



THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN COSTA RICA:

THE APPLICATION OF AN INTEGRATED
APPROACH FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS (SDGs)



**United Nations
Environment Programme**

INTRODUCTION

Costa Rica's commitment to the achievement of sustainable development has been steadily solid for decades. As a result, there are national and local initiatives in place that are already contributing to the targets. In particular, the Environ-

ment, Energy, Seas and Land Management Sector has recently mapped 118 initiatives of this nature, which involve 44 institutions of Costa Rica. Following the mapping and dialogue with the stakeholders of the Sector, this note presents practical

information in regards to the gaps, challenges, and areas of opportunities for Costa Rica to advance with a long-term development plan that integrates environmental sustainability and ensures the achievement of the SDGs in 2030.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, SEA, AND LAND MANAGEMENT SECTOR



118 initiatives contributing to the SDGs



44 institutions directly involved

KEY MESSAGES



THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION directly impacts the economic and social dimensions of development, and vice versa.



THERE IS A NEED TO DECOUPLE ECONOMIC GROWTH from environmental degradation (current development patterns are unsustainable).



WORK PROPOSALS and coordination in six key areas intrinsically related with the SDGs.



THERE IS A NEED FOR GREATER INTEGRATION and participation of all social actors (civil society, academia, and the private sector).



THERE IS A NEED FOR A LONG-TERM MULTISECTORAL planning toward the achievement of sustainable development.



ACTIONS SHOULD BE INCLUDED in the multi-annual operational plans, budgets and human resources of the institutions.

01. COSTA RICA AND THE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

Costa Rica is working to integrate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at a national level and to define relevant targets.

THE 2030 AGENDA and the SDGs

- ✓ Integrate international commitments
- ✓ Symphonize the will of a variety of stakeholders
- ✓ Consider all means of implementation

which has fundamental implicative approaches of how the transitioning toward the achievement of the SDGs can be successfully accomplished, and how its means of implementation are to be appropriately applied in order to fulfill the objectives of the SDGs.

Costa Rica is working to integrate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at a national level and to define relevant targets. Some themes are:

the centrality of **equality goals**,

the need for a **progressive structural change**,

and the establishment of a new equation among the state, society, and the market to effectively complement all efforts in a **single cohesive alliance**.

National Decree, the Costa Rican Government has created a High Level Council, which is formed by the President, and the Ministers of Planning (MIDEPLAN), Environment and Energy (MINAE), and Foreign Affairs. The national SDG coordination currently includes this High Level Council, a Technical Secretariat, and multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder work groups. The Council will meet regularly, three times every year, and its functions are:

To define a National Policy for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the SDGs with a prospective approach, integrating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, in accordance with the standards of Human Rights, and both National and International Laws;

To establish the requisite measures that will allow for the allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the SDGs;

any other measures derived from the exercise of its competence.

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs integrate all international commitments necessary to generate successful synergies in planning, implementing, and follow-up. The 2030 Agenda also seeks to symphonize the will of a variety of stakeholders to achieve a coherence of actions and Investments. For this reason, the recognition that development aid is insufficient, as it is needed to consider aspects as domestic resources, private investments, as well as other means of implementation ranging from technology, the availability of information, and the mobilization of Aliances at all levels. This opportunistic approach is one of the guiding principles of the Agenda, which entails policy congruity and the prioritization of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),

For these reasons, on the 9th of September 2016, Costa Rica signed the National Pact for the Achievement of the SDGs.

Within the framework of this National Pact through the means of a

**NATIONAL PACT
SIGNED ON THE 9TH OF SEPTEMBER 2016**

SIGNERS

 <p>CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: President of the Republic, President of Legislative Assembly, President of Supreme Court of Justice and Supreme Tribunal and Supreme Tribunal President of Elections</p>	 <p>PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: Advisory President of National Rectories</p>	 <p>LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: Executive Director of Local Governments, National Association of Mayors and Intendencies</p>
 <p>PRIVATE SECTOR: Global Pact Local Network Directive Joint President and Costa Rican Union of Chambers and Associations of the Private Business Sector (UCCAEP)</p>	 <p>CIVIL SOCIETY Federation of Social Organizations Red Viva (Live Network) Biklo Cooperative, Habitat for Humanity, Latin American University Library, Evangelical Church of Latin America</p>	 <p>WITNESSES OF HONOR: Defender of the Inhabitants and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System</p>

COMMITMENTS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Contribute to the fulfillment of the SDGs and its goals contained in the 2030 Agenda. ✔ Propitiate the mobilization of available resources to achieve the objectives and goals of the 2030 Agenda. ✔ Incorporate the objectives and goals of the 2030 Agenda into the planification and proposal of institutions and organizations. ✔ Strengthen institutional capacities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Promote a vision of the future for Costa Rica based on the 2030 Agenda. ✔ Actively participate in convocated Work Groups for the Technical Secretariat of the SDGs. ✔ Participate in the implementation of the National Strategy for SDGs follow-up. ✔ Be accountable to citizens for progress and gaps in implementation.
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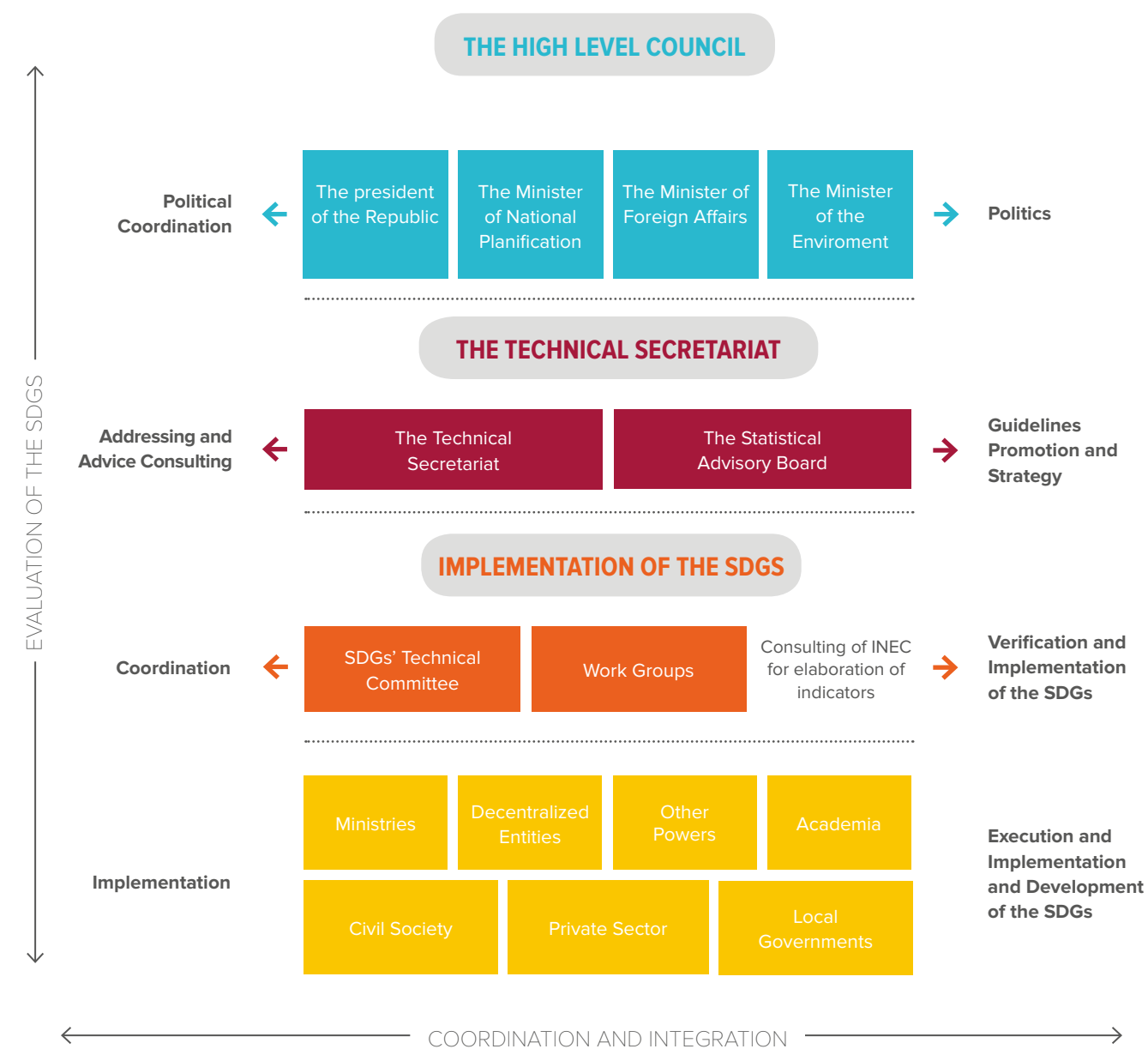
Source: Prepared from the text of the Pact

The inclusion of the SDGs within the institutional and national planning processes has been identified as a central point in the achievement of long-term efforts that will persist despite governmental

changes, which occur every four years. The Environment, Energy, Seas, and Land Management Sector was selected as a pilot to identify the country's progress and gaps in attaining a comprehensive

plan for the achievement of the SDGs. This process aimed also to consider the interrelation of this Sector's initiatives with the other development planning areas of the country's government.

LEVELS OF COORDINATION AND ARTICULATION FOR THE GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs IN COSTA RICA



Source: Technical Secretariat of the SDGs. Vice Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, Ministry of Planning.

02. AN ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

AS AN ENTRY POINT TO PROMOTE INTEGRATED SDG ACHIEVEMENTS

An integrated approach for sustainable development is one of the guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda. The focus relies, then, in balancing the benefits of the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, environmental, and economic. This is one of the reasons why environmental issues have a preponderant role in the Agenda, and 86 of the 169 SDG's targets include specific references to the link of the environment to other development priorities (such as: poverty and hunger reduction, health, education, and gender equality, among others). This recognizes that environmental policies, programs, and projects have a

direct impact on the economic and social aspects of sustainable development, and vice versa. In the case of Costa Rica, the Environment, Energy, Seas, and Land Management Sector is an inter-institutional coordination mechanism created to contribute toward the improvement of the quality of life of the population through the efficient management, conservation, and sustainable use of goods, services, and natural resources. The sector's efforts have focused on directing, coordinating, and executing public policy processes to implement a responsible environmental management compatible with sustainable human

development. The sector is made up of fourteen Ministries, which offer the opportunity to advance in the coordination and coherence of public action.

Some of the recent developments in this area include:

1 Improvement in environmental public management, particularly in relation to the competitiveness of the National Technical Secretariat for the Environment (SETENA), the governance of the energy subsector through the installation of the National Commission for the Conservation of Electricity (CONACE) and the creation of the Cocos Marine Conservation area.

2 Optimization of the energy matrix and the management of climate change, including the preparation and formalization of the VII National Energy Plan (2015-2030), and the implementation of national mitigation actions (NAMAs) to reduce emissions in the coffee and livestock sectors.

3 Advances in biodiversity protection, including the enactment of the National Biodiversity Policy, the reformulation of the payment for Environmental Services Program and most recently, the identification of 20 voluntary commitments submitted by the country to The Ocean Conference.

4 Efficient management of water resources with different initiatives, including the Integral Water Supply Program for Guanacaste, the launch of the AguaTica Fund, which through a public-private partnership seeks to protect and improve resource governance, and the integrated management of wetlands through the National Wetlands Policy (2017-2030).

5 Regarding technical regulations focused on sustainability, it is worth mentioning the issuance of technical regulations for the application of sustainable criteria in Public Procurement.

With these developments, Costa Rica has already made significant progress in formulating initiatives which combine environ-

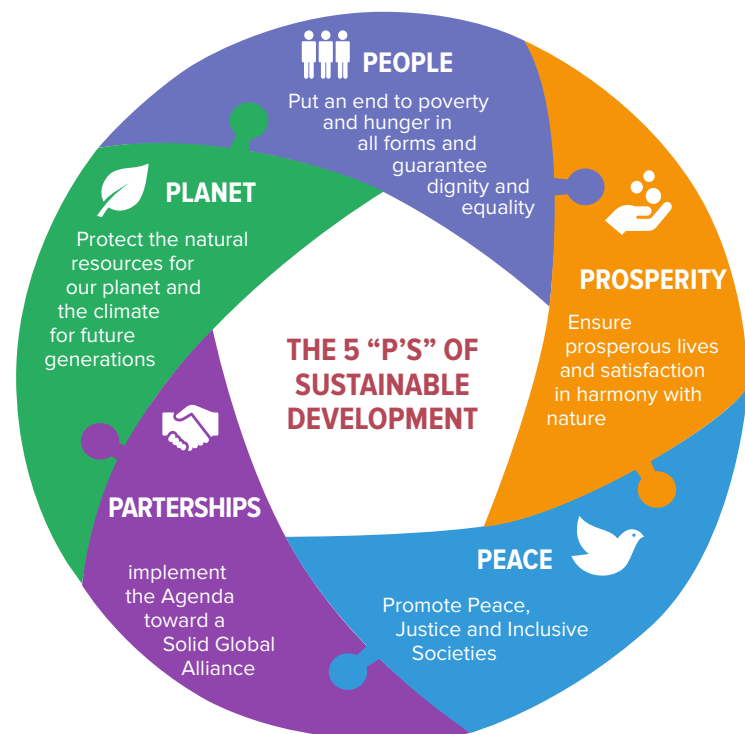
mental, social, and economic objectives around themes such as: Adaptation to Climate Change, Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems. A necessity for mainstreaming the perspective of poverty reduction and environmental management has also been identified.

MAPPING RESULTS

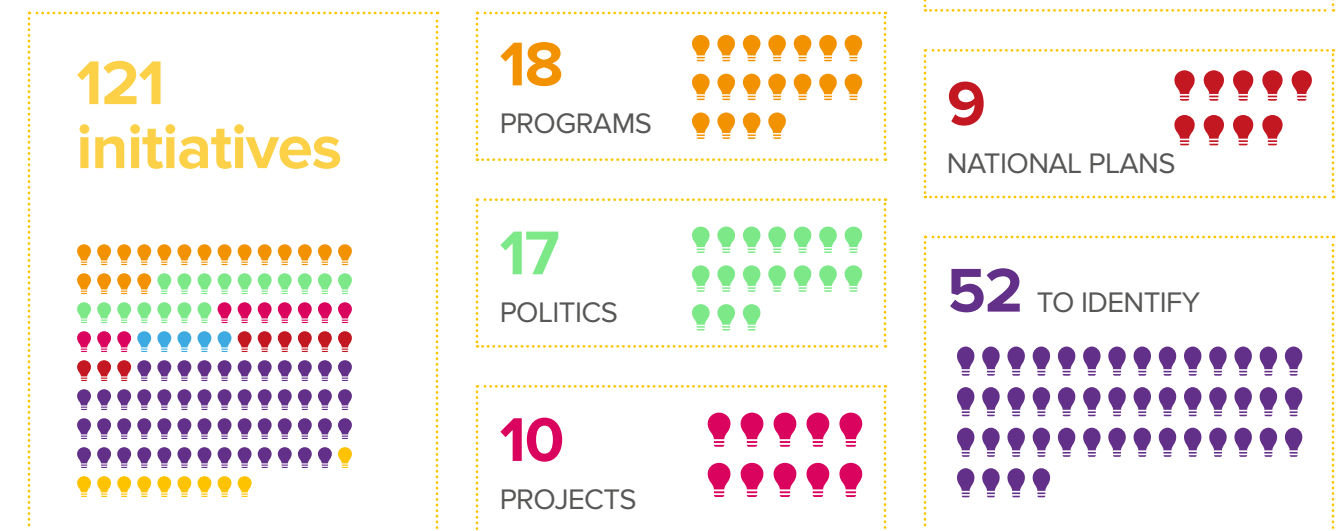
In order to define the transformational changes at a structural level, which must be made in order to achieve synergies with the SDGs, a mapping of the Initiatives of the Environment, Energy, Seas, and Land Management Sector has been carried out. In this way, 118 Initiatives have been identified

which directly contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Forty-four public organizations (including Ministries, Institutions, and / or Entities) participate in them. Ten of these initiatives are inter-institutionally coordinated, and 39 are led by the Directorates of MINAE. Their themes range from adapt-

ing to climate change, optimizing the energy matrix, developing the agro-food sector, rural development, and zero hunger, to sustainable consumption and production, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, integrated water resource management, and sustainable land management.



TOTAL INITIATIVES MAPPED RELATED TO THE SDGS.



Likewise, the main gaps in the achievement of the SDGs were identified. These include:

1 the need to articulate the targets with the Institutional Operational Plans and the respective allocation of budgetary and human resources required for their implementation;

2 the need to consolidate a long-term multisectoral vi-

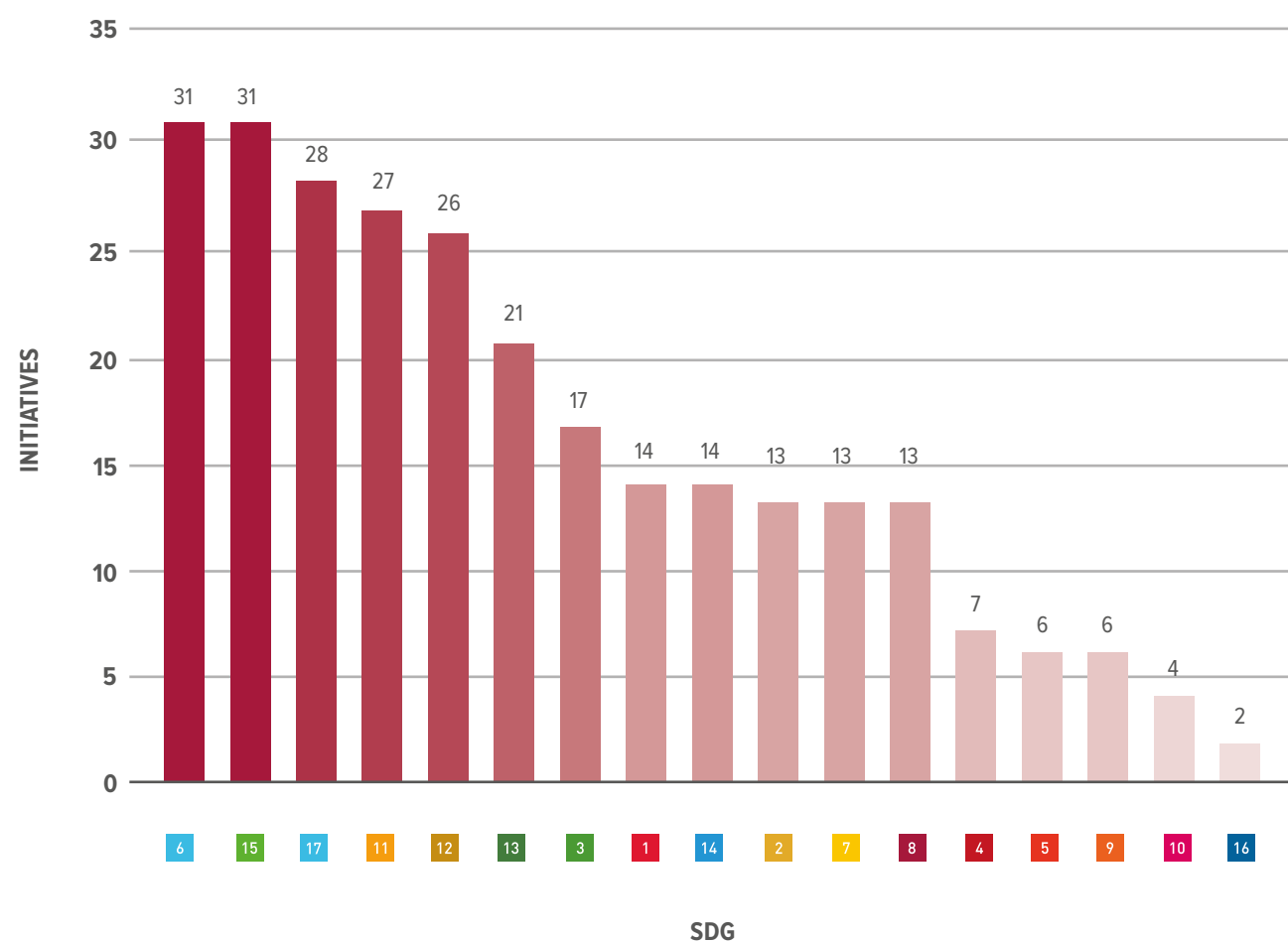
sion in the implementation of the SDGs; and

3 the need to have indicators for the different targets.

Based on these gaps, the Environment, Energy, Seas, and Land Management Sector has defined specific recommendations for action in six key themes, through which progress can be made in inte-

grated approaches for sustainable development. These recommendations are aligned with the country's key challenges in ensuring the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment reflected under Article 50 of the National Constitution. All these areas define one SDG as an entry point, but also potentiate synergies with others.

DISTRIBUTION OF INITIATIVES MAPPED BY THE SDGs



03. COMPREHENSIVE AXES FOR SDG

ACHIEVEMENT BY THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, SEAS AND LAND MANAGEMENT SECTOR:



Benefits of Forest Conservation for Human Development

Synergies with SDGs: 6 15

Forests are a key resource for the conservation of water resources (and the provision of water and energy), and of biodiversity (with implications for the pharmaceutical industry), landscaping (and its relation to tourism, employment, poverty, and infrastruc-

ture), and carbon sequestration (impact on climate change). To successfully strengthen an encompassed approach among forest conservation, economic production, and social welfare, the following actions are proposed:

1. Establish more forestry incentives, especially for reforestation.
2. Increase the budget of the sector.
3. Implement projects with a focus on productive landscapes.
4. Strengthen the SINAC, especially on the control of illegal activities.
5. Improve market access in the timber sector and improve technical assistance for producers.
6. Reform the Water Law.



National Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production

Synergies with SDGs: 1 2 3 4 6 7 8 12

The shift toward sustainable consumption and production patterns is a crosscutting issue, which to a large extent relates to other priorities, such as fiscal mana-

gement, employment, and poverty. A National Strategy could have impacts on many of the SDGs. The proposal includes the following actions:

1. Diagnosis of regulatory framework, follow-up, and monitoring that is to be maintained as a constant function.
2. Establish a steering and decision-making body, which organizes and directs, has political relevance, and brings together many actors, especially the private sector, and the associations of producers and consumers.
3. Constant communication programs for both producers and consumers.
4. Promote a change in consumer attitudes, which would generate a demand for a more sustainable production.
5. Promote more efforts like DIGEPYME, to strengthen as well as provide support to sustainable initiatives.



Sustainable & inclusive access to water & sanitation

Synergies with other SDGs:

- 1
- 4
- 8
- 11
- 13
- 14
- 15

The coverage in the water supply is almost total, nevertheless 48% of the water resource is wasted, and the sanitation coverage is minimal with an estimated lag of 60 years. This impacts not only on the sustainable

use of water resources, but also the indicators of environmental quality, quality of life of the populations, and key productive sectors such as tourism. The following actions are suggested:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen municipal regulatory plans and the management and use of water resources. 2. Reform the civil service to have human resources with expertise in the area, and an inter-ministerial approach. 3. Integrate interinstitutional and multi-year budgets to have long term projections for the investments in the sector. 4. Integrate existing information systems such as SNIT, SENIGA, SIREA, | <p>RECOPE, IMN, ICE, among others, and promote education and training in sustainable water use.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Involve MINAE, CENIT, SIREA, Treasury, INDER, Salud, and the private sector, among others, for a more comprehensive management of water resources. 6. Carry out a systematic mapping of sanitation needs and create a Sanitation Investment Fund. |
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Diversification of the Energy Matrix and Reduction of Dependence on Hydrocarbons

Synergies with SDGs:

- 1
- 3
- 8
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13

This proposal centers on two clear emphases: electric energy and the availability of fuels, especially in rela-

tion to the transport sector and its dependence on fossil fuels. The following actions are identified:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work towards the goal of the National Development Plan aimed to provide access to electricity with photovoltaic systems. 2. Incorporating biofuels into the energy matrix. Establishment of a Commission to develop this topic. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Promote an electric transportation system through the Electric Vehicle Law by strengthening its implementation through the establishment of Public-Private Partnerships, MOPT, ARESEP, RECOPE, MINAE, and MinSALUD. |
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Resilient and low carbon development

Synergies with SDGs:

- 2
- 6
- 7
- 9
- 11
- 12

The country has clear guidelines to follow in this area: the National Climate Change Strategy, on one hand, and the agreements reached in Paris 2015, on the other hand. However,

climate change actions have the potential to draw a clear path of sustainable development by enhancing the integration of the work of most development stakeholders and:

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporating adaptation to and mitigation of climate change in the agenda of political parties and other development actors, such as local governments, academia, SETENA, civil society, Comptroller's Office, and the private sector. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Reducing the vulnerability of policies, their targets, and public investment, in general, to climate change. 3. Applying the regulations that contemplate the incorporation of climate change as a cross-cutting issue in policy design. |
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Environmentally Sustainable Agro-food Systems

Synergies with SDGs:

- 1
- 5
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 14
- 15

In order to strengthen the environmental sustainability of the agricultural sector, the following is proposed:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration of sectoral and multi-annual budgets to implement actions aimed at solving and/or reducing sector gaps. 2. Establishment of long-term action lines, achieving a balance between actions which do not have a budget in the Annual Operational Plan but that will continue beyond the scope of the four years government term. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Reform of Civil Service to ensure availability of human resources with expertise in this area and in an inter-ministerial approach. 4. Establishment of a common platform that facilitates access to information given that the information system which is currently available, is not adequately shared. 5. Incorporate private sector actors with special emphasis on small producers. |
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04. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

POLICY INTEGRATION TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As shown by the previously presented six comprehensive axes, there are ample opportunities to generate synergies among the SDGs so that their implementation is more effective, and also uses more efficiently financial, human, and technical resources that are often scarce. These actions are necessary not only to balance social, environmental, and economic benefits, but also to complement development strategies at different implementation levels (community, local, sub-national, sectoral, and national), as well as enhance coherence with the regional and international agreements assumed by the country.

In this sense, Costa Rica is working under a results-based management methodology and the High Council for the SDGs has defined three entry points to implement the 2030 Agenda in the country.

Costa Rica is a strong country in relation to the conservation of its natural wealth. However, the country shows a tendency toward an unsustainable development pattern since its economic growth continues to be linked to environmental deterioration and an increasing



ecological footprint. In relation to land-use patterns and natural resources management, there is a growing socio-environmental conflictivity. The state should therefore have greater capacities and instruments to prevent negative impacts and reconcile diverse interests for sustainable development.

This reality affects not only the ecological dimension; but also the fulfillment of human rights. The negative impacts on ecosystem services compromise development objectives and the enjoyment of fundamental rights. This is of particular importance in the case of the

most vulnerable population sectors, and their sustainable, equal and effective access to resources such as water and land, among others.

Regarding institutional strengthening, a thorough review of public tasks versus State capacities is needed with the aim of ensuring the fulfillment of all human rights. A revision of the existing normativity can identify overlaps of functions among institutions and ways to reduce them. In addition, institutions must modernize their ability to exercise control, evaluate performance and monitoring, particularly for the prevention of negative environmental and social impacts. Finally, the Civil Service must ensure new areas of technical expertise, such as water management, strengthen technical capacities of public servants in their work areas, and ensure they have capacities to work with an inter-ministerial approach and develop multi-sectoral initiatives.

With regards to the implementation of government proposals, there is a need to ensure that they are strategic, exceed the four-year governmental period, have measurable goals, and a clear roadmap toward the achievement of the SDGs.

OPPORTUNITIES



Indicators for monitoring and setting national targets

With regard to measurable objectives, the definition of specific SDG indicators is an integral factor in the advancement of the stated targets. The process carried out by the Environment, Energy, Seas, and Land Management Sector can enhance the achievement of results of a wide array of initiatives, especially in areas such as nutrition, marine life, sustainable communities, and climate change, among others. Today, Costa Rica has a diagnosis for each of 17 SDGs, has raised awareness of strategic actors and defined short-term priorities to begin the 2030 Agenda implementation. At the global level, the indicators have been divided into three levels; in Costa Rica, 35% are at Level 1, i.e. they have data and methodology for their calculations. This is the case, for example, for the rate of mortality, which is attributed to household's and ambient air pollution that makes a clear connexion between health and the quality of the environment. Costa Rica has established baselines and is reviewing both the indicators and

the methodological sheets for their calculation. While recognizing that this is a dynamic process which is susceptible to adjustments, the first group of Indicators is being defined. Currently, there are two central challenges, which have been identified in this area:

1 The officials who manage the information must provide the same data to various entities / processes at different times, which affects perception of low efficiency of measurement and monitoring within the institutional framework.


2 Occasionally the officials responsible for generating the necessary data for the calculation of indicators lack technical capacity in this regard, which implies the need to identify and strengthen the capacities of the key persons in charge of data management in each institution.

In this context, having a centralized information system that facilitates the availability of information, aside from being responsible

for the generation of said information, will positively impact the progress in the measurement of results, and in the strengthening of national capacities.

The more specific efforts linked to priorities clearly identified thus far, are also indispensable to marking the path of progress with concrete steps. For example, regarding the relationship between social and environmental issues, there is already an effort to identify actions for the reduction of disaster's risks given the increasing vulnerability of the population living in conditions of poverty and inequality. In this sense, progress has already been made in establishing a National Dialogue to put an end to poverty, which includes the definition of indicators together with the Statistics Office (with indicators of Levels 1, 2, and 3), and the definition of integrated public policies linked to the SDGs. However, the issue of resilient infrastructure still remains at an early stage of conceptualization, therefore, most indicators do not yet have data and / or are not yet defined.

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1 The level 2 SDG indicators have an agreed methodology, but related data is not easy to be obtained. Level 3 indicators do not have methodology and the data is not easy to be obtained.



An Action Plan for the Operationalization of the National Pact for the SDGs

An integrated approach toward the fulfillment of the SDGs requires an articulated work between actors and sectors, the achievement of national consensus and accords, and coordination mechanisms which break from the traditional logic of working in isolation or in “silos”. Given that a National Pact has already been signed and multisectoral and multi-stakeholder work groups have already been formed, there is a key platform for the effective involvement of governmental sectors, and society in general, in the implementation of the SDGs.

Prior to the realization of multi-sector (governmental-level) and multi-stakeholder workshops, a Work Group has been formed in which SEPLASA, MIDEPLAN, CENIGA, and INEC participate to review available information, establish key targets, and identify policy makers in order to align national policies, laws, regulations, and action plans with the SDGs. This stage will be culminated at the end of July 2017, and a validation phase of the pro-

posed actions started with the participation of other governmental sectors, decentralized entities, and other stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society.

The multi-sectoral Work Groups will validate the goals and the progress of the Draft Plan of Action in the following three identified priorities:

1 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION;

2 POVERTY REDUCTION;

3 CITIES AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE.

This validation process of the national targets will be structured based on the integrated approach for the SDGs. Therefore, the persisting perspective that the targets related to the environment are of

a purely sectoral nature will need to be overcome. Additionally, the participation of non-governmental stakeholders is essential to define specific proposals and contributions from them, and in order to ensure their commitment with the SDGs and an effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is suggested that this process is complemented by a compilation of relevant data, including baselines, financial scenarios, implementation options, and the viability of achieving the SDGs, among others. After the multi-sectoral and multi-actor Workshop in August 2017, MIDEPLAN will prepare the National Action Plan, which will be ready in February 2018.

In order for each sector to include the corresponding actions in its operational plan, it is necessary for the Technical Secretariat to establish the frequency for the Work Groups meeting in order to obtain feedback, inputs, and additional information from each Sector which will allow for the definition of the final version of the Action Plan by MIDEPLAN.



Follow-up on Integrated Implementation


Finally, once the Action Plan for the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda has been validated, the platform provided by the National Pact will play a key role. It can serve to ensure that the representatives of each of the signatory sectors will disseminate the information and facilitate the coordination to ensure the achievement of intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral targets.

In the monitoring process, it is suggested that the multi-sectoral workspaces be facilitated by National and / or International experts

who will support and accompany the process, as well as ensure that sustainability issues are addressed in the sectoral planning processes.

In order to make monitoring and evaluation more efficient, as well as providing an allowance for any necessary adjustments in order to focus on expected SDG results, MIDEPLAN has proposed a long-term evaluation mechanism to measure the contribution of sectoral results to the attainment of national targets, and in turn to the effective accomplishment of the SDGs.

Regarding accountability and transparency, it is imperative that periodic public reports on the progress made in the Action Plan, and the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda be produced, with an underscoring on how these processes will exemplify into concrete impacts on the quality of life of the population. These can be complemented by actions to disseminate, raise awareness, and adopt good practices among citizens to promote lifestyles and initiatives, which will effectively contribute to the fulfillment of the SDGs.



Synergies with the Process of Incorporation into the OECD

Strengthening the existing synergies between the implementation of the SDGs and the incorporation of Costa Rica within the OECD is vital, as these two processes are currently underway with clear synergies and mutually beneficial contributions. In this regard, work is in progress in relation to the SDGs and the OECD's twenty-two Committees, and there is a great opportunity to make joint recommendations, define intersectoral goals, and then carry out a process of common validation both at the governmental level, within civ-

il society, and the private sector. For example, the next step would be to establish an action plan for each of the National Development Sectors, such as the Business Sector roadmap developed on the basis of dialogue between Business Chambers, through tools such as the “SDG Compass” and the “SDGs’ Matrices”, which includes the priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by economic activity. Likewise, the incorporation of the SDGs and their targets into the Institutional Operational Plans will have implications

for budget allocation and the priorities of Cantonal Plans, Operational Plans, ministries, decentralized entities, other powers, civil society, private sector, academia, and local governments. These planning and prioritization processes are an opportunity to define concrete actions and the generation of clear synergies between the achievement of the SDGs and the fulfillment of the OECD access requirements, so as to make a parallel process more efficient and avoid duplication of planning and implementation instruments.implementación.

05. CONCLUSIONS

1. Costa Rica has made significant progress regarding the 2030 Agenda, notably with the formal signing of the National Pact for SDG Achievement and the formalization of a SDG governance, and implementation mechanism, by Executive Decree in February 2017.
2. With respect to the effective integration of the environmental dimension into the SDGs, the defined strategic route shall be maintained to reflect not only the necessity to protect environmental assets, but also to ensure that opportunities toward the development of an inclusive and an environmentally sustainable development is accomplished. To this extent, the centrality of an integrated approach should be ensured to the SDGs within institutional planning not by sector but recognizing the multiple relationships, benefits, and synergies between all the SDG targets.
3. According to the mapping carried-out, the Environment, Energy, Seas and Land Management Sector is already substantially contributing to the progress toward the fulfillment of the SDGs in Costa Rica. Thus far, 118 Initiatives have been identified which are contributing directly to the 17 SDGs through the work of 44 public entities.
4. This is a contribution, which can be further enhanced. In fact, the specific recommendations proposed by the Environment, Energy, Seas and Land Management Sector to overcome the existing

gaps required to reach all of the objectives of the SDGs include the following:

- ◆ Consolidate a long-term multi-sectoral vision in the implementation of the SDGs, which will allow for the implementation and development of structural decisions and transformational changes toward accomplishing sustainable development.
- ◆ Articulate the goals established in the Institutional Operational Plans with the SDGs and allocate budgetary and human resources for the execution of initiatives focused on the achievement of the SDG targets.
- ◆ Have indicators for the SDG targets, which will allow for the establishment of national objectives and for the follow-up of the achievement of results.
- ◆ Generate integrated environmental core actions encompassing the six comprehensive focus areas defined: adaptation to climate change; energy optimization; development of the agri-food sector, rural development and zero hunger, sustainable production and consumption, biodiversity conservation, and integrated water management, as a direct contribution toward the three structural axes defined by the High Level Council for the Achievement of the SDGs: 1) Sustainable Consumption and Production 2) Reduction of Poverty 3) Resilient Cities and Infrastructure

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