Guatemala — Which language, which record, which port?



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A service that works in the capital can still misread a classroom instruction in Izabal or count the wrong cargo unit at Santo Tomás de Castilla. Give local reviewers the original record, the authority to correct an answer and a way to preserve the correction when the service is updated.

The decision before local leaders

This paper proposes two starting points for Guatemala. Before either begins, the service owner should agree on an existing comparison service, a way to challenge an error and the conditions for ending the trial.

Have pupils carry out locally reviewed instructions before distributing an AI lesson.

Proposed lead. Classroom teacher and participating language reviewer

What to measure. Correct completion by language variety and instructions withdrawn for revision.

Audit sample replies to municipal records requests.

Proposed lead. Municipal information officer

What to measure. Replies corrected before release and time needed to retrieve the version sent.

Local evidence in context

Indicator	Value	Observation	Source
Population	18,687,881	2025	World Bank WDI
GDP per person, current US dollars	6,598	2025	World Bank WDI
Residents aged 65 and over	5.0%	2025	World Bank WDI
People using the internet	60.2%	2024	ITU / World Bank

The year and geographic coverage belong to each observation. These figures describe the jurisdiction as a whole. Collect service-level figures before setting a cost target, staff requirement or digital access threshold.

Economic and social needs

Separate cargo estimates from a driver’s booking

The institutional plan for Empresa Portuaria Nacional Santo Tomás de Castilla includes forecasts of cargo tonnage. A forecast expressed in tonnes cannot tell a dispatcher how many lorries will reach a gate in a given hour. If a terminal tests a planning assistant, keep long-term projections apart from live bookings. Compare each recommended slot with arrival time, cargo type and the wait actually experienced by the driver.

Policy response. Label the planning horizon and unit on each scheduling screen and keep a manual booking route.

EMPORNAC, institutional strategic plan 2023–2027

Test understanding in the language of instruction

The Guatemalan government recognises 22 Mayan languages alongside Garifuna and Xinka, with Spanish as the official language. Testing a lesson in one language will leave questions about the others unanswered. Teachers should choose the variety used in their classroom and ask pupils to carry out a short instruction. If several pupils misunderstand the same step, change the wording with a local reviewer before offering it to another school.

Policy response. Record the variety, task and reviewer for every translated lesson offered under the pilot.

Government of Guatemala, National Day of Indigenous Languages

Public institutions and environmental needs

Keep the grounds for withholding a record visible

Guatemala's public information law, Decree 57-2008, distinguishes material that may be released from information restricted or reserved under law. A tool helping a municipal office search records could retrieve an entire file when only part of it answers a request. The records officer should identify the relevant material, check the basis for any restriction and retain the version actually released to the requester.

Policy response. Test search and redaction on copies before an assistant can prepare a reply for release.

Republic of Guatemala, Decree 57-2008, public information law

Check a river observation before mapping it

Guatemala's council for protected areas lists Río Dulce National Park in Izabal. If staff use an assistant to group reports of changes along the river, a place name heard from a boat should remain attached to the original report. A similarly named landing may lie on another bank. Field reviewers should confirm the location and decide whether a report belongs on a public map or only in a working file.

Policy response. Keep an unverified-location category and record who confirmed the bank and landing.

CONAP, protected areas register entry for Río Dulce National Park

How the policy would change a decision

Build the public search collection from approved instructions and blank application forms. For a resident asking about an individual case, route the request to a service that verifies identity and gives staff access to the correct file.

- Review each document before the chatbot can retrieve it.
- Try a query naming a neighbour using an invented case. Check that the answer cannot reveal the address or application.
- Provide an officer or staffed phone line for corrections and questions the chatbot cannot answer.

The municipal records officer should keep an inventory of public documents and a copy of the invented-case test. If the service retrieves a completed form, disconnect that collection, investigate earlier disclosures and keep the staffed service available.

Source: CAIA jurisdiction guide for Guatemala. The worked example illustrates the proposal.

Test a lesson in the language children use

Commission teachers and speakers of the specific language to review a local lesson, for example instructions for keeping drinking water safe after a flood. Ask pupils to explain the action without help. Keep an offline version.

The local pilot connects to Education and research. Review R03 · R05 in the regional risk register.

Implementation and public review

Stage	Evidence or decision	Proposed responsibility
Before the trial	Define a completed case and sample the current process. Include people who use the phone, desk or an offline route.	Classroom teacher and participating language reviewer
During shadow testing	Correct completion by language variety and instructions withdrawn for revision. Compare the same cases through both routes and record every override.	Classroom teacher and participating language reviewer
At the local decision	Replies corrected before release and time needed to retrieve the version sent. Record whether the result justifies a live trial and identify the person who can stop it.	Municipal information officer
After six months	Publish results by channel, the correction time, unresolved complaints and the decision to continue, revise or stop.	Local service owner

What partners can share

Guatemala, Belize and other willing partners could share lesson-testing methods and pay local language reviewers separately. Each language community should decide what material it is willing to license.

Record the local approval, correction route and stop authority before exchanging results. Other jurisdictions can reuse the method and run their own tests. Regional recommendation 5.

Where to draw the boundary

An office adopting this proposal would still need to check its own powers, contracts and data permissions. Organisations named as possible reviewers or leads have not been appointed by this publication. Publish any accepted role and its date with the local trial record.

A 90-day plan for the first service

Have pupils carry out locally reviewed instructions before distributing an AI lesson.

Proposed pilot lead. Classroom teacher and participating language reviewer

A lesson mistranslates a step pupils need to follow

Failure to test. An AI lesson changes an action in a language variety used by the class.

Evidence to retain. Keep the approved instructions and observed completion counts by language variety without identifying pupils.

Pause condition. A locally reviewed action cannot be understood consistently enough to use the lesson.

When	Proposed action and evidence
Days 1–30	Classroom teacher and participating language reviewer agrees the eligible cases, existing service measures, staffed alternative and authorised decision owner. Record reviewers and a cost estimate in local currency for staff time, testing, access and recovery. Identify the funding source and who would approve it.
Days 31–60	Run the original and proposed routes on the same sample. Correct completion by language variety and instructions withdrawn for revision. Report counted errors and eligible cases by channel and language where lawful, plus the time from error report to correction.
Days 61–90	Witness the fallback, correction and restart before asking the accountable officer for a decision. Pause on the condition above. Record affected cases, unresolved issues, costs and the date for the next check.
Six months after live launch	Publish a lawful comparison with the baseline, including corrections, open complaints and the decision to continue, change or end the use.

Sponsorship, funding and the proposed lead’s acceptance require a recorded local decision. Share test methods with Caribbean partners using the local data permissions.

Sector guide · Government of Guatemala, National Day of Indigenous Languages · Local evidence and sources · Regional high-impact use rules · Local risk scenario

Sources and method

The committee used published local evidence to select the four priorities and compared them with the Caribbean AI Framework's requirements for access, data, skills, oversight and adoption. Recommendations and stories are editorial proposals. This edition reports no results from a completed local pilot.

1. EMPORNAC, institutional strategic plan 2023–2027
2. Government of Guatemala, National Day of Indigenous Languages
3. Republic of Guatemala, Decree 57-2008, public information law
4. CONAP, protected areas register entry for Río Dulce National Park
5. World Bank WDI — Population
6. World Bank WDI — GDP per person, current US dollars
7. World Bank WDI — Residents aged 65 and over
8. ITU / World Bank — People using the internet
9. Guatemala jurisdiction guide, Caribbean AI Association
10. Guatemala pilot note, Caribbean AI Association
11. Caribbean AI Framework, consultation edition, 27 November 2026

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