

Dinero Electrónico: The First Mobile CBDC¹

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Abstract

Dinero Electrónico was a mobile payment system developed by the Banco Central del Ecuador that allowed citizens to transfer USD balances in real-time from person to person using basic cell phones. The program operated between 2014 and 2018. A key driver of the program was increase to financial inclusion in order to reduce the need for the central bank to hold and distribute large quantities of USD notes. We discuss reasons why the program was ultimately discontinued, including opposition to the program from private banks, and outline lessons learned.

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