Recovery Plan for the Communications and Information Technology Sector After Hurricanes Irma and Maria: Laying the Foundation for the Digital Transformation of Puerto Rico

AMADO CORDOVA, RYAN CONSAUL, KARLYN D. STANLEY, AJAY K. KOCHHAR, RICARDO SANCHEZ, DAVID METZ

Focusing on the communications and information technology (IT) sector, the authors assess the damage caused in 2017 by Hurricanes Irma and Maria and present 33 courses of action (COAs) that will both help the sector (and, more broadly, Puerto Rico) recover in a sustainable and resilient manner and support a digital transformation of Puerto Rico.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the nature and extent of damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria to the communications and IT sector?
- What are the sector's top-level needs and how can they be most efficiently and effectively met, both in the short term and with a view toward long-term benefits and the sustainability and resilience of infrastructure?
- How will these needs and priorities be addressed by specific COAs?
- How will the COAs contribute to the digital transformation of Puerto Rico?

KEY FINDINGS

Puerto Rico must develop and implement a state-of-the art, survivable, resilient communications infrastructure

- This infrastructure is essential for continuity of essential government functions and the provision of public safety services and must be well maintained and fully resourced.

- It must provide commercial telecommunication services, including voice and data services, to residents and the private sector and support affordable access to broadband internet service and emerging technologies throughout Puerto Rico.

- It is crucial for furthering the economic and social vitality of Puerto Rico and should thus host applications and web services that foster government and private-sector innovation, increase economic opportunity, and improve the quality of life for the residents of Puerto Rico.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- This report details 33 specific COAs addressing the needs for recovery of the communications and IT sector in ways that are sustainable and resilient; describes how they build on and support one another; and explains how COAs will further the economic development of Puerto Rico and the well-being of its residents.