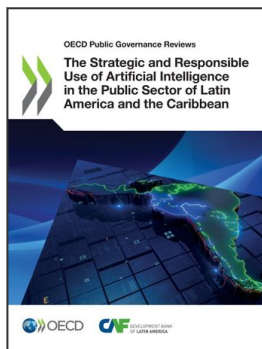# Foreword

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the public sector can have a significant impact on public policies and services. It has the potential to free up a significant amount of public servants' time, allowing them to shift from mundane tasks to high-value work, thus increasing public sector efficiency and effectiveness. Governments can also use AI to design better policies and make better and more targeted decisions, enhance communication and engagement with citizens and residents, and improve the speed and quality of public services. While the potential benefits of AI in the public sector are significant, attaining them is not an easy task. Government trails behind the private sector in using AI, the field is complex and has a steep learning curve, and the purpose of – and context within – government presents a number of unique challenges.

Governments around the world have shown significant interest in overcoming these challenges and are endeavouring to catch up, with a view to becoming AI-competent governments as a key aspect of their digital maturity. This trend is demonstrated by the more than 60 countries that have developed national AI strategies, with most including a specific focus on AI in the public sector, and the piloting and implementation of public sector AI projects across dozens of use cases. The OECD is closely monitoring AI developments across the globe through the OECD.AI Policy Observatory (https://oecd.ai), a flagship initiative that closely monitors global developments incorporating AI, as well as through public sector-specific efforts from the OECD Digital Government and Data Unit (https://oe.cd/digitalgov) and the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) (https://oecd-opsi.org), in collaboration with the OECD Working Party of Senior Digital Government Officials (E-Leaders).

The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region is seeking to leverage the immense potential of AI, including for the digital transformation of the public sector. The OECD in collaboration with CAF, Development Bank of Latin America, prepared this report to help national governments in the LAC region understand the current regional baseline of activities and capacities for AI in the public sector; to identify specific approaches and actions they can take to enhance their ability to use this emerging technology for efficient, effective and responsive governments; and optimally, to collaborate across borders in pursuit of a regional vision for AI in the public sector. The analysis in this report incorporates a stocktaking of each country's strategies and commitments around AI in the public sector, including their alignment with the OECD AI Principles, the world's first intergovernmental standards on AI.

This report represents the first findings from a larger comprehensive digital government review of LAC governments by the OECD and CAF, covering topics such as governance, skills and capabilities, building a data-driven public sector, open government data, digital innovation and capacities for leveraging collaborative GovTech approaches. This review entitled *Going Digital: The State of Digital Government in Latin America* is expected to be published later this year.

This report was approved by the OECD Public Governance Committee via written procedure on 14 January 2022 and prepared for publication by the OECD Secretariat.

From:

The Strategic and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector of Latin America and the Caribbean

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/1f334543-en