The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat is developing a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Colombia to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

**Description of the practice:**

**Organisation:** Ministry of Information Technology and Communications

**Name of the practice:** Centre for Digital Public Innovation

**Principles implemented:** Principle 2 – Encourage engagement and participation of the public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery.

**Description:** The Centre for Digital Public Innovation aims at strengthening the ICT-enabled public innovation ecosystem, working also as a delivery unit, helping to solve complex problems within the public administration.

To meet this purpose, a portfolio of services was structured around five main elements based on a cross-cutting approach:

1. Knowledge
2. Capabilities to innovate
3. Innovation Culture
4. Co-creation of innovative solutions
5. Community building

The portfolio consists of the following four services lines:

- Knowledge agency: because knowledge is an indispensable resource in the ecosystem to inspire the development of innovation exercises, we promote applied research, we review and document innovation experiences, we do technological surveillance and permanent systematization of good practices and lessons learned.
Digital government toolkit

- Innovation Lab: because it is natural to learn from the example, we incubate novel solutions that make use of emerging technologies and solve problems related to the Sustainable Development Goals and the State's performance.
- Innovation Academy: because the strength of an innovation ecosystem depends on the capacities of its actors to innovate, we transfer capacities to innovate with technology and we promote innovation culture models within the public administration.
- Innovation Community: because the resilience of an ecosystem depends on the quality and quantity of connections, we offer physical and virtual spaces for the meeting between the different actors of the ecosystem, and we manage alliances to develop and position digital public innovation projects.

Results

To facilitate the understanding of the Innovation Centre results, they are organized in the different service lines:

Capacities:

- Teams of more than 50 entities have been strengthened (see www.catalizadores.gov.co).
- 3 training courses have been designed to improve digital public innovation capacities (2 virtual courses and one at the Public Administration elective courses at the High School of Public Administration - ESAP).

Laboratory:

- More than 110 actors linked to the exercises.
- USD 300,000 contributed by the ecosystem to innovation exercises.
- 90 accompaniments to innovation exercises
- Real solutions have been developed to public challenges that have improved the way they provide their services (examples: Fight against smuggling through artificial intelligence, Improvement of the economic conditions of small farmers, project of sustainable and experiential tourism in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta to contribute to the challenge of decent work and overcoming poverty, among others).

Knowledge Agency:

- 5 versions of the Indigo Awards to the best digital public innovation experiences from the government and the private sector.
- More than 300 contents about digital public innovation.
- 21 researches and papers.
- 5 trend reports published.
Community and Partnerships

- 1 collaboration platform.
- 5 e-xperience events with more than 3200 attendees.
- 22 innovation tours
- 4 public innovators meetings
- 16 established alliances

**Development**

**Design:**

We are evolving our design, using the lean start-up method as a guide, developing iterations within each service line. We have different cycles depending on the service, but in general terms, we develop adjustments each year.

The following are some of the tools used: user profiles, benchmarking, business model canvas, strategic planning, financial estimates, design thinking, stakeholder mapping, diagnosis of innovation culture and impact evaluation model.

Among the stakeholders that participated in the design, there were public agencies from the national and territorial level, public agencies from abroad, international organizations, social organizations and private companies.

**Testing:**

Testing of MVP’s (minimum viable product), concept validation, and results measurement.

**Implementation:**

Websites with deployment of services.

Spaces to increase civil servants abilities and awareness of the innovation process.

E-learning tools.

Methodological tools to support innovation processes.

Accompaniment to develop co-creation processes.

Alliances to promote the widespread use of services.

**Resources**

The project counts on a dedicated team of 10 persons. The investment on the project to date is USD 4.6 million.
**Diffusion and scaling:** The Innovation Centre develops different kind of actions to share knowledge:

- Events and workshops of different stakeholders.
- Innovators meetings organized by the Centre.
- The e-xperience event (the most important about public innovation in the Latam region) organized by the Centre.
- Digital channels such as:
  - o [www.centrodeinnovacion.mintic.gov.co](http://www.centrodeinnovacion.mintic.gov.co)
  - o [https://www.linkedin.com/company/centrodeinnovacion/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/centrodeinnovacion/)
  - o [https://www.youtube.com/c/centrodeinnovacion](https://www.youtube.com/c/centrodeinnovacion)
- The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Community ([www.cien.net.co](http://www.cien.net.co))

The main targets are public servants, but the content the Centre shares are meant also for entrepreneurs, academy and social organizations.

**Expansion to other areas**

The dissemination and scaling started in the design phase. Some stakeholders had contacted the Innovation Centre in early stages to know about how to establish their own innovation teams.

On the other hand, the ecosystem approach conceived by the Innovation Centre, and the concept of public innovation that the Centre uses, has been transferred to other government innovation units. At his time is going to be adopted by the National Development Plan.

The process of expansion of the innovation Center has been planned as a strategy of articulation and up taking of innovation tools and culture to develop new solutions enabled by ICT by ecosystem actors.

The innovation Centre has documented some of the challenges that a public innovator has to face, and some lessons learned. The links to the information are the following:

- [https://youtu.be/cnoag36YWTY](https://youtu.be/cnoag36YWTY)

**Partnerships:** Private Sector, Civil Society, Academics and Research Bodies, Public Sector Organisations, Other

Current alliances:

- UN trough UNDP and UNDESA
- National Planning Department
- ESAP (Public Administration School)
Digital government toolkit

- EAN University
- DAFP (Public Service Administrative Department)
- Innpsula (Public organization in charge of strengthen private innovation)
- DIAN (Directorate of Taxes and National Customs)
- Impact Hub
- Sistema B
- Cordoba University

**Lessons learned**

- Public agencies look for inspiration when investigating the experiences developed by other entities. Sometimes the product of experiences documentation ends in a form that is difficult to be appropriate. Therefore, it is required to process the collected data in the traditional form to generate more easily assimilable contents, such as chronicles, videos, infographics and cases.

- When developing innovation processes, public agencies fear risk because it implies the possibility of failure and sanctions by control organisms. This is the reason why it is required to develop services that contribute to reduce and manage the risk in the process of innovation.

- Public entities think that innovation processes can be outsourced in units like Innovation Centers and similarly consider that innovation is limited to creativity processes. Therefore, it is required to strengthen aspects of awareness and innovation culture in the entities so that processes are recognized as co-creation.

- The innovation exercises are very attractive for senior managers. However, when the exercises go down the organization's hierarchy, they must get aligned not only with the strategic vision but also with the operational plans, as it is on these plans that public officials are assessed. Therefore, they are given greater attention and have greater possibilities to be implemented.

- In Colombia, innovation culture exists in some single officials. Thus, it is necessary to strengthen activities of socialization and capacity building for teams and senior managers.

- ICT enabled innovation in the public sector can’t be centralized by a single agency. For this reason, it was recognized that the ecosystem approach contributes to a widespread use of ICT-enabled public innovation. Amazingly, there are many actors working on this issue without common direction.

- Innovation teams must define cost-benefit measure schemes from the beginning, in order to know the impact of the actions taken.

- Governmental innovation units inserted into hierarchical structures should respond to priorities established by the host organization, and the scope of innovation will be framed within its strategic goals.

- Experimentation is the new trend about public innovation, but you must avoid the concept that experiments ends with trials. Try to get as far as you can, hopefully till implementation.
Conditions for successful implementation

- Having an organization to sponsor the initiative, with sufficient political and operational will.
- Involve public and private partners from the beginning.
- Establish a governance scheme for ecosystem approaches.
- Seek quick wins to demonstrate the value of innovation in digital government strategies.
- Built the service portfolio from the bottom-up, but have all the support of the highest levels of the government.
- Establish baselines and indicators to measure if innovation is achieved.
- Think about sustainability of your unit since the beginning.
- Align your projects with strategic plans of the government.
  ICT is an important lever, but is always a tool. People are the real objective.

Other Information

The Innovation Center is an evolving project. There has been learning along the way, and lean startup strategies have been used to pivot the approach generating greater value and sustainability.

The Innovation Centre adapts its portfolio each year, and it has identified 2 moments in which a pivot was needed.

Today the innovation Centre is focused on emerging technologies, Sustainable Development Goals, working both as a Lab and as a Catalyst for the public innovation ecosystem.