

Honduras: Public Innovation

The Honduran Government is working to expand broadband access to its citizens to reduce the digital gap and create an environment that encourages the use of information technologies in different areas within the private and public sectors. The digital agenda aims to create a more transparent, efficient, and accessible government for its citizen, fostering a dynamic economy and an environment where competitiveness prevails. Technology is a crucial tool that can help adapt to the COVID-19 emergency, a pandemic that has been addressed with the use of innovative mobile applications and information systems that have automated certain decision-making processes during the crisis the world is facing today.

The Honduran Government, through its ministries and institutions, experienced difficulties in the past to integrate advances in digital government. Hence, it was necessary to create a new administrative figure that could articulate all these efforts. President Juan Orlando Hernández identified this necessity and on May 19, 2020, an executive decree was approved that created the Office of Presidential Priorities and Public Innovation to promote the President's top priorities and to integrate a public policy that promotes innovation and the Digital Government Agenda in Honduras.

A comprehensive digital government public policy is one of the fundamental pillars that can foster the creation of an ecosystem that yields technological development in the country. The digital government is now working alongside different stakeholders that are involved in this process. Connectivity, digital government, and the digital economy are crucial aspects of the framework for this policy.

On the core of the digital transformation process, is the creation of the Integrated System for the Facilitation, Interaction, Logistics, and Administration of Services (SIN + FILAS), which transforms government procedures into efficient digital transactions. This initiative also aims to unify government processes through a web interface where citizens can have access to their procedures in an automated way, such as certificates, licenses and certain permits that are necessary for different operations in the Honduran State for the economy, society, and digital identity. This automatization process will drastically change the way citizens and businesses interact with the government.

Moreover, a bill has been drafted and sent to Congress to promote technological development and innovation through creative initiatives that are supported by a public innovation law. This bill enables the creation of risk and guarantee funds for technological entrepreneurs and strengthens the digital economy's rudimentary ecosystem. It also includes the normalization of teleworking, status recognition for innovative platforms and applications that generate public value, as well as the promotion of research and academic excellence in the country.

The creation of a network of public innovators is of great significance for this process. Public administration in Honduras can be modernized through innovation labs, taking into account the best practices within the academic sector and international cooperation. The majority of the initiatives are focused on the modernization of processes through telemedicine, tele-education, and the implementation of an electronic wallet (e-wallet) to promote social and financial inclusion.