



## **“Transformation to an Open Public Administration in Belize”** **(2019-2021)**

Establishing an open government ecosystem is critical to improving public safety and governance in Belize. Open Government and Open Data have shown practical gains worldwide to advance and achieve transparency and fighting corruption, **but also economic and social development outcomes.**

The Trust for the Americas and the Organization of American States (OAS) have been working in Belize in 2018 and 2019, supporting the first steps towards Open Government in the country. The *“Promoting an Open Government Ecosystem”* project (phase one) enabled government institutions and various civil society organizations to deliberate and discuss co-creation of policies and learn about modern participatory tools in public administration. An active civil society coalition is key to increase government transparency and accountability.

Both government and civil society actors were trained on issues that enabled actors to partner in innovating and taking on new initiatives as a result of their active engagement on seminars, roundtables, hackathons and project implementations through grants. In addition, the project was able to support the insertion of Belize to the Caribbean regional open government ecosystem by joining the open data initiative *Development the Caribbean Initiative* (DevCa). Finally, the project established the first ever *Belize Open Week* (BOW) as a convening space for greater multi-stakeholder participation. While the phase one has been an important milestone, a new phase of the project will consolidate the open government efforts initiated in the country, by providing new opportunities and spaces for collaboration, co-creation, and setting the ground for Belize to finally take it to the next level.

With this in mind, the objectives of this second phase of the project implemented by The Trust of The Americas with support of the Department for Effective Public Management of the OAS are to:

- 1. Broaden knowledge and build capacities of government and non-government actors to co-create and initiate more transparent and efficient public service delivery.**
- 2. Unleash critically needed collaboration between Civil Society and Government to improve transparency and open government.**
- 3. Empower communities through innovation to promote solutions that generate livelihood opportunities and good governance.**

The project will be implemented in all six districts of Belize (**Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, and Toledo**) and aim to impact the country’s entire population by strengthening public institutions and building capacities to generate public value from data, which will lead to improved government services. A transformative process needs reformers in civil society and in

government to work together under *Open Government* principles: **Transparency** (providing citizens with meaningful information), **Participation** (empowering citizen voice in policymaking) and **Collaboration** (solving problems with citizens and respond to their needs, including marginalized communities).

**1. Objective 1: Broaden knowledge and build capacities of government and non-government actors to co-create and initiate more transparent and efficient public service delivery.**

Under this objective, representatives from civil society groups, the media, the private sector, and local governments will participate in a dedicated cycle of seminars and dialogues supported by the OAS with international experts, to enable the Belizean open government ecosystem to design, develop and implement new open government initiatives. The capacity building efforts will be reinforced with the establishment of formal mechanisms to co-construct transparency and accountability action plans where participants will be given real opportunities to apply the knowledge acquired.

The **expected result** is the improvement of technical competencies both in national and subnational governments. **Outputs** for this objective includes capacity-building sessions for at least 100-200 government officials and non-government actors; including youth. Additionally, this objective will seek to improve the quality and quantity of donor engagement and support mechanisms in national development priorities, activating international support mechanisms. The component seeks opportunities to empower civil society organizations to advocate for national development priorities and to increase local NGO knowledge of capacities and strategic advantage.

**2. Objective 2: Unleash critically needed collaboration between Civil Society and Government to improve transparency and open government.**

To strengthen government-civil society dialogue and the development of action plans, the Trust/OAS will promote collaboration among civil society organizations, media, academia, the private sector and government to develop effective joint agendas and multi-stakeholder' commitments. Most modern public innovation happens with the active participation of the citizens as end-users of services. With the support of experts, we will help local stakeholders set up mechanisms for collaboration through dialogue roundtables, define joint agendas and projects, and conduct coordinated evaluations of public budgets, procurement procedures and systems, regulations and anti-corruption efforts to strengthen economic growth.

The **expected result** of this objective is the co-creation of an Open Government action plan mindful of improving transparency (through the OGP methodology), increasing collaboration and public understanding of the Government priorities, including civil society groups from across the country. A national Open Government Coordination Mechanism will be established in partnership with the government and non-government organizations, and an Open government action plan will be drafted for the country.

**3. Objective 3: Empower communities through innovation to promote solutions that generate livelihood opportunities and good governance.**

The Trust will empower the next generation of social entrepreneurs to improve public services, government transparency, and civic participation by providing them with innovation training, tools, access to technology, collaborative spaces, advising, and networking opportunities.

**The expected result** of this objective is to encourage innovators from the public sector, civil society and civic tech to explore ideas that combine effective use of Open Data with interactive, location-based mobile applications to create new services and/or revenue opportunities in their communities. The long-term outcome is to strengthen innovation by increasing the number of solutions developed that combine effective use of open data with interactive, location-based mobile applications to create new services and/or revenue opportunities in their communities.

To learn more about the first of the project visit: <https://www.facebook.com/OpenGovBelize/>

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