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Incubated project "Cultivándome"

"Caminos Seguros", project that received seed funding

¡Caminos seguros para todos!
Se espera la muerte de más de 4.000 animales silvestres al año por atropello en Ruta 2_ Colibrí *Eugenes spectabilis*

Monitoreo de la Ruta 2:
Sección El Empalme-Villa Mills

With the objective of promoting the creation of collaborative networks between actors in society and local governments, The Trust for the Americas, in collaboration with the Collaborative Public Innovation Laboratory (Innovaap by its acronym in Spanish) and the University Agency for Entrepreneurship Management (AUGE) of the University of Costa Rica (UCR), OSCity and the Organization of American States (OAS), implemented the project "Improving Municipal Government Services Through Innovation and Local Networks".

Specific objectives of the project:

1. Strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations and municipal officials to operate under the principles of Open Government.

2. Activate collaboration between local governments and civil society actors through social innovation laboratories.

3. Increase transparency and efficiency through civic technologies to improve municipal services.

The project developed three main training and capacity-building components for local governments and entrepreneurs. The first component, "Gente Emprende", promoted the creation of five self-sustaining social projects devised by citizens to offer a solution to public problems in five cantons of Costa Rica. The second component, "Blockchain Pilots for municipal permits", was developed in coordination with the municipalities of Quepos and Grecia. These pilots use blockchain technology to issue commercial patents and liquor licenses. Finally, the third component "Open Government Municipal Action Plans", trained and provided technical support to thirty-five (35) local public officials from Grecia, Cañas, Orotina, Turrialba, Curridabat, and Sarchí municipalities aiming to strengthen their capacities to consolidate Open Municipalities through the study and practical exercise of the principles, concepts, and regulations applicable at the local level.

Likewise, during the pandemic, we conducted two additional initiatives aimed at promoting advocacy and actions in the field of Open Government to expand the scope and impact of the project. These initiatives open to the general public were the "Open Virtuality Month", which consisted of a series of four webinars on open data, simplification of public procedures, and empowerment of local governments

attended by 115 people at the national and regional level. In addition, in November 2020, the "GovTech Forum" gathered actors from the public sector, business sector, academia, and multilateral organizations to strengthen the technology and Open Government ecosystem in Latin America.

Timeline of the project

1. Gente Emprende:
December 2019 - June 2021

2. Blockchain Pilots for Municipal Permits:
January 2020 – June 2021

3. Open Virtuality Month:
April 2020

4. GovTech Forum:
November 2020

5. Open Government Municipal Action Plans:
January 2021 - June 2021

Impact of the project

249 public servants trained.
5 participating municipalities in Costa Rica.
489 persons from the civil society trained.
17 social projects or public solutions incubated.
7 social projects or public solutions received funding.
$35,000 awarded in seed funding for public problem-solving proposals.

Access the project's interactive data visualizations:
- Gente Emprende: **here**
- Open Virtuality Month: **here**
- GovTech Forum: **here**
- Open Government Municipal Action Plans: **here**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Representatives of Cañas Municipality

The Trust for the Americas, in partnership with local partners and five local governments (Grecia, Cañas, Turrialba, Quepos, and Orotina), implemented the project to strengthen local networking and collaboration between the public and private sector, academia, and civil society. Providing innovation tools to different social actors and training local government officials on citizen participation were needs that this project sought to address.

This project focused on creating a collaborative ecosystem that leads to better quality government services with greater coverage. It also contributed to improving democratic processes and overcoming distrust in public service to ensure that social dialogues are more accessible and effective in establishing a new mentality regarding the exercise and role of public officials, civil society leaders, and youth. As a result of this project, civil society representatives, the media, the private sector, and local governments participated in different collaborative sessions (innovation labs). They also designed and implemented innovative projects to shape

better public services. The long-term impact of this project will be the effective collaboration of subnational governments with a wide range of stakeholders at all levels of society (including vulnerable communities) and the improvement in the quality and coverage of services provided by the municipal governments.

This project harness Open Government efforts to maintain its results by building capacities and fostering ownership on the principles of transparency, participation, collaboration, and accountability. In addition, it aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

Project adaptation to the Covid-19 context

The COVID-19 pandemic generated changes in social dynamics such as distancing, mandatory quarantine, temporary or partial closure of institutions and organizations, among others. As a result, the implementation from April 2020 to July 2021 had to adapt to new interaction dynamics with participants and municipalities.

Some of the strategies implemented were:

1. Collaborative restructuring (with local partners and municipalities) of the methodology of the project´s components to identify foreseeable needs and challenges.

2. Development of a contingency plan that considered the contextual needs of the participants. Three characteristics were identified as fundamental: the flexibility of training, accessibility to the internet and digital technologies (digital devices), and personalized support in learning and innovation processes.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

GENTE EMPRENDE COMPONENT (DECEMBER 2019 – JUNE 2021)

The "Gente Emprende" component was implemented in collaboration with the Collaborative Laboratory of Public Innovation (Innovaap) and the University Agency for Entrepreneurship Management (AUGE), both from the University of Costa Rica (UCR).

The main objective of this initiative was to promote self-sustaining entrepreneurship projects that create solutions to public problems in five cantons in the country: Cañas, Grecia, Orotina, Quepos, and Turrialba.

The projects aligned with six United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION

Component activities:

1. Ideation and implementation of workshops

Participants accessed workshops developed based on the methodology of our partner AUGE. Likewise, Innovaap provided participants with technical support to develop solution proposals to address public problems in the different cantons. The Trust for the Americas provided expert criteria, a close follow-up to the projects, and seed funding for the winning initiatives.

2. Selection of projects that received seed funding.

The proposals generated in the different cantons participated in a competition to obtain seed funding to foster the development of project prototypes. Thirty-six (36) proposals representing five cantons were received by the evaluation panel. After an expert review, twenty-four (24) solution proposals were selected to continue to the second phase of development and evaluation.

First evaluation phase:
Cañas: **4**
Grecia: **6**
Orotina: **2**
Quepos: **7**
Turrialba: **5**
Total: 24

3. Implementation of the virtual methodology and assessment of technological capabilities.

Due to the health restrictions generated from the declaration of the State of National Emergency in Costa Rica, an assessment to know if participants had access to electronic devices and the internet was developed. As well, digital communication channels and personalized support were included as fundamental elements to support participants.

The projects that decided to continue with the *"Gente Emprende"* process after the assessment were the following:
Cañas: **4**
Grecia: **5**
Orotina: **1**
Quepos: **6**
Turrialba: **5**
Total: 21

4. Virtual workshops.

To give continuity to the participant's learning experience and support them in developing their solution proposals the component taught synchronous virtual workshops structured in two phases and facilitated by experts in different subjects. The training process was also accompanied by a virtual platform where tools and information related to the learning program were available. Toolkits and learning materials were sent to the participants to support them if they did not count with a stable internet connection.

Discovery phase: focused on the problem, need, or opportunity that it sought to solve or create, and in the generation of tools that facilitate the understanding of the identified problem.

Creative phase: focused on creating the proposed solution by identifying the best accessible way to solve the problem. The participants had four weeks to develop the tools explained in this phase; the proposal of the benefits of the proposed solution,

12 projects successfully concluded both phases of virtual workshops and proposal development:
Cañas: **3**
Grecia: **2**
Quepos: **4**
Turrialba: **3**
Total: 12

In the second evaluation phase, a contest with an external panel of expert juries was held. Juries had extensive experience in entrepreneurship, social innovation, project management, among other topics.

As a result, five (5) projects from Grecia, Turrialba, and Cañas municipalities were awarded funding (5,000 USD each) to foster the implementation and growth of their solution proposals. The projects received support to establish their legal representation as social organizations in Costa Rica, a prerequisite to receiving seed funding.

The winning projects were:
- **Cañas:** *Gallinas ponedoras.*
- **Grecia:** *Cultivándome.*
- **Turrialba:** *Bawo Chocolates, Caminos Seguros Panthera y Ayúdame a estudiar.*

5. Support to incubated projects.

Additional virtual workshops were planned and developed to offer a comprehensive learning experience to entrepreneurs. Experts in different subjects taught different topics and each participant received a summary document about each workshop.

Complementary virtual workshops provided:

Tools to start an entrepreneurship project in a virtual format
Wednesday, October 28, 2020
Katherine Fernández (Manatí-Innovaap)

_____

How to develop a more agile project?
Wednesday, November 04, 2020
Allison Quesada (Auge and Innovaap)

_____

Brand building
Wednesday, 13 January, 2021
Sebastián Vásquez (Auge)

Likewise, 2 workshops were facilitated oriented to technology-based projects.

Workshops for technology-based projects:

Prototyping, prioritizing the contents of the MVP and Design Studio

Monday, November 16, 2020 **Ayúdame a Estudiar**

_____

Friday, November 20, 2020 **Caminos Seguros**

In the same way, each project received weekly support and follow-up from coaches through virtual meetings or WhatsApp messages.

6. Follow-up methodology and mid-term on-site visits

A follow-up strategy to develop entrepreneurial skills and capacities among participants was carried out before the disbursement of the seed funding and the formalization of contracts with winning each team. Follow-up allowed constant communication and closeness with the participants.

Once the winning teams reported that the funds had been given to them, they were provided with tools to detail expenses, invoices, and level of progress of their projects.

These tools are:
- Guide to the use of funds
- Biweekly follow-up form
- Invoice report
- Evidence of progress
- Template for recording expenses and modifications

Likewise, during March 2021, mid-term on-site visits to each financed project were held. Visits allowed us to identify the level of progress achieved in the implementation of the winning projects.

Date of on-site visit:	Project:
March 15	Gallinas Ponedoras
March 16	Cultivándome
March 22	Bawo Chocolates
	Panthera Caminos Seguros
	Ayúdame a Estudiar

7. Description of incubated projects

1. Gallinas Ponedoras

Canton: Cañas, Guanacaste.

Organization: Asociación de Mujeres Microempresariales del Asentamiento Nueva Guatemala (Association of Women Microentrepreneurs of the Nueva Guatemala Settlement).

Members of the "Gallinas Ponedoras" project

"Gallinas Ponedoras" (Laying Hens) is a women's network that builds and operates hens farms for the sale of eggs. Through this network, women head of households are provided with a job opportunity to be economically independent. This network empowers women and offers them an alternative to contribute financially to their families and supports them to continue taking care of their homes and families.

Thanks to the workshops received, the business idea developed into a structured and sustainable project. The seed funding provided was used to purchase the materials to build the five home farms, as well as the hens, food, and equipment. Each farm houses a maximum of 150 laying hens. Additionally, the labels for the egg trays were designed and printed.

To date, five women are employed by this initiative. They have formed new collaboration networks with public and private institutions, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Cañas Municipality, the World Vision organization, and the National Learning Institute (INA by its acronym in Spanish). Likewise, the members of the project had access to virtual training and additional mentoring on Agricultural Project Management provided by the INA.

Get to know the project "Gallinas Ponedoras": **DIA | Gente Emprende: Gallinas Ponedoras La Victoria (Leticia Valverde)**

2. Cultivándome (EcoGrecia Community Garden).

Canton: Grecia, Alajuela.

Organization: Asociación Ambiental EcoGrecia (EcoGrecia Environmental Association).

"Cultivándome" (Cultivating me) it is a collaborative urban garden where people can rent a piece of land to grow food organically. Additionally, they offer outdoor workshops and organic products for sale.

Through the "Gente Emprende" component, this project obtained the necessary local permits to rent and install the land. Material donations were received for the construction of 20 wooden boxes for growing food. Additionally, the community garden and a fence were designed and built. Likewise, the team purchased the material and tools needed for the continuous installation and sowing work. The seeds were prepared for germination, a logo for the project was designed, and a communication campaign was created. In addition, the assembly of the greenhouse began with the support of volunteers from the community.

Get to know the project "Cultivating me": **DIA | Gente Emprende: Cultivándome (Jeffry Porras)**

3. Bawo Chocolates.

Canton: Turrialba, Cartago.
Organization: Sagamo de Turrialba Sociedad Anónima (Sagamo from Turrialba S.A.).

"Bawo Chocolates" is a project dedicated to the elaboration and commercialization of healthy chocolates and cocoa products made out of raw materials from Turrialba with cultural identity and high quality. It seeks to generate a productive chain in the community under the premise of fair trade for cocoa producers in the Turrialba area and the elaboration of products that provide great nutritional value.

In the first stage of the project, a production room with a temperature control system was installed. Subsequently, the entrepreneurs used part of the financing to purchase tools and electrical appliances required to obtain better quality products. Likewise, "Bawo Chocolates" expanded its product family by introducing to the market a chocolate spread in three different flavors. The project has a renewed brand image and environmentally friendly packaging.

Currently, the products are sold in local hotels, nutrition clinics, and social media. The project is also a member of the "White and Black" community, an alliance of local businesses in Turrialba.

Get to know the project "Bawo Chocolates": **DIA | Gente Emprende: BÁWÖ Chocolates (Samuel Garro Mora)**

4. Ayúdame a Estudiar.

Canton: Turrialba, Cartago.
Organization: Ayúdame a estudiar CR Sociedad Anónima (Help Me Study CR S.A.).
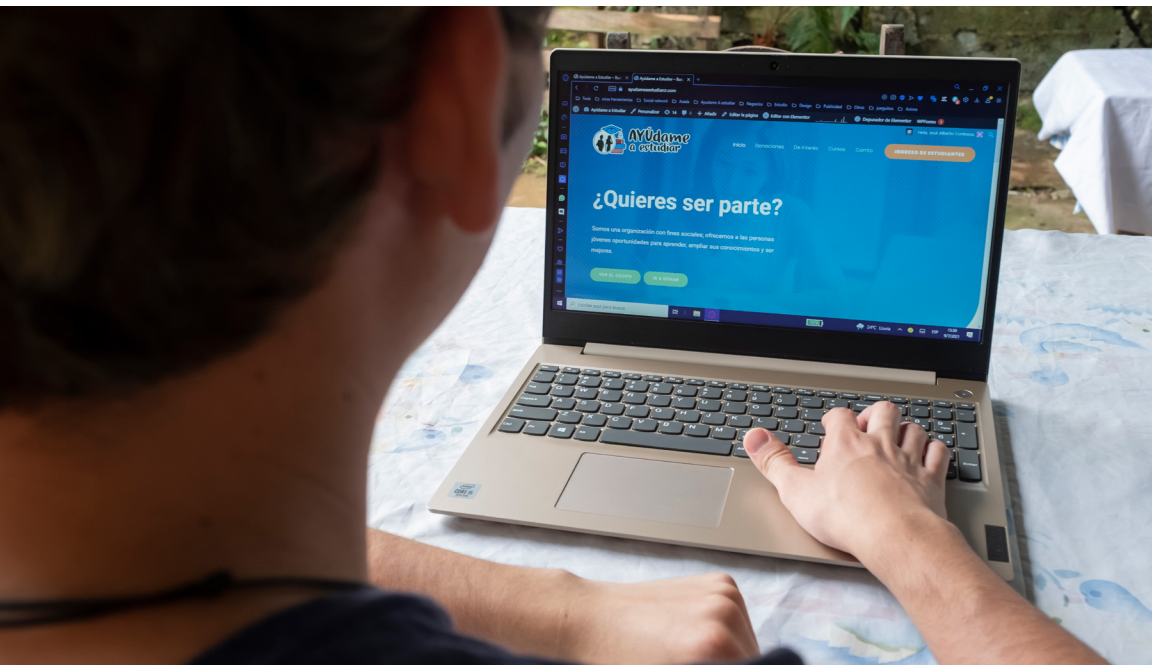
"Ayúdame a Estudiar" (Help me Study) is a web platform that seeks to create a network to connect people who can finance education (sponsors) with young people from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds who want to study. In addition, it seeks to offer youth vocational guidance and preparation to access university education.

The project purchased the license of the Worpress.com site and the domain **ayudameaestudiarcr.com** to design the web page. In addition, the project founders developed a strategy to build the website and held meetings with programmers, a social worker, a counselor, and education professionals.

Lastly, a social media and marketing professional developed a communications campaign for launching the platform and provided project members with an induction process to teach them how to use the project's social media channels. Currently, the website is in operation as it was launched in June 2021 and virtual courses are starting to be shaped and offered, such as an English course that will be soon available on the platform.

Get to know the project "Ayúdame a Estudiar": **DIA | Gente Emprende: Ayúdame a Estudiar (Jose Contreras)**

5. Panthera Caminos Seguros

Canton: Turrialba, Cartago.
Organization: Panthera Corporation.

"Caminos Seguros" (Safe Roads) offers a wildlife monitoring system through photographs, reports and studies with a technical-scientific base to increase the safety of users and wildlife in the national road network.

Twenty (20) monitoring cameras were placed in twenty of the 191 drains in 48 km, from El Empalme to Villa Mills; Route 2, to define if the fauna used them as safe passage. The monitoring cameras allowed the project to identified that none of the drains meet the conditions for the tapir to cross safely under the street. In addition, they installed eighteen (18) cameras in the forest and ten (10) cameras in trees on the same route to corroborate if the animals cross safely and to list the species that need aerial passages.

To date, "Caminos Seguros" has developed a record of run-over animals to measure the magnitude of the impact of Route 2. In one day, 67 run-over birds and 22 mammals were recorded in the 48 km of the monitored area. In a year, it could be expected the death of 4,628 wild animals on Route 2.

Through this monitoring, images of the fauna are collected and used to attract donations to continue monitoring new routes. Additionally, the project is working on designing a low-resolution website prototype on which the images from the cameras will be published to promote the sustainability of the project.

Get to know the project "Panthera Safe Roads": **DIA | Gente Emprende: Caminos Seguros para Todos (Daniela Araya)**

BLOCKCHAIN PILOTS FOR MUNICIPAL PERMITS

(JANUARY 2020 – JUNE 2021)

Increasing transparency and efficiency through civic technologies to improve municipal services was one of the main objectives of this project. The Trust has partnered with different sectors to work on projects throughout Latin America that generate solutions to reduce the development gap in the hemisphere. To achieve this endeavor, the active participation of academia, civil society, government, the private sector, entrepreneurs, and young innovators is essential.

In this particular case, The Trust, together with the GovTech start-up OSCity, developed a pilot project to implement blockchain technology in the municipalities of Quepos and Grecia, in order to improve the transparency and efficiency of the processes of two municipal services. It was the first of its kind in Costa Rica.

These two blockchain pilots for the issuance of municipal commercial permits and liquor licenses will allow citizens, companies, and other government agencies to certify in a simple and reliable way that the content of a permit has not been altered or modified, as well as leave an unalterable record of its existence.

Representative of the Information Technology unit in Quepos

Municipal Inspector of Grecia Municipality

Component activities:

The work for the development of the pilots was organized in two phases: the first one to assess the feasibility and adaptation of the pilot platforms, and the second phase to develop and give maintenance to the platforms.

STAGE 1: Assessment of the adaptation of the platform (January – February 2020).

We considered the following activities for the completion of the first phase:

1. Kick-off meeting. The first meeting focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the project objective and identifying a particular process, service or certificate to be digitized using this technology (some examples are: general patents, authorizations, liquor licenses, work certificates). This meeting was held virtually with the two selected municipalities: Grecia and Quepos.

2. Analysis of the selected process. An analysis of the workflow or flowchart of the selected service, the process of issuing patents, actors involved, quantity and frequency of the issuance of permits, way of capturing the information, and analysis of the databases was carried out. This analysis was needed to adapt the blockchain technology to the specific municipal service.

STAGE 2: Implementation (March - May 2020).

We considered the following activities for the completion of the second stage:

3. Interoperability meeting. Once the process was identified, we focused on establishing how the information from the platforms would be captured. During this stage, users and representatives from the municipalities participated in a dialogue to better know the cycle of the certificate and its issuance process.

4. Test sessions. We allocated a session to present the application, show the functionality of the pilots and identify possible changes.

5. Pre-launch meeting. We held a pre-launch session to carry out technical and operative tests, clarify doubts and consult the municipal needs that could be assessed to add more functionalities to the platform.

Municipalities selected to develop blockchain platforms:
Blockchain fosters the digital transformation of public services, but it requires an adequate technological context to achieve a social impact. For this reason, the two pilots proposed by this project had to have some criteria or preconditions to achieve a successful implementation. Based on these criteria, we seek to guarantee the integrity of the experience, its long-term continuity, the commitment of public officials to the modernization of management, and the capacity of the internal technical team to respond to the technological needs of the pilots.

In summary, the selected criteria were:

- Political will and decision-making capacity for the development of the pilots.
- Existence of a standardized process with clear steps and a political communication strategy.
- Simple and scalable: tests in a controlled environment.
- To have a technical team within the municipality that addresses the technological challenges related to the application of blockchain.
- To have the ability to continue using blockchain in the long term.
- To have a comprehensive digital government strategy.

Considering these six criteria, during November 2019, The Trust for the Americas' and OSCity's teams conducted interviews with representatives of different municipalities in Costa Rica, both with administrative staff and with public servants. After the interviews, the two governments that best met the mentioned criteria were the municipalities of Grecia and Quepos. Based on this decision, in January 2020 we initiated the development of blockchain pilots in the two municipalities.

Description of the Blockchain Pilots.
Each municipality developed a certificate system for the issuance of commercial permits and liquor licenses. Through those systems, the data used to issue municipal permits are certified and validated; this data management allows to generate reliable, decentralized, resistant to manipulation, and more secure data records. From this, the patents are issued and made available to the general public. Any citizen or municipal inspector can consult the certificate by downloading it from the platform or by a QR code.

Pilots of the Grecia Municipality.

Pilot platform for patent certificates: **https://certif.grecia.go.cr/**
Pilot platform for liquor licensing: **https://licores.grecia.go.cr/**

Learn about the experience of the Grecia Municipality using blockchain:
https://youtu.be/RM86s6idrho

How do blockchain pilots in Grecia work?
We invite you to watch this video: **https://youtu.be/1iCJxl63Lno**

Pilot for the issuance of Commercial certificates

INICIAR SESIÓN

CERTIFICADOS DE PATENTES
en Blockchain

Este sitio es una prueba piloto del Municipio de Grecia, demostrando el
potencial de emitir las patentes comerciales en Blockchain. Esto
permitirá que cualquier ciudadano o inspector pueda validar las
patentes de manera transparente y segura, dando la confianza que no
han sido alteradas ni falsificadas.

SABER MÁS

Pilots of Quepos Municipality.

Pilot platform for commercial permits: **https://quepos.os.city/**
Pilot platform for liquor licenses: **https://queposlicor.os.city**

Learn about the experience of the Quepos Municipality using blockchain:
https://youtu.be/16B0LN_oDaI

How do blockchain pilots in Quepos work?
We invite you to watch this video: **https://youtu.be/RT0jQpQwkH8**

Blockchain platform to consult liquor licenses

INICIAR SESIÓN

Licencias de licores
en Blockchain

Este sitio es una prueba piloto del Municipio de Grecia, demostrando el potencial de emitir las licencias de venta de licores en blockchain. Esto permitirá que cualquier ciudadano o inspector pueda validar las licencias de manera transparente y segura, dando la confianza que no han sido alteradas ni falsificadas.

LEER MÁS

Open Government Municipal Action Plans (January 2021 – June 2021)
Following the project objectives, a training space was designed to strengthen the capacity of municipal officials to operate under the principles of Open Government, providing innovative tools to different social actors on strategies for transparency, citizen participation, and collaboration.

Participants of Orotina Municipality

The objectives of this component were:

General objective
Strengthen technical capacities for the consolidation of Open Local Governments through the study and practical exercise of the principles, concepts and regulations on Open State applicable at the local level.

Specific objectives
▪ Contribute to overcoming mistrust to ensure that multi-stakeholder social dialogues are more accessible and effective: establishing a new mindset towards public officials, civil society leaders, and youth, and generate better democratic processes.

▪ Contribute to create a collaborative ecosystem that leads to government services with better quality and greater coverage.

▪ Promote and facilitate the effective collaboration of local governments with other stakeholders at all social levels (including vulnerable communities) and improve the quality and coverage of municipal government services.

▪ Construction of local Open Government plans with at least two commitments that promote the pillars of local open governance.

▪ Influence from the local level the agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically on SDG 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

Modality

Based on previous experience collaborating with municipalities, during the first two months of 2021, we worked on the planning and design of the materials for a bimodal training program.

The program was developed and facilitated by Ana Gabriel Zúñiga, an international expert with solid expertise in promoting the co-creation of Open Government initiatives and former Vice Minister of the Presidency for Political Affairs and Citizen Dialogue in Costa Rica.

Temporality
- **March and April:** Training modules.
- **May:** Co-creation of municipal Action Plans.

Municipal profile

Participants from local governments of Costa Rica (political and technical representatives), with emphasis on the Municipalities of Quepos, Grecia, Cañas, Orotina, Turrialba, Curridabat and Sarchí.

Component activities:

1. First meetings with municipalities.

Two in-depth working sessions with The Trust for the Americas' team were held to present and validate the program content. Once the design of the training program was completed, seven virtual meetings were held with representatives of local governments to introduce the initiative, encourage them to participate, and develop a schedule of virtual training sessions considering the time availability of each municipality.

First meeting with the Sarchí Municipality
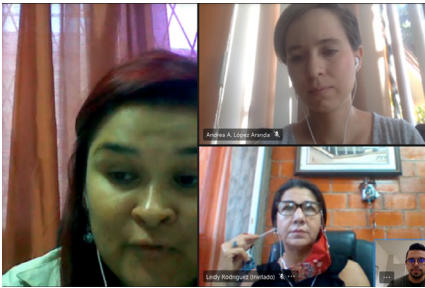
First meeting with the Turrialba Municipality

First meeting with the Cañas Municipality

Implementation of the training program

The training program was implemented from April 8 to May 27, 2021 (every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Costa Rican time). It was attended by thirty-five (35) public officials representing six Costa Rican municipalities: Quepos, Grecia, Cañas, Orotina, Turrialba and Sarchí.

▪ The program content was structured in six modules taught over virtual workshops Total duration: 6 weeks / 12 hours.

▪ The first five sessions gathered all participants and one last session was bilateral between the program facilitator and each local government.

▪ A virtual course was created and made available in the Trust's Virtual Classroom to accompany synchronous sessions, facilitate access to the materials reviewed in each module, and offer participants the opportunity to interact in discussion forums.

See course: **https://aulavirtual.trustfortheamericas.org/enrol/index.php?id=166**

Course "Open Government Municipal Action Plans" in the Trust's Virtual Classroom.

Head of the Economic Development Area of Cañas

Mayor of Sarchí Municipality

TRAINING PROGRAM

April 08, 2021

Module 1: What is Open State?

- Concept and principles.
- Historical tour at global and regional level.
- Current context: platforms, networks, innovations and action plans.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMKmhg0yjzY

April 15, 2021

Module 2: Open State in Costa Rica

- Milestones of the advancement of the agenda in Costa Rica.
- Applicable regulations.
- Governance and institutionality.
- The Open State ecosystem in Costa Rica.

https://youtu.be/JXLNVXTuGHw

April 22, 2021

Module 3: Transparency and Anti-Corruption

- Human right to access public information.
- Active and passive transparency.
- Good practices in the fight against corruption.

https://youtu.be/dU8zK2MUU3o

April 29, 2021

Module 4: Digital Transformation and Open Data

- Open State in the Digital Age.

- What is Open Data?

- Regional good practices: PIDA, open contracting, climate change, transport and gender.

https://youtu.be/f9DE6oWmMUU

May 6, 2021

Module 5: Co-creation and citizen participation

- The local civic space.

- Types of citizen participation.

- Co-creation platforms in local governments.

https://youtu.be/Vk176S-B-VI

May 6, 2021

Module 6: Open Local Governments

- Practical exercise for the identification of cantonal priorities.

- Practical exercise for the creation of an Open Municipal Route.

- Practical exercise to identify actors that could be incorporated in the Open State
  ecosystem of each canton.

- Practical exercise to generate conditions for the co-creation of Action Plans.

https://youtu.be/R6HZAPLsU-g

Access the training program:

**https://www.thetrustfortheamericas.org/media/projects/attachments/es/Planes_
de_Acci%C3%B3n_para_la_Apertura_Municipal.pdf**

Learn about the experience of Sarchí Municipality participating in the component:

DIA | Open Government Municipal Action Plans: Sarchí (Maikol Porras)

Work plan with municipalities.

In April, we conducted the first four modules aimed to generate and strengthen the capacities of local governments in Open State, Transparency and Anticorruption, Digital Transformation, and Data Governance. In module 4, Cynthia Rosales, representative of "Mujeres en Movimiento", and Violeta Belver from the Government of Buenos Aires, shared successful experiences and best practices that could be replicated in the participating municipalities.

Participants of Orotina Municipality

In May, the participants took modules 5 and 6, thus completing the asynchronous activities that fostered collaborative work and the exchange of best practices. Module 6 was aimed at helping each local team identify the municipal thematic priorities that would be included in their action plans. Action plans were then submitted to review by the facilitator and our local coordinator. Subsequently, bilateral feedback sessions were held with each local government to agree on the next steps and deepen the technical support for the consolidation of their action plans. Only the Quepos team did not participate in the bilateral sessions. The entire program was successfully completed by the municipalities of Sarchí, Orotina, Cañas, and Grecia.

The second day of bilateral sessions took place in June aimed at reviewing potential Action Plans and the Co-Creation Route.

During June, the final follow-up sessions with each local government were held. In these bilateral sessions, The Trust provided feedback on the process of co-creation of Action Plans and the commitment proposals for subsequent validation with other local actors.

Each municipal government will continue to work on its action plans under two priority Open Government commitments for a period of one to two years to ensure their implementation.

Learn about the experience of the Orotina Municipality participating in the component: **DIA | Open Government Municipal Action Plans: Orotina (Jeffrey Valerio)**

The impact of the component.

Two data collection and evaluation instruments (surveys) were developed in collaboration with facilitator Ana Gabriel Zúñiga to measure the impact of the component.

Representatives of Cañas Municipality

Twenty-three (23) participants in total completed both surveys, based on their answers the following is concluded (85% confidence level and 10% margin of error):

The results of the surveys show that 56% of the participants considered having an introductory level of knowledge about Open Government at the beginning of the component, and 34% said they had an intermediate level. After completing the training process, most participants (70%) mentioned having increased their knowledge on Open Government and 36% of them went from having an introductory level to an intermediate knowledge level on Open Government.

Participant's knowledge level about Open Government

Level before the component:

None: 1
Introductory: 13
Intermediate: 8
Advanced: 1

N=23

Level after the component:

None: 0
Introductory: 6
Intermediate: 16
Advanced: 1

N=23
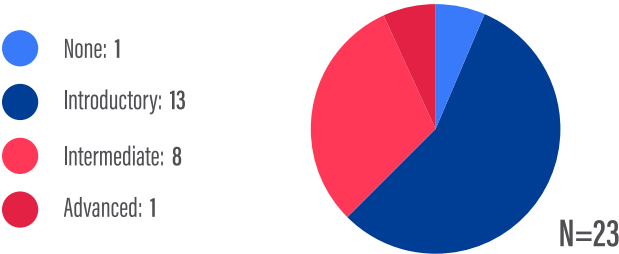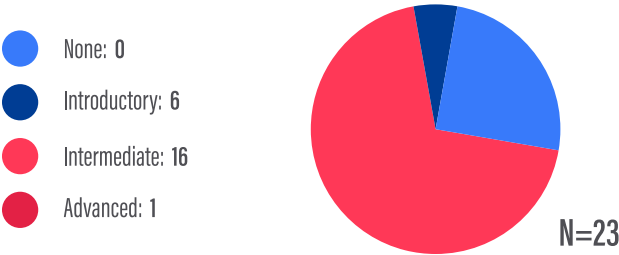
On the other hand, at the beginning of the training program, the participants did not identify that technology and the digitalization of municipal processes contributed to or promoted the opening of information and the generation of participation spaces available to citizens. At the end of the process, participants recognize that transparency, participation, collaboration, and digitalization are fundamental pillars of Open Government.

Likewise, the component made it easier for participants to identify the relevant actors in the Open Government ecosystem and their roles. At the end of the process, the participants recognized new actors such as companies and civil society organizations and their relevance in the opening processes. This ability to identify relevant stakeholders should be reinforced as little involvement of local governments was identified in carrying out this type of mapping.

Participants who consider that they have improved their collaboration processes with other stakeholders on Open Government issues.

Yes: 19

No: 4

N=23
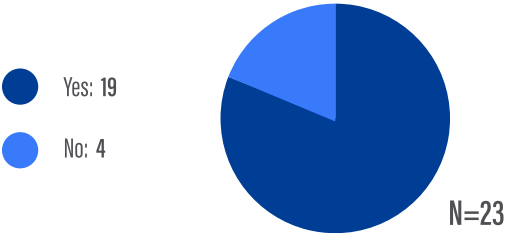
There is evidence of the progress of participants in the recognition and use of technical language on Open Government, the awareness of the importance of co-creation, and the direct involvement of civil society, not only in the construction of action plans but also in the implementation of municipal work. Increasing citizen participation in the process of shaping actions in Municipal Opening Plans must be further reinforced, considering the relevance of being developed and implemented to a large extent in a digital context in response to COVID 19.

The exchange and exposure to good international practices allowed municipal representatives to identify and recognize digital tools that facilitate access to information and decision-making in local affairs, improving their perception of what access to information and the use of open data entails.

Participants who implement open data initiatives in their municipalities.

Before the component:

Yes: **20**

No: **3**

N=23

After the component:

Yes: **23**

No: **0**

N=23
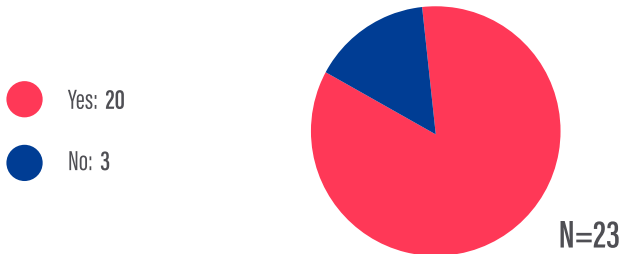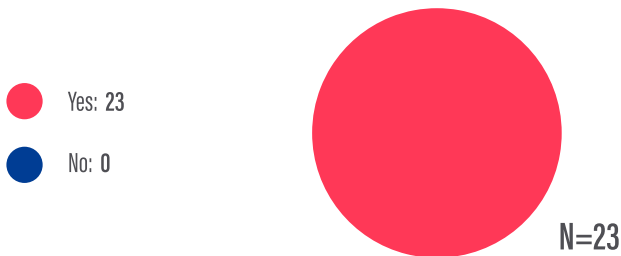
Additionally, it is evident that, based on the initial and final results of the evaluations, civil servants recognize to a greater extent the development, generation and implementation of initiatives in terms of collaboration with various local actors. That is, they have more clarity of the concept of collaboration and its implementation from the municipality. Also, the positive impact of the approach to GovTech and open data issues in the ideation of innovative solutions that facilitate access to information, accountability and citizen participation in local affairs became evident.

See visualization about the component participants: **access here**

Learn about the experience of Cañas Municipality participating in the component: **DIA | Open Government Municipal Action Plans: Cañas (Luis Fernando Mendoza)**

OPEN VIRTUALITY MONTH

(APRIL 2020)

In April 2020, The Trust and the local governments developed a series of webinars to promote actions on Open Government in times of Covid-19 and virtuality.

115 people at the national and regional level participated in the four two-hour virtual webinars held every Thursday of April. These learning spaces focused on encouraging the development of Open Municipalities to improve transparency, participation, and collaboration with citizens.

View the data visualization of the Open Virtuality Month: **access here**

Virtual webinars:

April 7, 2020.
"Empowering local governments to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus"
Activity 1. Jesús Cepeda, OS City executive director.
City Listener and Blockchain Certificates tools as means of municipal empowerment to mitigate the coronavirus and its rapid spread.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t_SLAMS71Y&list=PLRCSe4mWDI-AB461mPROyfxQ-xBVrV53M&index=4&t=6s

April 16, 2020.
"The experience of the Esparza Municipality on opening public data. Learnings and best practices" - activity 2. Huberth Fallas, IT Director Municipality of Esparza.
Challenges, advances and achievements of the Municipality of Esparza in terms of Opening Public Data with a collaborative approach.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-QEmEWOpQg&list=PLRCSe4mWDI-AB461mPROyfxQ-xBVrV53M&index=3&t=11s

April 23, 2020.
"A more efficient and agile municipal government: CoLABora methodology for the simplification of procedures, focused on users" - activity 3. Harry Navarro and Gabriel Salas, Innovation Managers, Innovaap.
Experience of the coLABora methodology: pilot project for the simplification of patent procedures in several local governments of the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) of Costa Rica.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k1d-1PCQ60&list=PLRCSe4mWDI-AB461mPROyfxQ-xBVrV53M&index=2&t=1s

April 30, 2020
"The role of local governments during the pandemic: effective communication with the private and entrepreneurial sector" - activity 4. Allison Quesada, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Manager, AUGE UCR.
The role of municipalities in supporting the private, commercial and entrepreneurial sector in times of pandemic and recession.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwuuYHCinI8&list=PLRCSe4mWDI-AB461mPROyfxQ-xBVrV53M&index=5

GOVTECH FORUM COSTA RICA

(NOVEMBER 2020)

The **GovTech Costa Rica Forum** was a networking meeting that brought together the main actors from the public sector, business sector, academia, and multilateral organizations, to promote the technology and Open Government ecosystem in Latin America. This meeting arose out of our conviction that we are in the right moment to lead governments towards a digital transformation of the State; teaching them to increase their transparency and build an Open Government.

The event sought to strengthen the links between the public and private sectors, to promote the intelligent use of new technologies to offer better public services and democratic practices. The GovTech Forum Costa Rica is a new way to strengthen the regional ecosystem of digital government and civic technology.

At the end of the GovTech Forum Costa Rica, The Trust for the Americas, OSCity, and Innovaap announced the launch of the GovTech CR Fund. This initiative seeks to support the Government of Costa Rica in its Digital Transformation process by involving academia, the public and private sector, and multilateral organizations. The fund is a first step to promote the investment of resources in technology issues to improve the services offered to citizens, to continue to add allies in this area.

The event was held on the Hopin platform, which allowed the **participation of more than two hundred (200) people.**

See the data visualization of the GovTech Costa Rica Forum: **access here**

COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT:

MONITORING THE COMMITMENT TO PREVENT AND COMBAT CORRUPTION FOR THE 4TH ACTION PLAN TO THE OGP.

In 2019 Costa Rica presented the commitment "Integrity and Anti-Corruption" to the OGP, whose objective is to strengthen the capacities of public institutions and citizens for the prevention and fight against corruption through the publication and use of open data. It also considers the importance of citizens using open data to exercise a versatile, effective, and evidence-based oversight.

The commitment is linked to a series of efforts previously made by the country to modernize its anti-corruption policies and regulations within the framework of the accession process to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In addition, it is directly related to the Inter-American Open Data Program to Prevent and Combat Corruption (PIDA) promoted by the OAS Summit of the Americas, as this program emphasizes the need to strengthen regional commitments to use open data to combat corruption, as well as open data policies and multisectoral collaboration to promote inclusion and transparency.

The project supported the following actions:

▪ Co-creation of an open data publication protocol against corruption; developed under the framework of the "Open Up Guide: Using Open Data to Combat Corruption" published by the International Open Data Charter. This guide contains a list of the thirty (30) databases that are priorities for the fight against corruption. The guide also describes the databases' attributes, including; budgets, contracts, declarations of assets and interests, beneficiaries, public financing, security methods, health, extractive industries, and lobbying. This co-creation developed with citizens, public officials, journalists and experts, and was adapted to the national legal framework and the Open Guide to Open Public Data created by the National Open Data Commission. **Access the guide here.**

▪ Support in the prioritization and recognition of the state of the data for its future publication in open formats and in a unified platform that allows its free download with a user-friendly visualization interface. Access to all relevant regulations in simple language is an asset of this support process as well. This platform will be regularly subjected to consultations with its users (journalists, academics, students, civil society organizations) to guarantee that it responds to their needs and interests.

BEST PRACTICES

GENTE EMPRENDE:

Adaptation to virtuality.
The technological mapping carried out at the beginning of the component (to determine the project viability) was timely and generated relevant information to make decisions.
The support of coaches to each winning project favored the prompt response to the needs of the participants, a better follow-up, and a personalized guidance, key aspects to achieve the success of the project.

Support of local alliances.
The support provided by AUGE and Innovaap was essential for the participants' proposals to mature into viable projects. Its training and follow-up methodologies allowed the conceptualization of the projects and contributed to the development of the prototypes.

BLOCKCHAIN PILOTS FOR MUNICIPAL PERMITS:

Integration of the use of blockchain at the operational level.
Quepos and Grecia Municipalities achieved effective and continuous participation of their technical and operational teams in the implementation of blockchain technology.

Previous interoperability meetings.
Prior to the development of pilots using blockchain technology, it is essential to clearly identify the process and manner in which information would be captured on blockchain platforms. Ideally, this process should include a dialogue with users and administrative staff of the platform to learn about the certificate lifecycle and issuance process.

OPEN GOVERNMENT MUNICIPAL ACTION PLANS:

Exchange of best practices and experiences.
In capacity-building processes, as in workshops, the participation of actors from other local governments and countries is valuable, allowing the exchange of best practices and experiences.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GENTE EMPRENDE:

Strategic alliances.
It is important to develop strategic alliances with public institutions to increase the project impact at the national level. These efforts would also help participants access a network of social enterprises and organizations that could support them in their quest for long-term sustainability.

Local closing activity.
It is recommended that the municipal teams subject to this capacity-building process culminate their training with the development of a public activity in which various actors of the canton, including the municipal authorities, share their experience and exchange future plans on this topic.

BLOCKCHAIN PILOTS FOR MUNICIPAL PERMITS:
Development of sustainability plans.
When planning initiatives that offer project incubation and financing opportunities, it is important to develop detailed sustainability plans to ensure that projects continue to operate over the long term. This should be anticipated in each Municipality budget, as resources are usually limited.

OPEN GOVERNMENT MUNICIPAL ACTION PLANS:

Inclusion of people with disabilities.
It is important to consider the use of inclusive tools for people with disabilities, especially when it comes to virtual workshops.

Institutionalization of best practices.
It is imperative to promote the institutionalization of best practices to co-create municipal Open Government action plans. This will largely depend on the maturity of each municipal agenda and priorities. Strengthen the leadership of municipal representatives is a key element to mitigate the risk of not being able to institutionalize best practices.

Increased participation.
The active participation of Mayors is recommended to guarantee the implementation and resilience of the Open Government Action Plans. The participation of civil society actors is also recommended throughout the workshops.

EFFORTS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

To support the long-term impact of the project, a series of actions and commitments have been agreed upon, including:

- Extension of the collaboration agreement with Innovaap to monitor and follow up for one year the ventures financed in the Gente Emprende initiative. This support consists of documenting the growth of each social venture; helping them face administrative and management obstacles; and supporting them in consolidating the social value of their project.

- An alliance with the LACChain **Global Alliance initiative, of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, was consolidated to promote the sustainability of the blockchain pilots in Grecia and Quepos. This alliance aims to create blockchain-based solutions that positively impact Latin America and the Caribbean and advance the common goal of improving public services and the quality of life of citizens through technology.

- To continue with the Open Government work at the municipal level we developed medium and long-term action plans with local governments. These plans contain a series of projects and initiatives that foster local actions on transparency, citizen participation, collaboration, and public innovation. The Trust will support the municipalities in implementing the plans and documenting their results.

Orotina Municipal Representative

COMMUNICATIONS

One of the project's main objectives was to raise awareness about how multisectoral collaboration plays a vital role in creating economic opportunities that improve the quality of life of communities. Also, it was relevant to give visibility to the integration of emerging technologies as a practical resource in increasing public capacities to promote transparency, citizen collaboration and facilitate the completion of procedures, such as commercial patents.

Local partners played a crucial role in connecting with target audiences to enhance multisectoral participation, especially citizen participation, a crucial element in implementing the project. Its local communication channels contributed to promoting the different activities of the project, such as virtual trainings and local events.

From the beginning of the project, a comprehensive communication strategy was designed including:

- A graphic proposal designed specifically for each component.
- A set of key messages for dissemination on social media.
- An analysis of the target audience of each component.
- A press release to highlight events and activities.

These actions allowed each initiative to have a unique visual identity to facilitate new marketing products during the execution period: certificates for trained people, designs for photographs and videos, among others. This strategy was fundamental to achieve visual uniformity and promote brand recognition of our components. During the 21 months of project implementation, most of the activities were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtuality represented challenges in event planning and in gathering communication material such as photos, videos, testimonials, etc. Still, it also provided the opportunity to reinforce the use of digital communication channels and create new ones, such as our newsletter.

For the closing of the project, audiovisual material such as photographs, infographics, videos, and capsules were produced to document the components **"Gente Emprende," "Open Government Municipal Action Plans"** and **"Blockchain Pilots for Patent Issuance",** where the Embassy of the United States in Costa Rica is given visibility, as a donor of the project, to implementing partners and local partners.

In the almost two years of implementation of the project, we achieved coverage in local media with activities that directly involve the Government of Costa Rica, such as the webinar series of the "Open Virtuality Month in Local Governments" and the component "Blockchain Pilots for the Issuance of Patents" in the municipalities of Grecia and Quepos.

Finally, all original content, including this report, is available on our platforms, such as The Trust for the Americas website, blog, and social media:

🌐	**trustfortheamericas.org**	in	**The Trust for the Americas**
f	**@Trust4Americas**	▶	**The Trust for the Americas**
🐦	**@Trust4Americas**	📰	**TRUST Newsletter**
📷	**@Trust4Americas**	B	**TRUST Blog**

2020

GENTE EMPRENDE

During the first half of 2020, we focused, alongside Innovaap, on communicating the launch of the "Gente Emprende" component. Visibility was given to the workshops held in the five municipalities, and also the call for applications.

The Trust for the Americas, Innovaap-UCR y AUGE lanzan Proyecto Gente Emprende en Costa Rica

2020/01/16

The Trust for the Americas en alianza con el Laboratorio Colaborativo de Innovación Pública InnovaAP y la Agencia Universitaria para la Gestión del Emprendimiento de la Universidad de Costa Rica lanzan proyecto Gente Emprende.

Costa Rica

Leer más

[The Trust for the Americas, Innovaap-UCR y AUGE lanzan Proyecto Gente Emprende en Costa Rica | The Trust for the Americas](#)

In the second phase of this component, we continued to collaborate with Innovaap to make visible activities such as training sessions, and the postulated projects. Then, for the presentation of the selected ventures, a videoconference was held, transmitted by the Zoom platform.

OPEN VIRTUALITY MONTH

The " Open Virtuality Month" was disseminated, through a social media campaign, **press release**, a publication on our blog **about practices learned**, and a **Youtube** playlist compiling the recorded sessions.

In the following extract, you can see the activity being mentioned in the portal on COVID-19 of the Government of Costa Rica.

Mes de la virtualidad abierta en Gobiernos Locales

Desde Gobierno Abierto y en el marco del Convenio de Colaboración con The Trust for the Americas, se impulsan actividades dirigidas a incentivar el proceso de Munis Abiertas, que busca facilitar a las municipalidades procesos de transparencia, participación y colaboración en conjunto con la ciudadanía.

Es por ello que, durante el mes de abril junto a la iniciativa de The Trust for the Americas de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) se realizarán una serie de webinars para promover acciones en materia de gobierno abierto en tiempos de COVID19 y virtualidad.

Open Virtuality Month in Local Governments | COVID-19 Government of Costa Rica

"BLOCKCHAIN PILOTS FOR PATENT ISSUANCE"

The launch of the "Blockchain Pilots for Patent Issuance" represented an additional opportunity for coverage in Tier 1 local media newspaper "Delfino", with an audience of more than 4 million digital visits per month.
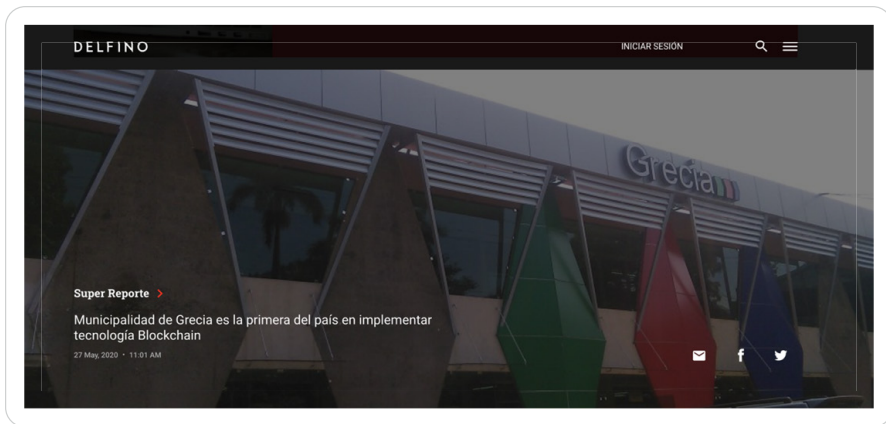
[Municipality of Greece is the first in the country to implement Blockchain technology | Dolphin](#)

"CONTACTLESS GOVERNMENTS" REPORT

For the presentation of the "Contactless Governments" report in the second half of 2020, Lucas Jolías, from the startup OSCity, joined Rodrigo Iriani, in a live session broadcasted live on **Facebook** and published later on our **Youtube** channel. The invitation to the audience was made on social networks and the Trust's Newsletter.

GOVTECH FORUM COSTA RICA

Like the previous activity, the communication efforts for the GovTech Forum Costa Rica Forum was carried out together with the implementing partner, OsCity. Being a virtual event on the Hopin platform, with speakers from different spheres, the public was summoned weeks before to register, resulting in a live connected audience of 200 people.

In the following image, the invitation to such a forum can be seen on local and international portals.

[Mexico: Comité de Informática de la Administración Pública Estatal y Municipal A.C. (CIAPEM)](#)

Costa Rica: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

In the second half, through The Trust for the Americas social media, we managed to reach more than 19,000 users with this content.

2021

GOVTECH IN LATIN AMERICA: ECOSYSTEM, ACTORS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO REINVENT THE PUBLIC SECTOR

It is a book, in which the project team participated, documenting the state of the art in the field of GovTech in Costa Rica and contributing to the emerging debate on its scope, development possibilities and future challenges, from multiple perspectives from representatives of multilateral organizations; authorities and those responsible for digital government strategies and technological transformation; team members of GovTech startups and labs; experts and consultants of recognized trajectory; academics and representatives of civic technology organizations in the region, among many others.

The celebration of its publication was shared with the public through an entry in **The Trust's official press room**, a newsletter issue, and social media posts. It was also launched live on **OsCity's Youtube Channel**

Lanzamiento Libro: GovTech en Iberoamérica.
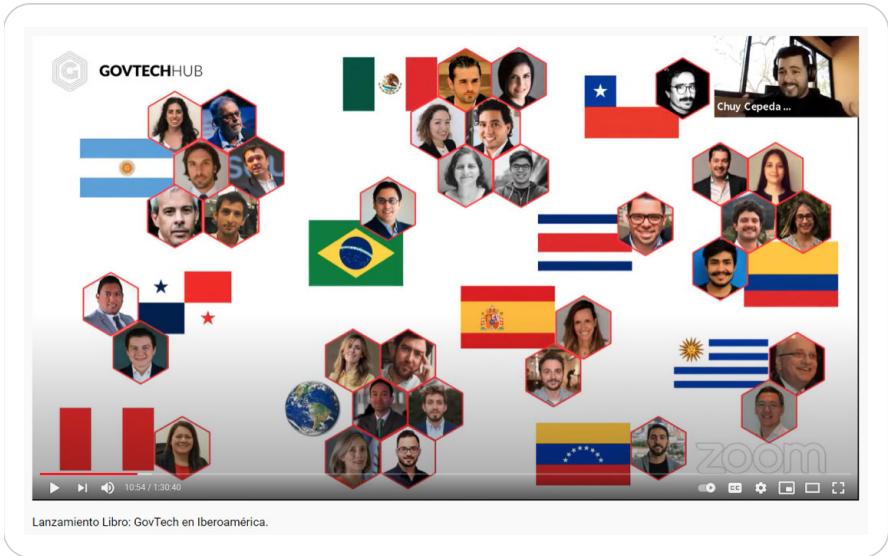
This book can be downloaded through our webpage, **here**

GENTE EMPRENDE: WHAT HAPPENED?

After selecting the five projects of "Gente Emprende" that received training and mentoring, communication efforts were allocated to present them to our digital community. To do this, an entry was generated for the **The Trust for the Americas blog**, which was later promoted on social network and in two issues of our newsletter.

In addition, together with Innovaap, a strategy for social networks was developed in which, through attractive images, it was told how each venture evolved after the accompaniment and financial support. On our end, we were able to impact more than 3,100 people.

Later, the publication of the professionally produced audiovisual material marked the closure of the component. These inputs can be appreciated on our social networks or compiled into a playlist on **Youtube**

BLOCKCHAIN PILOTS

A video tutorial was developed to explain the process of digitally issuing the patents. These videos, both for the municipality of **Grecia** and **Quepos**, are on Youtube.

The pilots were also made visible when anoucing The Trust for the America's partnership with an organization that promotes the GovTech ecosystem in the region.

Finally, this initiative was communicated through video testimonies given by beneficiaries: public officials and proprietaries.

OPEN GOVERNMENT MUNICIPAL ACTION PLANS

This component will be communicated on the last quarter of 2021 thanks to the produced short video capsules. The videos can be found in a playlist on
The Trust Youtube channel

The testimonies given by the public officials of the involved municipalities supported the development of communications materials that will be shared in the next few months:

- Social media posts.
- Press release to be shared on our press room and with local media.
- Blog entry with Project Coordinator Jorge Umaña's experience on implementing the initiative.

DONORS AND ALLIES

IMPROVING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES THROUGH INNOVATION AND LOCAL NETWORKS

2019 - 2021