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Caribbean CTO Brief

From consumers to shapers: the Caribbean's sovereign AI, cyber, and GovTech moment.

Issue 3



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This week's brief shows the Caribbean rapidly shifting from simply using global digital tools to actively building sovereign AI and data infrastructure, tightening cyber and legal foundations, investing in public-service AI skills and GovTech labs, and aligning with new regional benchmarks to shape—not just follow—the next wave of digital government.

Caribbean CTO Brief – Week of 17 November 2025

1. T&T Opens Strategic GovTech Lane with UAE

Signal (17 Nov 2025) Trinidad and Tobago signed a landmark MoU with government-linked technology entities in the United Arab Emirates, signalling a new government-to-government partnership track around digital government, AI and infrastructure.

Estimated impact: High (T&T and regional spillovers) – Potential access to capital, platforms and implementation expertise that could accelerate DPI, cloud and smart-government pilots in T&T, with lessons for CARICOM peers.

Pilot Watch: Use this MoU to co-design 1–2 flagship pilots (e-ID, digital payments, or AI-enabled services) with clear KPIs and regional sharing built in.

Source: Official T&T / UAE releases – 17 Nov 2025.

2. CARICOM's Updated CCSCAP 2025 Raises the Cyber Bar

Signal (31 Oct 2025) CARICOM IMPACS launched the Updated CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan (CCSCAP) 2025 in Port of Spain, adding a sixth pillar on Incident Response and explicitly targeting online fraud, ransomware and identity theft.

Estimated impact: High (regional) – Provides a shared roadmap to harmonise cybercrime laws, stand up or strengthen national CSIRTs and better protect digital government platforms, improving digital trust and readiness scores.

Pilot Watch:

- Fast-track a national CCSCAP gap analysis.
- Prioritise CSIRT build-out and critical-infrastructure incident response playbooks.

Source: CARICOM IMPACS – 31 Oct 2025.

3. Latin American & Caribbean AI Index 2025: Users Up, Investment Down

Signal (14 Nov 2025) ECLAC and Chile's CENIA released the Latin American Artificial Intelligence Index (ILIA 2025), showing LAC generates ~14% of global visits to AI solutions with only 11% of the world's internet users, but captures just ~1.12% of global AI investment, with big gaps in talent and governance. (Source: Intelligent CIO)

Estimated impact: High (strategic) – AI adoption is happening bottom-up via cloud tools, but without stronger public-sector investment, strategies and capacity, Caribbean states risk remaining "consumers not shapers" of AI.

Pilot Watch:

- Mandate each ministry to identify 1–2 AI use cases aligned to national priorities.
- Tie these to a 2026–2027 AI investment and skills plan anchored on ILIA metrics.

4. Public Service AI & Data Training – Last Call for Applications

Signal (Deadline: 21 Nov 2025) The Public Service Academy is advertising multiple online programmes for public officers – including "Policy Analytics: Understanding and Using Data" and "Artificial Intelligence in Public Policy" – with an application deadline of 21 Nov 2025.

Estimated impact: Medium (but foundational) – Directly tackles AI and data capability gaps flagged by ECLAC and others, and can seed internal "AI champions" across ministries before larger investments land.

Time-sensitive: Yes – applications close 21 Nov 2025.

Pilot Watch:

- Each ministry nominates a small cohort (2–5 officers) and formally recognises them as internal AI/data focal points.

Source: Public Service Academy – Nov 2025.

5. T&T GovTech Innovation Lab Gains Global Recognition

Signal (2025 case study) An international 2025 case study confirms that Trinidad and Tobago's government developer innovation lab has delivered 15 public-sector proof-of-concepts, built a community of over 680 local developers, and earned recognition including a WSIS Champion award and the IDB President's Award for Innovation in the Public Sector.

Estimated impact: High (implementation capacity) – Validates a home-grown "GovTech factory" model that other ministries – and other Caribbean states – can plug into rather than building from scratch.

Pilot Watch:

- Expand the lab's mandate to run cross-ministry AI and DPI pilots.
- Formalise a regional "GovTech sandbox" where neighbouring states can test and adapt T&T prototypes.

Source: 2025 international GovTech case study.

6. Guyana–Cerebras MoU: 100MW "Sovereign AI" Data Centre

Signal (MoU signed 2025) Guyana signed an MoU with Cerebras to build and operate an AI data centre of up to 100MW at Wales, powered behind-the-meter from the gas-to-energy project. The partnership, framed under "Cerebras for Nations", includes commitments on data sovereignty, modern digital legislation and a major skills programme for Guyanese engineers, students and researchers. (Source: Business Wire + others)

Estimated impact: Transformational (regional AI compute) – Positions Guyana as a potential sovereign AI hub for CARICOM, with direct implications for hosting national models, government analytics and climate workloads.

Pilot Watch:

- Initiate a CARICOM dialogue on shared "sovereign AI" capacity.
- Explore reserved capacity for Caribbean public-sector workloads with clear data-governance terms.

7. Guyana's "Digital Forest" as a Global Green AI Case Study

Signal (showcased at COP30) At COP30 in Belém, Guyana showcased its AI- and satellite-enabled forest MRV system, built under the Norway partnership and now delivering 15 years of transparent, digital forest monitoring over 18 million hectares. The system is being expanded to track biodiversity indicators and underpins Guyana's LCDS 2030 and the new Global Biodiversity Alliance. (Source: News Room Guyana + others)

Estimated impact: High (climate-governance capacity) – A leading example of a small state using AI + data to enforce climate commitments and monetise ecosystem services.

Pilot Watch:

- Identify 1–2 priority environmental or land-use domains per country (e.g. watersheds, marine areas) where similar MRV models could be adapted in partnership with Guyana.

8. Jamaica's Chief Justice Calls for Laws to Enable Full E-Justice

Signal (2025) Jamaica's Chief Justice Bryan Sykes used the signing of a new Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS) to call for updating national laws so the justice system can operate fully digitally, with hurricane resilience cited as a key driver. The IECMS is being implemented with the Rwanda Corporation Initiative, backed by Global Affairs Canada and UNDP Jamaica. (Source: IRIE FM + others)

Estimated impact: High (justice modernization & interoperability) – Anchors digital justice not just in technology, but in legislation that enables e-filing, electronic evidence and remote hearings across the region.

Pilot Watch:

- Commission a rapid "legal readiness for e-justice" review across CARICOM.
- Use Jamaica–Rwanda as a template for South–South justice-tech partnerships.

Ecosystem Watch – Haiti Tech Connect

Signal (Awards in ~30 days) Haiti will host the inaugural Haiti Tech Connect Awards to honour individuals and organisations in Haiti and the diaspora who are "building the country's digital future." (Source: Le Nouvelliste)

Why it matters: Raises visibility of Haitian digital talent and can become a platform for regional and diaspora partnerships. Consider remote participation, sponsorship or showcasing Caribbean govtech use cases.

Regional Benchmarks – ECLAC's "Digital Government to Smart Government" & eLAC 2026

Signal (2025) ECLAC's *Digital Government to Smart Government* Knowledge Guide and Digital Development Observatory updates frame a new Digital Agenda 2026 for LAC, focused on digital resilience, inclusion and data-driven public services. Recent outputs highlight: digital-resilience strategies, regional skills initiatives and new tools to measure the digital society. (Source: Caribbean Development Portal + ECLAC)

Estimated impact: Medium–High (benchmarking & funding compass) – These are the reference documents multilaterals and donors will use to assess progress and design support.

Pilot Watch:

- Map your national digital strategy explicitly against eLAC 2026 themes.
- Use this alignment when shaping proposals to IDB, CDB, CAF and others in 2026.

Conference Watch (Next 4 Months – "Need to Know")

Time-sensitive priority (speak / partner / learn):

- **Nov 2025 – DevFest Caribbean 2025 (Port of Spain)** *Why it matters:* Deep developer and cloud ecosystem; good venue to scout AI and GovTech talent.
- **Dec 2025 – Connected Caribbean Summit 2025 (CCS 2025)** *Why it matters:* Telecoms, cloud and infrastructure – key for DPI, 5G and resilience deals.
- **Dec 2025 – The Caribbean Digital XII & CarPIF 11** *Why it matters:* Regional digital-policy and interconnection agendas; align national positions, push for improved IXPs and data-resilience measures.
- **Jan–Feb 2026 – CTU / EULAC Data Embassies Webinar; CANTO Connect 2026 & 42nd AGM** *Why it matters:* Data-embassy models for resilience; telco and infrastructure decision-makers in one room.

Trendline: From “Using Global Tools” to Building Sovereign Digital Capacity

Across these signals, the region is shifting from *simply consuming* global platforms to:

- Building sovereign AI and data infrastructure (Guyana–Cerebras, Digital Forest).
- Hardening cyber and legal foundations (CCSCAP 2025, Jamaica’s e-justice push).
- Scaling internal capability (public-service AI/data training, GovTech labs).

For CTOs, the opportunity is to **shape where regional infrastructure, standards and capacity land – not just adapt later.**

Verified Future: Trust, Law and Measurement as Strategic Assets

What’s emerging clearly:

- **Trust infrastructure:** Cyber norms, CSIRTs, MRV systems and justice reforms are becoming core national assets, not side projects.
- **Measurement discipline:** ILIA 2025 and ECLAC’s Smart Government work are the “scoreboards” donors and investors will be watching.
- **Law as enabler:** From cybercrime to e-justice, *updating legislation* is now a precondition for serious digital and AI investments.

For Caribbean executives, the next 6–12 months are ideal to:

1. Align national strategies to these regional benchmarks.
2. Ring-fence capacity-building budgets tied to AI/data and cyber.
3. Enter partnerships (UAE, Rwanda, Cerebras, etc.) with a clear view on **data sovereignty and interoperability** from day one.

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Jevon Beckles · 1st
CEO at Reasonable ICT Solutions

1d ...

Might be good to include the links to the websites for some of these things where applicable.

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Irwin Williams Author
Head of Software Development at iGovTT

23h ...

Jevon Beckles thanks!

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Jevon Beckles · 1st
CEO at Reasonable ICT Solutions

1d ...

Link for item 4: <http://mpaai.gov.tt/training/policy-analytics-understanding-and-using-data>

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