



COSTA RICA
ABIERTA
¡LA HACÉS VOS!



OPEN STATE
ACTION PLAN

2019-2022

Presentation

Open Government is a paradigm that's always on the lookout for change, experimentation, and the adaptation to new circumstances. Nevertheless, when in 2019 we embarked on the co-creation process of the IV Open Government National Action Plan, we couldn't have possibly predicted the great transformations that we were going to experience in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges that this situation was going to pose in social, political and economic terms.

In December 2019, when the first version of this plan was presented to the Open Government Partnership (OGP), only eight commitments were included: seven from the Executive Branch and one from the Judicial Branch; the commitment of the Legislative Assembly still hadn't been approved by the Legislative Directory.

However, understanding the value of an initiative such as this one, the Legislative Directory soon proceeded to approve the commitment in its ordinary session No. 093-2020, resulting in a ninth commitment that's now included in this second version of the Plan and that proposes the "Co-creation of a comprehensive, innovative, and multichannel citizen participation strategy for the Legislative Assembly on the basis of opening collaborative spaces and processes".

Because of the adoption of commitments by the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches, as well as the participation of counterparts from civil society, private sector and academia, we decided that this plan should be known from now on as an Open State Action Plan, in recognition of a process that has involved a broad range of actors from all sectors of society, and of the country-wide project of turning Costa Rica into an Open State.

On the other hand, considering the consequences provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the flexible guidelines approved by OGP's Criteria and Standards Subcommittee to address the pandemic, the National Open Government Commission, in its session N° 59 of August 6, 2020, unanimously decided to extend the implementation period of the Action Plan until August, 2022.

Considering this extension, the Commission asked the implementing agencies of the commitments to make the necessary revisions and adjustments, giving them the opportunity of reviewing the timetables and proposing a new schedule up to 2022, adjustments that have been included in this new version of the Plan.

Some of the most important changes that resulted from this process of revision can be found in the Education commitment, to which the Ministry of Public Education added 4 additional milestones with the purpose of broadening its ambition, and the commitment of Decarbonization, in which the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements changed the name of the platform that will make transparent the information on territorial planning, support decision making and enhance citizen involvement, which now officially will be known as GEOexplora+i.

In light of these modifications, Costa Rica presents this second version of the IV Open Government National Action Plan, now called Open State Action Plan 2019-2022, which reflects a series of clear and ambitious commitments that will advance transparency, accountability, innovation and citizen participation in the three Branches of Government.

This new version of the Plan, furthermore, is our commitment with citizens that the drastic and unpredictable changes that we've suffered this year must not be an obstacle for the continuation of our impetus towards openness and collaboration, since precisely those are the values that will make us more resilient and effective to face the challenges of the future.

To conclude, I wish to thank Ms. Nancy Marín, Minister of Communication from January, 2019 to May, 2020, for her decisive leadership in the co-creation and initial implementation of the first version of this Action Plan, and Mr. Agustín Castro, current Minister of Communication and President of the National Open Government Commission, who will lead the next steps.

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December, 2020*

Foreword

Costa Rica is the strongest democracy in the region; we are a country without an army that has opted for multilateralism, peace, and democracy. Why is Open Government important for a country like ours? In its most recent edition, the Estado de la Nación Report (2018) pointed out that the “resilience of Costa Rican democracy is under siege, due to internal and external factors that pressure political stability.” If we turn our attention to what is happening in the Americas and in many other countries, we could assert that the democratic model is in a state of crisis.

We have to work to rebuild trust. As a country, we cannot wait for the worst to happen to take actions. Transparency, accountability and citizen participation are key so that the solution of the problems we are facing as a country include not only the Executive, the Judicial or the Legislative Branches, but everyone: the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and citizens.

Devising this Fourth Open State Action Plan has been just such an opportunity to build trust. I want to deeply thank the Puntarenas teacher who provided contributions on how to work on the issue of education, the women of the Garabito development associations who reflected on how to recover the economy, all the people from the communities of Río Claro, Aguas Zarcas, Guanacaste, Desamparados, Limón and many others that participated in this process by helping us to prioritize problems, but more importantly, to find solutions. I thank also the institutions: the Police Force members, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Institute for Rural Development, the Procurator General of Public Ethics, the Comptroller General of the Republic, and all other ministries and institutions that accompanied us in this process.

This process was co-created with citizens from the onset; but I also have to thank the great contribution made by civil society organizations, academia, and the other Branches of the Republic for helping to make this an Open State Action Plan. The Open Government Partnership and the World Bank have been our great allies in this process.

The Open Government team of the Ministry of Communication and the National Open State Commission conceived this plan to truly impact people's lives and solve substantial problems. However, this had to be done taking into account and listening to the population of the entire country, not only of the Greater Metropolitan Area. This is the result of such effort. Thanks to all the people who participated and contributed their share. In Costa Rica, problems are best solved by leveraging our collective intelligence, not just sitting on desks.

Nancy Marín Espinoza
Minister of Communication
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Abbreviations

AAA	Alliance for an Open Assembly
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AyA	Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewage
CCSS	Costa Rican Social Security Fund
CNDA	National Open Data Commission
CNE	National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response
CNEA	National Open State Commission
CONAMAJ	National Commission for Improvement of Justice Administration
CONAPDIS	National Council of People with Disabilities
CTDR	Rural Development Territorial Councils
DRM	Directorate of Regulatory Improvement
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries
ICODER	Costa Rican Institute for Sport and Recreation
ICT	Costa Rican Tourism Board
IFAM	Institute for Municipal Development and Advisory
IGN	National Geographic Institute
IMAS	Joint Social Aid Institute
INDER	Institute for Rural Development
INEC	National Institute of Statistics and Census
INVU	National Institute of Housing and Urban Development
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MEIC	Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce
MEP	Ministry of Public Education
MICITT	Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications
MIDEPLAN	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy
MINAE	Ministry of Environment and Energy
MIVAH	Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements
MJP	Ministry of Justice and Peace
MOPT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
IRM	Independent Review Mechanism
MSP	Ministry of Public Security

MTSS	Ministry of Labor and Social Security
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEA	Organization of American States
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OIT	International Labor Organization
ONG	Non-Governmental Organizations
PIDA	Inter-American Open Data Program Against Corruption
PNDIP	National Development and Public Investment Plan
SETENA	National Technical Environmental Secretariat
SIGMA	Judicial Statistics System
SIGMEP	Geographic Information Systems of the Ministry of Public Education
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SNE	National Employment System
UCR	University of Costa Rica
UNA	National University
UNED	Distance State University



| Introduction: A Plan to Improve People's Lives

Governing *with* citizens and not *for* citizens. This is Open Government's great promise, and it is the promise that Costa Rica seeks to approach through this Fourth Open State Action Plan.

Meeting this objective entails the great challenge of improving transparency levels in the public sector, thus guaranteeing democratic access to public information, promoting and facilitating citizen involvement, and encouraging the opening of collaborative work spaces through innovation and the best use of new technologies.

However, these actions alone are not enough: for Open State reforms to be more than the sum of their parts, these cannot be simply cosmetic changes; they must generate a new governance framework designed with the objective of working alongside with various social actors to improve the living conditions of people and generate concrete changes in public action for the benefit of society.

The current context demands it: the great challenges our country is facing, which pose a huge number of different social, economic, and political demands, need to be addressed in an effective, responsible, responsive, inclusive and participatory manner. This Open State Action Plan is an innovative point of departure to drive such ambitious institutional and cultural changes towards the openness that is necessary to ensure the construction of a more prosperous, equitable, and just society.

For the Alvarado Quesada Administration, Open State is a priority because it is precisely a call and an opportunity for state renewal and the modernization of the public administration based on an innovative relationship among different actors to co-create public value. This priority is reflected in the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022, which establishes Transparency and Open Government as inescapable principles, covering areas such as citizen involvement, accountability, open government and universal access to information that can act as a cross-cutting axis in all public activities, permeating all layers of institutional planning and execution.



Bringing the Open State Closer to Citizens through the Commitments of the Fourth Plan

Given the need to take a qualitative leap with respect to previous action plans and to bring the Open State agenda closer to the daily needs and concerns of the population, the Executive Branch, together with the National Open State Commission (CNEA), proposed that the central focus of this Plan would be to develop commitments aimed at improving the quality of life of people. To that end, the strategic areas of the National Development Plan, the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, and the main needs of the country were taken as a basis to define the following six wide-ranging, ambitious thematic areas on which the commitments of the Plan were built:

- Education
- Employment
- Decarbonization
- Social Inclusion
- Economic Recovery
- Citizen Security

Additionally, as a result of a citizens' initiative, a seventh thematic area addressed to the Executive Branch, corresponding to Integrity and Anti-Corruption, was included.

In accordance with the country-wide project of making Costa Rica an Open State, this Fourth Plan again includes the participation in the process of the Legislative Branch and the Judicial Branch, introducing the novelty that, for the first time, both Branches included citizens in the construction of their commitments from the onset of the process.

The whole Plan was co-created, that is, built in close collaboration among public institutions, civil society, the private sector, and academia. Hence, a four-stage process was designed focused on the solution of priority problems of the population, where all stakeholders were able to participate in several online consultations and face-to-face workshops, thus ensuring the inclusion of a great diversity of voices and views that can be reflected in the following commitments:





Education, in charge of the **Ministry of Public Education (MEP)**

Transparency and accountability in projects developed by Education Boards



Employment, in charge of the **Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS)**

Labor Prospection System and National Employment System with a participatory, transparent approach



Decarbonization, in charge of the **Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH)**

GEOexplora+i to make transparent the information on territorial planning, support decision-making and enhance citizen involvement



Social Inclusion, in charge of the **Institute for Rural Development (INDER)**

Inclusive and participatory rural development



Integrity and Anti-corruption, in charge of the **Ministry of Communication**

Strengthening of citizen capacities and mechanisms for the prevention of corruption in the public sector based on open data



Economic Recovery, in charge of the **Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Commerce (MEIC)**

Evaluation of simplified procedures from the citizens' experience





Citizen Security, in charge of the Ministry of Public Security (MSP)

Sembremos Seguridad as a bridge in the institutional articulation for the fulfillment of security action lines with transparency and accountability



Open Justice, in charge of the Judicial Branch

Judicial Observatory for monitoring judicial management



Open Parliament, in charge of the Department of Citizen Participation of the Legislative Assembly

Co-creation of a comprehensive, innovative, and multichannel citizen participation strategy for the Legislative Assembly on the basis of opening collaborative spaces and processes

In addition to the National Development Plan and the Agenda 2030, these commitments are also linked to country-wide policies such as the Digital Transformation Strategy toward a Bicentennial Costa Rica 4.0, the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050, and the process of adhering to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the Open Justice Policy of the Judiciary Branch and the Institutional Open Parliament Policy of the Legislative Assembly.

Participation and Collaboration in Bicentennial Costa Rica

The great majority of the commitments of this plan emerged from an explicit demand for more participation, involvement and articulation of the population in the processes of design, implementation, and evaluation of public policy, in the clear understanding that people are the final beneficiaries of every government action, therefore, these actions must respond to the needs of the population, not only to the inner logic of the institutions.

In that regard, the simple dissemination of information is no longer enough for the population, which rather seeks a more active role and greater capacity for public advocacy. This is why these commitments seek to strengthen the role of citizens as co-creators, co-implementers and co-evaluators in different ways, always with the proactive aim of reforming government practices to make them more open and responsive to the needs of citizens, generating the conditions to achieve concrete improvements in people's lives.





In a changing Costa Rica, challenges must be faced and progress must be driven by all Costa Ricans. Making the leap from governing for citizens to governing with citizens requires a continuous cycle of transformations in the way the government relates to people which cannot be achieved overnight. However, we are convinced that, only by taking advantage of collective intelligence through openness, collaboration, and dialogue among the different sectors of society, we will be able to overcome the great challenges we face in our Bicentennial of independent life, which range from insecurity and inequality to the climate crisis and sustainable development.

The Fourth Open State Action Plan unlocks a way for the population to actively participate in the decision-making and development of public policies alongside the three Branches of the Republic, with the aim of consolidating the trust and collaborative effort we need to drive forward our country's progress. At the same time, this Plan should not be assumed as a comprehensive and finished product, but rather as a step forward in a permanent process of openness and inclusion, and as a sign of more and better things to come. Costa Rica deserves no less.

| Costa Rica: Our Journey toward an Open State

Costa Rica is the oldest, most consolidated democracy in the region. In a continent shaken by coups, dictatorships, and armed conflicts, since 1948 Costa Rica has emerged as a beacon of stability, recognized for the strength of its institutions and the peaceful resolution of its disputes. As part of this long democratic journey, the Costa Rican state has been building participatory structures to integrate people more directly into areas such as community development, management of educational and clinical centers, management of roads and aqueducts, promotion of sports and youth, prioritization of municipal projects and emergency preparedness, among others.

In addition, the enactment of several reforms and new regulations in recent decades has strengthened the right to access public information and to participate in public matters. These reforms include the amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution to declare the Government of the Republic “popular, representative, participatory, alternative and responsible”, the Municipal Code, the Law against Corruption and Illicit Enrichment in the Public Function, the Law on Popular Initiatives, the Law on Regulation of Referendums, the Law on Regulation of the Right to Petition, the Decree on Transparency and Access to Public Information, and the Decree on Opening of Open Data. It is also important to highlight the role of the Constitutional Court in sustaining the mandatory nature of transparency and the right to access information of public interest in many of its rulings.



Costa Rica and the Open Government Partnership

As a natural evolution of this search for new forms of greater interaction between the state and society, in 2012 Costa Rica joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multilateral organization that promotes policies on the right to access public information, citizen participation, and the fight against corruption in each of its member states.

As part of its commitments with OGP, Costa Rica must develop biannual National Open State Action Plans, which are the main instrument of the country's Open State policy, mainly in terms of strategy and implementation of actions and reforms in the public sector. Thus, by creating national action plans with concrete and attainable commitments, we aim to address common challenges for the achievement of an Open State.

The body responsible for developing action plans is the National Open State Commission, created by Executive Decree No. 38994, dated April 29, 2015, which works as a multi-stakeholder forum including representatives of civil society, academia, the private sector, and the public sector. This Commission is responsible for promoting transparency, access to information, citizen participation, collaborative work, and the use of information and communication technologies in the Public Administration; it is currently chaired by the Ministry of Communication.¹

So far, our country has developed and implemented three biannual action plans (2013-2014, 2015-2017 and 2017-2019):

-  The First Action Plan was presented by Costa Rica in 2013. Its commitments focused mainly on digital platforms, as it prioritized the development of technological tools to handle red tape and to have an impact on the state's efficiency. Its main actions were organized on 23 commitments, grouped into three challenges: To improve public services; to increase public integrity, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation; and to manage public resources more effectively.
-  The Second Action Plan was presented in 2015. It was based on the guidelines of the National Development Plan 2015-2018, which incorporated the consolidation of an Open and Transparent Government as one of its pillars. This Second Plan was characterized for considering, from the onset, the need for a

¹ The National Open Data Commission (CNDA), created in 2017 through Decree No. 40199, also operates in Costa Rica. The CNDA advises, evaluates, and makes recommendations on the step-by-step progress of the implementation of the national open data policy, and it actively supports the publication and use of open data with the different actors in the ecosystem. This Commission is made up of representatives of civil society, the private sector, academia, and the public sector, and it is chaired by the Ministry of Communication.





leading and permanent participation of civil society in the process of building priorities, for which the “*Yo Soy Gobierno Abierto*” initiative was important in managing to consolidate an effective approach through workshops held in different regions, which were the fundamental basis for the process of building the commitments of this Plan. Together with these actions from civil society, several inter-institutional liaisons were articulated to undertake the task of being the necessary agents of change for an adequate appropriation of the Open Government culture in their respective institutions. This Plan was also the first to adopt an Open State perspective by incorporating commitments from the Judiciary and the Supreme Electoral Court.

 The Third Action Plan was presented in 2017. It comprised five commitments that responded to Sustainable Development Goals number 5 (Gender equality), 10 (Reduction of inequalities), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), 13 (Actions for climate), and 16 (Peace, justice and robust institutions), as well as a commitment proposed through an online consultation, and six commitments selected and undertaken by the Branches of the Republic, all this in full compliance with the decision of these institutions to join the Open State initiative.





Articulating the Open State

Costa Rica's efforts to integrate the Judiciary, the Legislative Branch and the Supreme Electoral Court into the Open State agenda have been highlighted by both the Open Government Partnership and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which consider our country a pioneer and international benchmark of initiatives that seek to build an Open State.

Among these efforts is the joint signing, dated November 25, 2015, of the Declaration for the Creation of an Open State in Costa Rica by the President of the Republic, the President of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Magistrate President of the Supreme Electoral Court.

This Declaration was complemented by the Framework Agreement on Promotion of an Open State, dated March 21, 2017, and signed by the representatives of all the Branches of the Republic with the objective of consolidating their commitment to promote a transparent, efficient and effective state and to foster the fight against corruption and guarantee citizen participation, in order to build an Open State that strengthens public confidence and complies with the human right to access public information and citizen participation.

In the current Alvarado Quesada Administration said Agreement was ratified by the four Branches of the Republic on April 2, 2019, by signing the Framework Commitment for Strengthening National Dialogue and the Open State, in which all branches commit themselves to integrate the participation of the national community in different levels as an assertive decision-making mechanism that facilitates governance and political stability in our country.

In terms of specific Open State initiatives, starting with the Second National Open Government Action Plan, the Judicial Branch, the Legislative Branch and the Supreme Electoral Court have adopted commitments. Each Branch has also conducted their own organic processes: the Judiciary, for example, understood the value of co-creation and transparency to strengthen its dynamics, which has led it to develop a Citizen Participation Policy and an Open Justice Policy. The Legislature, meanwhile, began its Open Parliament process in 2015 with their own action plans that resulted in the approval of an Open Parliament Institutional Policy.

To incorporate Local Governments into the Open State logic, since 2017 letters of understanding have been signed with seventeen municipalities to promote Open Government principles in their planning and management. In addition, an Open Municipality Strategy is currently being worked out with the objective of developing a more integrated Open State agenda at the local level.



Tasks and Challenges

The path from Open Government to Open State that Costa Rica has been traveling should be understood as a country-wide project that is not an end in itself, but a means of organizing and articulating processes to ensure the appropriation of the principles of transparency, citizen participation, collaboration and co-creation, accountability and innovation at all levels of the public administration to improve people's quality of life. This implies that the planning, budgeting, execution, monitoring and evaluation of public policies must be based on this logic.

In that regard, to achieve an Open State is particularly vital to permeate all public institutions with the participatory approach, which entails a process of construction of new forms of interaction between institutions and the population to foster spaces of trust, dialogue and co-creation that strengthen the development of active citizen involvement and harness collective intelligence for the solution of national problems.

Although important progress has been attained in this agenda in recent years, the road toward an Open State is a continuous and permanent process of changes, reforms and innovations that aim to transform the usual way of doing things in a public sector that has historically been used to rigid, change-resistant, opaque, and vertical organizational cultures without spaces and formal mechanisms for citizen participation.

This inevitably creates several tasks, challenges, and needs that must be addressed when fostering a culture of openness in all branches and levels of the state. Several of these challenges have begun to be addressed in the co-creation process of this Fourth Open State Action Plan, but their complexity imply they cannot be solved in the short run. Some of these needs and challenges include the following:

-  To ensure and maintain leadership and political commitment even when faced with turnover of senior officials and government transitions.
-  To demonstrate the results and impact of the Open State agenda in the well-being and living conditions of people.
-  To increase the ability to coordinate successfully with all relevant actors and offer an attractive value proposition that entices them to collaborate in these initiatives, including other government branches, civil society, academia, and the private sector.
-  To improve active communication and dialogue with different stakeholders and concerned parties.
-  To design a governance framework and a consistent institutional arrangement to effectively operationalize the formulation and implementation of initiatives and commitments at a state-wide level.



- 👤 To establish intra and inter-institutional synergies to conduct joint activities and promote actions and training for capacity-building, particularly on innovative ways to include citizens in public policy processes.
- 👤 To consider the enactment of laws to bolster these processes, such as the Access to Information and Citizen Participation Laws, to facilitate the expansion of these practices to all public institutions and at all government levels.
- 👤 To empower citizens and give them spaces to express their views and have an impact, which ultimately means sharing power with them.
- 👤 To rethink the way the state relates to all people in conditions of equality, in the midst of the persistence of digital, educational and economic divides.
- 👤 To nationalize an agenda that, so far, has been strongly concentrated in the main institutions of the Greater Metropolitan Area, for which it will be necessary to approach and articulate regional perspectives and visions.

| Building along with Citizens: The Process of Co-creating the Open State Action Plan

The process of co-creation of the Open State Action Plan sought to involve different actors from civil society, the private sector, academia, and the public sector. For this purpose, multiple opportunities were opened to work directly with those who were interested in participating, and thus, to consider their interests and aspirations. These actors, including citizens who had never heard about the topic of Open State and high-ranking leaders of public institutions, had the same right to contribute their opinions, proposals and recommendations at the different stages of the process, which were the main input guiding the joint decision making.

Prior to starting the process, several actions were taken to ensure compliance with the highest standards of participation and co-creation. This involved a thorough review of OGP official documents and the evaluation reports of the Independent Review Mechanism for Costa Rica, as well as focus groups with actors that had been part of previous co-creation processes, and calls and meetings with other experts.





Principles of the Co-creation Process

Based on that documentary review and the focus groups, a set of principles were developed to guide the implementation of different activities and the selection of criteria and methodologies during the whole process, in order to achieve as much compliance as possible with the highest standards of co-creation and participation on all stages. The principles selected are shown below:

Table 1 Principles of the co-creation process for the Fourth Open State Action Plan

Principle	Description
Transparency and trust	All aspects of the co-creation process of the Plan will be communicated to all stakeholders as clearly and proactively as possible.
Informed participation	Involvement in the process implies committing to a spirit of openness and learning, for which one must be willing to get informed about the topics that will be addressed in the different spaces.
Evidence-based decision making	Instances of participation and decision making throughout the process of co-creation of the commitments will be based on reliable data and verifiable input.
Joint learning	Everyone involved in the process should be empathic with the values, priorities, and knowledge of their peers, and they should aim at collective over personal benefits.
Focus on the final beneficiary	The issues and needs of potential final beneficiaries will be considered throughout the process.
Inclusive participation	All participatory spaces should have representatives from academia, civil society, the public sector, the private sector, and specific populations.
Ongoing participation	The process will seek continuity of the participants through the entire triannual cycle of the plan and not only in the co-creation stage.
Alignment with government priorities and country-wide goals	Commitments should be aligned with the National Plan for Development and Public Investment 2019-2022 and the Sustainable Development Goals.





National perspective	Participatory spaces will be implemented in different regions of the country to incorporate their views and consider their needs.
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Source: Prepared by the authors, 2019.

Communication and Outreach Strategy

For the dissemination of the different activities and consultations of the co-creation process, graphic and audiovisual materials specially created for social networks and digital media were used. Additionally, the Costa Rica Open Government website (<http://gobiernoabierto.go.cr/>) was fully redesigned, and a section dedicated to this Action Plan was added; also, a digital newsletter was established, which was used to send information on the process to more than 1060 people every month. Efforts were also made to disseminate the details and progress of the construction of the Plan through both national and local media.

Moreover, a number of face-to-face activities were conducted to publicize the process of co-creation of the Plan and the Open State agenda in general, with representatives of NGOs and social organizations, scholars and university student organizations, business chambers, public officials, municipalities, among others.

In parallel during all stages, a number of meetings, calls, focus groups, and presentations were held with technical personnel and political authorities of the public institutions potentially responsible for implementing the Plan's commitments, in order to secure their involvement throughout the process and gather their views and priorities together with those of citizens.

Stages of the Co-creation Process

The co-creation process was focused on a problem-solving approach and structured in four main stages as shown below:

1. Definition of the thematic areas of the Plan.
2. Prioritization of problems for each thematic area.
3. Design of proposals for the solution of each prioritized problem.
4. Technical formulation of the commitment of each thematic area based on the prioritized problem and the solution proposals.



During these stages, a multi-channel participation dynamic was implemented, which involved combining online consultations through the website <http://consulta.gobiernoabierto.go.cr/> (which was completely renovated under the framework of this process) with spaces for in-person deliberation and consensus building. The objective was to attain mutual feedback from each participation space; this way, an online consultation generated inputs to support decision-making in the face-to-face workshops, the results of which, in turn, were submitted for consideration through another online consultation, and so on until the final formulation of the commitments.

For each stage of the co-creation process, a report was published with the outcomes of the activities together with reasoned answers which explained how each proposal was considered. To facilitate tracking of each proposal in the following stages of the process, each contribution had a unique code. In addition, a database with all the inputs received was published online. These reports and databases are available at <https://www.gobiernoabierto.go.cr/plan-de-accion-de-estado-abierto-informes-sobre-el-proceso/>.

Although online consultations were open to the participation of anyone interested, the spaces for in-person participation followed a funnel logic where the first workshops were completely open, but as the process progressed only those people who had already participated in the workshops of previous stages could continue participating. This was intended to guarantee an adequate follow-up from one workshop to the next of the conversations and decisions that had been made previously, and to maintain the same course of action throughout the process.

Stage N°1: Definition of thematic areas

For this first stage, an online public consultation was opened from August 28th to September 11th of 2019, where the six thematic areas prioritized for the plan by the Executive Branch and the National Open State Commission were submitted for the consideration of the public: Education, Employment, Decarbonization, Social Inclusion, Economic Recovery, and Public Security. This consultation consisted of forms that allowed people to share their views on the most urgent problems, key actors, important initiatives and any other comments or recommendations regarding each thematic area.

Additionally, this consultation allowed the possibility of proposing new thematic areas to be included in the Plan, as long as they met a number of criteria defined by the technical team and the Ministry of Communication. Based on the proposals received, the National Open State Commission decided to add a seventh thematic area to the Plan: Integrity and Anti-corruption

A total of 170 completed forms were received in this consultation.

Stage N° 2: Problem prioritization for each thematic area

This stage focused on the identification and prioritization of problems for each thematic area through three participatory exercises:





- Regional workshops to identify local problems in rural and coastal regions of the country.
- Online consultation to rank the main problems by thematic area in order of importance.
- A national face-to-face workshop to prioritize a single problem by thematic area.

The regional workshops took place on September 09th - 13th, as follows:

Table 2 Schedule and attendance to regional workshops

Date	Region	Location	Participants
September 09th	Brunca	National Training Institute, Río Claro of Golfito	36 people
September 10th	Pacífico Central	Civic Center for Peace, Garabito	14 people
September 11th	Chorotega	National University, Liberia	5 people
September 12th	Huetar Norte	Civic Center for Peace, Aguas Zarcas of San Carlos	21 people
September 13th	Huetar Atlántica	National Training Institute, Limón	19 people

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2019.

People attending these regional workshops who showed interest in participating in the national workshop and in the activities of the next stages were provided with support and facilities, so that they could travel to San José. In all, 14 people from different regions were sponsored.

The online public consultation for this stage was conducted from September 24th to October 4th. In this consultation, participants were given the opportunity to prioritize three problems in order of importance in each thematic area, thus, problems were ranked based on this information. Starting from this consultation, the Legislative Assembly and the Judiciary joined this process, and for the first time they co-created their commitments together with citizens. In this consultation, 537 completed forms were received.

Then, on October 5th, a National Workshop for Problem Prioritization was held at the Buenaventura Corrales School in San José. This workshop was open to all those who wanted to attend; participants worked in thematic tables following various dynamics and using as input the contributions of the regional workshops and online consultation, as well as relevant data related to the thematic area. This space allowed for the prioritization of a single problem per area and





provided additional information that was systematized on a canvas. This workshop was attended by a total of 90 people.

Stage N° 3: Design of solution proposals for each prioritized problem

After prioritizing a problem for each thematic area, Stage N° 3 focused on the design of solution proposals to these problems. To this end, two activities were conducted:

-  Online consultation to propose solutions to the problem prioritized in each thematic area.
-  National workshop to prioritize one or two proposals for solving the problem of each thematic area.

The online public consultation was held on October 16th - 24th, and it provided participants with the opportunity to review the canvas detailing the problem, to choose the Open Government principle or principles that could contribute most to the solution of that problem, and to provide an initiative or proposal to solve the problem from an Open State perspective.

In this consultation, a total of 142 forms were received, and these contributions were used as input for the national solution workshop, in order to provide solution ideas to the participants, which could then be retaken or reformulated in the thematic tables.

The National Workshop for Solution Design was held on October 26th in the Multi-purpose Hall on the third floor of the Supreme Court of Justice in San José. This was a workshop open to all the people who had participated in the previous problem prioritization workshop. Through thematic tables and following different dynamics, two proposals for solving the problem in each area were designed and prioritized. A total of 59 people attended.

The results of this workshop were the Idea Tables and Solution Canvas, where the solutions prioritized for each thematic area were developed, including also additional information on each solution that then served as input for formulating the final commitments.

Stage N°4: Technical formulation of the final commitment of each thematic area

In this stage, nine work sessions were held with relevant public institutions and representatives who participated in the national workshops; these were aimed at formulating a more detailed draft of each commitment based on the inputs collected in the previous stages.

After these work sessions, follow-up meetings were conducted with the public institutions responsible for the commitments, in order to ensure the technical and political validation of the final version of the commitments that were then included in this Open State Action Plan.





In addition, the final online public consultation was conducted on December 9th, 2019 - January 10th, 2020 to ask citizens for recommendations regarding the implementation of the commitments and to explore their interest in acting as counterparts in any of them. A total of 31 completed forms were received in this consultation².

| Solving People's Problems: Our Commitments

This Open State Action Plan is made up of nine commitments relevant to the values of transparency, accountability and public participation, the main purpose of which is to contribute to the solution of people's problems and thus result in an improved quality of life.

The starting point was the National Development and Public Investment Plan (PNDIP) 2019-2022, which includes Transparency and Open Government as part of its orientations and inescapable principles. The Plan's commitments also sought to align with the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, whose objective is to devise a new public governance framework and a renewed state architecture that will allow for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies with sustainable development, facilitating access to justice for all and building effective, responsible and inclusive accountable institutions at all levels.

The Plan is closely linked to the Digital Transformation Strategy for the Bicentennial Costa Rica 4.0, the vision of which is a digitally transformed Costa Rica that accelerates productivity, competitiveness and socio-economic development, and takes advantage of the fourth industrial revolution and knowledge societies to ensure well-being for all its inhabitants in an inclusive manner, and to enhance the country's sustainable development.

It is also linked to the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050 through which Costa Rica has proposed to lay the foundations of the new economy of the 21st century that responds to changes in the global context, moving towards a green economy that promotes the sustainable use and harnessing of natural resources. For that reason, the country has committed itself to be the world's first decarbonized economy by 2050; for this, it is necessary to gradually reduce fossil fuel consumption until it is eliminated and enter even further into a system of renewable energy generation that can be sustainable and self-sufficient and contributes to mitigating the environmental impact generated by economic activities.

² Due to its final version being approved later, the Open Parliament commitment had its online consultation until May 25th – June 5th, 2020, following the same criteria used for the other commitments. A total of 16 completed forms were received.





Likewise, this Plan is articulated with other country-wide agendas, such as the process of adhering to the OECD, where Costa Rica is part of the OECD Expert Group on Open Government, as well as the Network on Open and Innovative Government in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Integrity Network for Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

The commitment of the Judiciary is linked with this Branch's own internal processes, some of which have been included in previous Open Government plans, such as the Citizen Participation Policy of the Judiciary and the Open Justice Policy. The commitment of the Legislative Branch is also related to an initiative included in a previous action plan: the Institutional Open Parliament Policy.

But, above all, the following commitments emerged as answers to the economic, social, political or institutional problems that were identified by the citizens in the different spaces of co-creation and consultation of the process of building the Plan.

For this reason, in its co-creation and implementation each commitment incorporates counterparts from civil society, private sector, public sector, and academia that will assume part of the efforts of extending the impact and quality of each one of the commitments. The counterparts have the task of accompanying and supporting the implementing institutions in the execution of each commitment, whether in one or multiple milestones.

The commitments also aimed to avoid duplicating the efforts that institutions may already be undertaking to solve the problems that were identified by citizens; therefore, with the principles of Open Government we sought to strengthen some of the main policies that are already being developed or implemented in the thematic areas of the Plan, which are the following:

-  Education
-  Employment
-  Decarbonization
-  Social Inclusion
-  Integrity and Anti-corruption
-  Economic Recovery
-  Citizen Security
-  Open Justice
-  Open Parliament



Education

Ministry of Public Education (MEP)



| Education

This thematic area encompasses aspects that promote the development of abilities for social coexistence and the incorporation into the labor market by increasing the coverage and quality of the education system. The improvement of educational infrastructure, use of technology, inclusive education, quality of teaching, among others, are the elements that this thematic area can include.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, people were asked about the main problems related to education. These were grouped into the categories of: Infrastructure; Curriculum reform; Training, evaluations, and controls; Overload of functions; Education Boards; Universities; Misinformation; Reading and writing; and Students. In addition, problems such as poor quality of education, educational segregation and poor training opportunities were identified in the regional workshops.

These contributions were integrated and synthesized into 12 different problems, which were ranked in order of importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of the co-creation process:

Table 3 Five main problems, according to the highest scores in the Education area.

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Disarticulation between current educational plans and new educational trends	87
2	Poor training of teachers	79
3	Lack of assessments of institutions, programs, and teachers	65
4	Disparity in the quality of education between the GAM and other regions	57
5	Excessive paperwork and labor overload of teachers	42

Source: Prepared by the authors with input from online consultations, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:

Lack of articulation among sectors involved in education.

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by an array of shortcomings such as a lack of institutional communication, coordination and structuring; an excessively vertical work model; and a Central Valley-centered approach that does not take into account the particular



characteristics of the regions. This results in duplication of efforts, lack of institutional understanding, poor execution of public funds and organizational uncertainty.

The prioritized problem was submitted for consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where people made proposals for solutions. These proposals include: establishing a national dialogue table for the education sector; defining a space where different sectors can meet and together outline how to address demands or needs; generating a greater link with the social environment and parents; and using technology and digitalization to analyze progress, publish information, and follow up on the use and impact of resources.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solution:

To integrate and articulate a network of different actors for Open Education.

The ultimate goal of this solution is to achieve a more comprehensive education and to generate alliances in favor of education, as well as to achieve greater openness and participation between institutions and citizens, which is important due to the wide scope of operation of this issue at the national level and the diverse aspects that should be taken into account.

Based on this solution proposal, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that, based on the participatory experience of the Education Boards and Administration Boards, can contribute to the articulation of the different actors of the education sector and generate new information on the projects that different educational centers are developing, the resources they are executing, and the quality of their management.



Table 4 Commitment of the Education area

Commitment of the Education area

01. Transparency and accountability in projects developed by Education Boards

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 31/08/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Ministry of Public Education (MEP)

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Education Boards and Administration Boards are ancillary organisms of the public administration that constitute the basis for the operation of public educational centers. They consist of community members who contribute their work on a voluntary basis and have the function of developing programs and projects, formulating the school's budget, safeguarding, administering and executing the public funds that have been transferred to them, among other tasks. These Boards manage and execute funds that are essential for the operation of educational centers, such as those intended for infrastructure, school kitchens, and transportation.

Although MEP, as the governing body of education in Costa Rica, has the task of coordinating with the Boards in order to guarantee the delivery of a quality educational service, to date the mapping of the projects executed by each Board and their levels of compliance are not as detailed as necessary.

It has also been detected that the Boards, on many occasions, do not have adequate support from the institutions to handle their tasks appropriately and execute their funds in a transparent, effective way.

These weaknesses are evidenced more explicitly in infrastructure, where problems such as unfinished works, cost overruns, choice of low-quality materials, difficulties in hiring engineers and in designing tender documents are common. This is particularly relevant because in the field of educational infrastructure the country reports a historical deficit of 30 years, according to data from MEP's Directorate of Infrastructure and Educational Equipment.





	<p>Some actions taken by MEP to respond to this situation include a Cooperation Agreement with <i>Fundación Gente</i> for strengthening the Education and Administration Boards and developing a National Board Strategy, and the georeferenced publication in the Geographic Information System of the Ministry of Public Education (SIGMEP) of information on the different Education and Administration Boards in the national territory. However, the information available is still rather basic, and it does not permit to monitor the work of the Boards, the use of the public funds they manage, the strategic partners they have, or the attainment of their objectives.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment aims at improving the information available about the Education and Administration Boards existing in the country, ensuring the publication of data on their legal representatives, transfers of resources for operating expenses of the educational centers, and infrastructure projects. All this information will be published in open, accessible formats on the institutional transparency website of the Ministry of Public Education (https://www.mep.go.cr/transparencia-institucional) so that anyone can consult it.</p> <p>Likewise, this site will include data on student assessments for each educational center, which are collected through student participation mechanisms. In addition, the MEP Boards online portal (https://juntas.mep.go.cr/) will publish the schedule of support and accompaniment actions for the Boards.</p> <p>Moreover, an instrument to evaluate the management of the Boards will be developed and implemented in a pilot plan, which will assess compliance with regulatory and technical criteria. The results of this evaluation for each educational center will be published on the institutional transparency platform.</p> <p>At the same time, a full list of national and international cooperating strategic partners currently carrying out projects in the education sector will be published on the institutional transparency portal. Additionally, a communication channel will also be made available in the transparency portal, so that all interested partners can express their willingness in participating in the projects developed in each educational center.</p>
	<p>This commitment is expected:</p>





<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide more robust information on the public funds managed by the Boards and on the infrastructure projects they develop, which in turn will allow to identify corrective actions that also take into account students' assessments on the state of their educational centers. 2. To open a space for the voices of the students to have a level of incidence in the decision-making process inside the MEP. 3. To create the necessary conditions so that MEP and other actors in the education sector can identify measures for a closer accompaniment to the Boards in the execution of their work. <p>These objectives will be measured through the preparation of the instrument for the evaluation of the management of the Boards. Comparing the results of this evaluation among different periods will allow the Boards to make decisions and focus their efforts to meet the needs of the educational centers, in compliance with the law. The instrument will measure the degree of progress of good practices in the different fields where the Boards have functions. The application of this instrument will start at the Regional Directorate of San José Oeste and the Regional Directorate of Coto and will gradually expand its application to other Regional Directorates of Education.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p> The commitment is relevant to transparency because it is publishing new and better information on open formats about the Education Boards and Administration Boards.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to civic participation because it creates new opportunities for actors in the education sector -including students- to coordinate with each other and with MEP to strengthen the work of the Boards and support their projects.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to accountability because it creates the conditions to supervise the administration and execution of public funds and the work of the Boards, as well as to evaluate the management of the Boards through a new instrument.</p>
<p>Additional Information</p>	<p> The commitment is linked to the strategic area of <i>“Education for sustainable development and coexistence”</i> of the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2021.</p>





The commitment is linked to Sustainable Development Goal N°4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Milestone activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date
<p>Identification and collection of information on legal representatives, transfers of funds for operational expenses of the education centers, student assessments and infrastructure projects of each Board.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Online platform with open data on the operation expenses of the educational centers and infrastructure projects for each Board in the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.</i></p>	01/01/2020	31/08/2022
<p>Publication of the schedule of support and accompaniment actions from the different MEP offices for the Boards.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Schedule of support and accompaniment actions from the different MEP offices for the Boards published on the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.</i></p>	01/01/2020	31/08/2022
<p>Preparation and implementation of a pilot test of the instrument of evaluation of the management of the Boards.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Results published on the implementation of the pilot test of the instrument of evaluation of the management of the Boards published on the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.</i></p>	01/01/2020	31/08/2022
<p>Creation of communication materials on the importance of participating in the priorities of the plans and projects of the Boards.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Communication materials on the importance of participating in the priorities of the plans and projects of the Boards published on the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.</i></p>	01/01/2020	31/08/2022
<p>Conduction of workshops with student representatives on the importance of participating in the priorities of the plans and projects of the Boards.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Report on the workshops with student representatives on the importance of participating in the priorities of the plans and projects of the Boards published on the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.</i></p>	01/01/2020	31/08/2022
Implementation of regional dialogues with students and a digital	01/01/2020	31/08/2022





student consultation.

Deliverable: *Report on regional dialogues with students and the digital student consultation published on the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.*

Publication of the list of strategic cooperating partners who are currently developing projects in the education sector.

01/01/2020 31/08/2022

Deliverable: *List of strategic cooperating partners published on the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.*

Opening of a communication channel for diverse actors to express their interest in participating in the projects of the educational centers.

01/01/2020 31/08/2022

Deliverable: *Communication channel opened in the institutional transparency platform of the MEP website, with regular updates.*

Contact Information

Name of responsible person from implementing agency	The person holding the position of Director of Regional Management and Development	
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Other actors involved	<i>State actors involved</i>	Office of the Ministry, Office of the Administrative Vice Ministry, Directorate of Regional Management and Development, Regional Directorates, Finance Directorate, Geographic Information System, Directorate of Management Computing, Directorate of Technology Resources, Directorate of International Affairs and Cooperation, Directorate of Infrastructure and Educational Equipment, Directorate of Programs on Equality, Directorate of Student Life, Directorate of Technical Education, Office of Institutional Planning and Regional Coordination, Institutional Team on Open Data.





	<i>OSCs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	Student governments, <i>Fundación Gente</i> , Education Boards and Administration Boards, schools and high schools, other civil society organizations.
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Source: Prepared by the authors with input and revisions from the Ministry of Public Education, 2020.



Employment

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS)

| Employment

This thematic area includes initiatives that seek to promote the creation of formal and quality employment, as well as the transfer of knowledge. The transition of workers from the informal to the formal economy, the extension of the coverage of training processes and labor intermediation, among others, are actions that could be considered in this thematic area.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, people were asked about the main problems related to this area, which were grouped into the categories of: Access to employment; Informality; Development of capacities; Job intermediation; Procedures and requirements; Lack of investment; and High costs. In addition, problems such as the lack of employment opportunities in line with local conditions, few employment options for people with disabilities, and weaknesses in education and training were identified in the regional workshops.

These contributions were integrated and synthesized into nine different problems, which were ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of the co-creation process:

Table 5 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Employment area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Unemployment of people over 45 years of age	81
2	Youth unemployment	51
3	Dispersion of efforts and resources among institutions (in favor of employment programs)	51
4	High rate of informal employment	49
5	Lack of training opportunities for academic and labor development	32

Source: Prepared by the authors with the inputs from the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:

Employment opportunities do not respond to the characteristics of the population of the rural zones.

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by a number of deficiencies or omissions such as: training not meeting the needs of specific zones; limited use of the strengths of the zones to generate employment or entrepreneurship; and lack of adequate accompaniment



to enhance people's abilities. This results in the flourishing of illegal activities among the unemployed, frustration, mistrust, irritation and indifference in people and a loss of trust in the system.

The prioritized problem was submitted to consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose solution ideas. These proposals include: Consolidation of the Prospection Model; a country-wide Repository or Information System on the different research projects conducted on employment; availability of information on employment opportunities to the population; enhanced communication with the business sector; greater involvement of the unemployed population in search of a job, and enhanced communication among government institutions to join forces towards common goals.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solutions:

1. Employment platform (office/technology) by canton/district to be managed with citizen participation, co-creating and collaborating with all transparent data, where the Municipality would be responsible for involvement in the National Employment System with support from the private sector. There should be a commitment to monitoring and accountability.

2. Alliances and networks among actors (community organizations) to make the needs and strengths of the community visible in order to achieve employment opportunities, through access to information and its dissemination among citizens (transparency).

The ultimate goal of these solutions would be to map the specific characteristics and needs of each zone and attain greater alignment on the type of enterprises to create for each zone, as well as working horizontally with citizens and community organizations to find solutions with regard to the unemployment problem and to strengthen alliances among participants.

Based on these solution proposals, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that will reinforce the Labor Prospection and Information System and the National Employment System, the main employment policies of the present Administration, using a more participatory approach focused on the regions and zones where the unemployment problem is more urgent.



Table 6 Commitment of the Employment area

Commitment of the Employment area

02. Labor Prospection System and National Employment System with a participatory and transparent approach

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 31/08/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS)

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

The open unemployment rate in Costa Rica has remained above 10% for almost two years. In the Continuous Employment Survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) in the second quarter of 2019, this rate was 11.9% nationwide.

Unemployment mostly affects people who did not complete their primary and secondary education, who account for 58.3% of the country's unemployed. On the other hand, unemployment also has regional characteristics, as it particularly affects the Brunca, Pacifico Central and Chorotega regions, where the open unemployment rate reaches 14.9%, 14.4% and 12.7% respectively.

This is because in Costa Rica employment opportunities are not evenly distributed: in some zones there are many sources of employment, but in others only very few; this particularly has to do with the fact that in the latter there is not a sufficient critical number of people with the training and skills required by private companies.

In other words, there are deficiencies in the employability of important sectors of the population, understanding employability as the transferable skills and qualifications





	<p>that reinforce people’s ability to take advantage of education and training opportunities presented to them in order to find and keep decent jobs.</p> <p>In response to this employability problem, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) together with other Costa Rican institutions, following the guiding principles laid down by the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), which is the governing body in this area, and in compliance with Recommendation 204 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), OECD’s guidelines, and the Sustainable Development Goals, are developing a Labor Prospection (with a territorial and gender approach) and Labor Market Information System.</p> <p>This System involves the application of several techniques to anticipate future needs, and thus avoid imbalances or mismatches between the labor market and labor competencies. This prospection is based on an information system that collects and updates information from different sources to aid decision making processes for different social actors.</p> <p>Additionally, in 2019 the government created, through Executive Decree N°41776-MTSS-MEP-MIDEPLAN-MDHIS-MCM- MCSP, the National Employment System (SNE, for its initials in Spanish), which will come into operation in the medium term. The SNE seeks to integrate state employment services, so that they respond to the current dynamics of supply and demand, allowing for a more targeted approach and facilitating people’s access to employment services anywhere in the country through the National Learning Institute and its one-stop window. This National Employment System, in turn, will be fed with data from the Labor Prospection and Labor Market Information System.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment aims at complementing the Labor Prospection and Labor Market Information System and the National Employment System with a focus on transparency and participation that directly includes the views of the beneficiary population, especially from those regions of the country where unemployment is more prevalent, and taking into account gender equality.</p> <p>The objective is that this participation can contribute to ensure that the information collected by the Labor Prospection and Labor Market Information System and the</p>



	<p>National Employment System will integrate citizen views, and that the services articulated by the SNE can meet the needs of beneficiary populations, which will also be included as auditors and co-evaluators of the impact of these services.</p> <p>This will be achieved through three specific actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development of a platform for viewing, publishing, and downloading free and open data on employment, unemployment, employability of the population and employment opportunities, disaggregated by territory (Labor Market Information System). 2. The inclusion of extensive consultation with actors from different social sectors and geographic locations in the elaboration of the Labor Prospection System. 3. The establishment of a participatory, permanent mechanism involving civil society organizations and the private sector, so that they can follow up, monitor and evaluate the development of the Labor Prospection and Labor Market Information System and the National Employment System from the perspective of its beneficiaries, as well as providing recommendations, detecting information needs, co-creating proposals for improvement, and providing feedback to government authorities about the information and the services that are most needed in response to the objectives of these systems. <p>This mechanism would be the counterpart from civil society to the different institutional bodies that supervise and execute the SNE, and it will work with a territorial approach in order to articulate with community organizations and institutions of the different regions of the country to ensure that their opinions are taken into account and the information reaches the locations where it is most needed.</p>
<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<p>The ultimate objective of the Labor Prospection and Labor Market Information System and the National Employment System is to define action lines based on information from different sources for public and private decision making from the perspective of data intelligence, as well as to define the order, logic and governance that employment services should have, so that these are articulated and integrated with each other in a systemic logic that responds both to the dynamics of the labor market - articulating supply and</p>





demand - and the needs of people in search of employment, or to keep their job and improve their working conditions for those who are employed, prioritizing those in a vulnerability condition.

In that regard, this commitment, by aligning with the actions and priorities of both Systems, maintains the same ambition.

However, the commitment intends to change the existing practice by adding a participatory and transparency component to the development and execution of both Systems, which can reinforce and complement their actions in the following way:

1. The public and freely accessible platform of data and information on employment disaggregated at the territorial level will allow citizens and the private sector to learn about the dynamics of employment in their respective regions, to have an informed participation on the consultation spaces, and to closely follow up the scope and impact of the Systems. This information, together with the more basic information on employability programs and services, will be disseminated with a particular focus on the beneficiary populations of the most affected regions, in order to have a deeper impact.

2. Conducting extensive consultations for the development of the Labor Prospection System will allow the collection of a large number of different views and needs, which can help reduce the mismatch between the supply and demand of competencies and make better decisions in anticipation of future needs. Such consultations will be conducted in coordination with the MTSS, in each of the six planning regions of Costa Rica, with the purpose of recognizing and collecting the inputs of the population, so that they can then be considered in the preparation of the prospective data.

3. The participatory, permanent mechanism proposed by the commitment will highlight the needs of different regions in terms of employment, increase the population's inclusion and buy-in with regard to the development of the Systems, allow for the socialization of information among communities, encourage co-evaluation of employment services to guarantee they respond to the needs of the beneficiaries, and foster alliances among civil society actors, both private and institutional, at local and/or regional levels, to find solutions regarding the employability problem in their territories.





Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?



The commitment is relevant to transparency because it disseminates more and better information on the needs of communities regarding employment, unemployment, employability profiles, and the existing job opportunities, disaggregated by territories, in open formats and with citizen-friendly visualizations, as well as information on employment services.



The commitment is relevant to civic participation as it opens consultation and participatory mechanisms, so that citizens can contribute and have a greater impact on the Labor Prospection System and the National Employment System.



The commitment is relevant to accountability as it also proposes the publication of information regarding monitoring and evaluation of the Labor Prospection System and the National Employment System, and because it opens spaces for citizens to allow them to oversee their impacts.

Additional information



The commitment is completely in line with the Labor Prospection System and the National Employment System, the main government initiatives seeking to contribute solutions to the employability problem.



The commitment responds to the strategic area of *“Innovation, Competitiveness and Productivity”* of the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022, which includes the National Employment System as a strategic intervention that aims to strengthen labor intermediation for graduates from training and education processes, who are registered in a single platform for their labor insertion.



The commitment responds to Sustainable Development Goal N° 4: *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong*





learning opportunities for all,” and also Goal N° 8: “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.”

Milestone activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date
<p>Linking Open Government principles to the design of the flows of the National Employment System and the EMPLEATE Labor Prospection Study, with regional work groups.</p> <p>Deliverable: 1) <i>Agreement of the Employment Council for the National Employment System.</i> 2) <i>Invitation to Civil Society to participate in regional exercises.</i></p>	01/11/2020	31/08/2022
<p>Citizen involvement and consultation in the six regions of the country for the EMPLEATE Labor Prospection Study, with the objective of learning about the demands of the different sectors involved. This logic must be included in each of the periodic exercises to be conducted.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Systematization of the results of the tasks done for the execution of the regional prospection studies.</i></p>	01/02/2021	31/08/2022
<p>Informing the public about the services and programs from both systems through municipal corporations and public-private employment agencies (once they are operational).</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Generation of informative materials.</i></p>	01/11/2020	31/08/2022
<p>Developing a labor market information system, with the capacity to display prospective data and territorialized information related to this topic, in open formats.</p> <p>Deliverable: <i>Proposal of a computing platform for the labor market information system in Costa Rica.</i></p>	01/12/2020	31/08/2022

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	<i>OSCs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, 2020.



Decarbonization

Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH)

| Decarbonization

This thematic area integrates the efforts that help to make Costa Rica a green, emission-free, inclusive country that is adaptable to climate change. Initiatives related to sustainable transport and mobility, clean energy, sustainable construction, integral waste management, low carbon agriculture, and territorial management models that protect biodiversity are considered in this area.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, people were asked about the main problems related to this area, which were grouped into the following categories: Traffic congestion; Culture, awareness and political will; Waste management; Energy; Agricultural practices and land use; Territorial planning; and Climate change. In addition, problems such as non-compliance with territorial planning, and lack of policies aimed at master plans of the maritime zones were identified in the regional workshops.

These contributions were integrated and synthesized into eight different problems, which were ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of co-creation:

Table 7 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Decarbonization area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Public transportation system does not respond to citizens' needs for mobilization	118
2	Inappropriate treatment of solid waste and sorting at the source	75
3	Polluting vehicle congestion	66
4	Few incentives for the use of and transition to environmentally friendly energy sources	28
5	Inappropriate territorial management, deforestation	20

Source: Prepared by the authors with input from the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, which decided to define and prioritize the following problem:

Inappropriate territorial management

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by a number of deficiencies or omissions such as: disorderly processes when organizing and planning spaces; breach of master



plans; limited legislation on the subject, and lack of awareness and information in society. This results in construction in high-risk areas, traffic congestion, deforestation, and limited availability of common spaces such as parks and green areas.

The prioritized problem was submitted to consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose solution ideas. These proposals include: the creation of citizen commissions with participation in decision making; education and training actions; creation of appropriate digital communication tools for efficient and timely communication; inclusion in educational programs of advice on how to reduce the individual carbon footprint; and collaborative work with Local Governments and citizens in reforestation and waste management campaigns.

Then, these contributions were used in the National Workshop for Solution Design as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solutions:

- 1. Promotion of a law on Territorial Planning and development of the Center for Territorial Intelligence.**
- 2. Creation of spaces between civil society and the institution for the use and promotion of information on decarbonization and territorial planning.**

The end goal of these solutions would be to achieve orderly territorial planning, adequate cadaster plans and reforestation campaigns.

Based on these solution proposals, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that would use the Center for Territorial Intelligence, a web platform that publishes and displays georeferenced information on territorial use and planning, to encourage citizen participation in territorial planning, support local and regional planning processes, and integrate decarbonization-related data that may be useful to fight climate change in the most vulnerable places.

At the moment of the co-creation, the name of the previously-mentioned platform was Center for Territorial Intelligence; however, due to internal adjustments in the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH), this name was changed in the second semester of 2020, which is why in this version of the commitment the platform is now known as GEOexplora+i.



Table 8 Commitment of the Decarbonization area

Commitment of the Decarbonization area

03. GEOexplora+i to make the information on territorial planning transparent, support decision making and enhance citizen involvement

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 08/31/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH)

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Costa Rica and the world are facing a climate crisis caused by global warming that threatens to irreversibly alter the living conditions on our planet.

In Costa Rica, the annual growth of greenhouse gas emissions is estimated at 2.4%. And if no mitigation measures are taken, between 2015 and 2030 these emissions would grow by 60% and could increase by 132% in 2050.

Among the various reasons behind this increase in emissions are the disorderly and unplanned use of territories and a land management model that is oriented toward private vehicles and not people.

This situation responds to a historical lack of multi-sector and multi-factor integration into land management and to a generalized breach of existing regulations. This is how only 40 of the 82 cantons in the country have a master plan (though in most of them it is only partial), only 21 have the environmental viability of the National Technical Secretariat (SETENA) and only 4 have a matrix of hydrogeological vulnerability.

This lack of adequate territorial planning has generated environmental degradation, ecosystem destruction, unsustainable mobility models and problems associated with





vulnerability to natural threats caused by climate change, the costs of which for 2015 were estimated at 2.5% of GDP, according to the Comptroller General of the Republic.

In addition to this, a difficulty has been detected in raising awareness and involving citizens in territorial planning processes since Costa Rican institutions do not have official mechanisms to make possible the necessary coordination among the various actors, including civil society and the private sector, to work towards finding the solution to territorial planning problems. In addition, there is no effective and well-informed citizen participation in political decision making on urban planning and development.

In response to this situation, the Costa Rican government has promoted ambitious initiatives such as the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050, which includes among its axes the management of rural, urban and coastal territories oriented toward conservation and sustainable use. Moreover, there's also the National Urban Development Policy 2018-2030, which aims at increasing knowledge, participation and involvement of all people in key issues of territorial planning, and promoting inclusive, resilient and urban planning adjustable to new circumstances, deriving in a National Urban Development Plan, master plans, plans at regional level and plans at other sub-national levels that incorporate the environmental variable and involve gradual improvement and adjustment of infrastructure in order to mitigate the risks and threats of climate change.

In addition, the MIVAH has undertaken the effort to create GEOexplora+i, which is a technological platform supported by a Geographic Information Center, accessible to the public through a geoportal. It contains georeferenced information and data and includes displays on topics and projects related to territorial and urban planning in the country.

The publication of information through GEOexplora+i aims at facilitating access to official geospatial information to non-expert users and to the Costa Rican population in general, as well as to facilitate input exchange and improve articulation and coordination among institutions, and aid territorial and social co-management, budget planning and programming in areas considered by state institutions as strategic priorities, and to support data-based decision making to improve territorial management and sustainable development.





This platform is currently in a beta version that is not yet available to the public.

What is the commitment?

The commitment seeks to strengthen the collection, integration, and publication of data on territorial planning and land use in order to allow public institutions to make more informed decisions and to generate innovative solutions to territorial problems. In addition, it seeks to provide organized civil society with easier access to these data, with the aim of involving citizens more actively in the different participatory instances currently existing with regard to these issues, so as to position territorial planning as a priority issue in the policy agenda of the country through which relevant problems can be solved and the decarbonization goals of the National Decarbonization Plan can be indirectly achieved.

For this purpose, six main actions are proposed:

1. Development and launch of the final version of GEOexplora+i, drawing from an evaluation of the beta version with civil society organizations, public institutions and other key actors, to adjust and make improvements from the perspective of potential users and target audience.
2. Articulation with other institutions, such as MOPT, MINAE, ICT, INVU, CNE, MJP, INDER, Ministry of Health, CCSS, MEP, MSP, Ministry of Culture, ICODER, AyA, IMAS, MICITT, IFAM, MIDEPLAN, IGN, MAG, INEC, and municipalities, to integrate in this platform information specifically relevant to territorial planning that contributes to decarbonization and climate change, such as mobility data, vehicle fleet, urban and coastal master plans, infrastructure recovery, gas emissions, environmental variables of master plans, among others.
3. Establishment of a Citizen Council on Territorial Planning, made up of a community of expert users from different sectors with whom MIVAH is already working, to be in charge of periodical evaluations of the information available in GEOexplora+i and generating recommendations on data to be added, the presentation and use of existing information, and the ways to improve the user experience, among others. This Council would also support the efforts to articulate with other institutions that have not yet





shared information to be integrated into this platform.

4. Holding workshops with the community of expert users that will focus on promoting the use of the data available in the platform to generate proposals for solving problems related to territorial planning, climate change adaptation and decarbonization. These workshops can also take the form of forums, data expeditions and hackathons and, if possible, they should link with municipalities that have already been identified as especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change.
5. Co-creation of a Citizen Participation Guide for Territorial Planning that will facilitate and strengthen citizen involvement and clearly explain the powers, responsibilities, and current rules and regulations on the subject, and will serve to promote the formal participation spaces already existing in the field of territorial planning and mobility. For the promotion of these spaces, the Citizen Council on Territorial Planning, and the workshops with the community of expert users previously described, will be used, as well as other opportunities for education and training provided by other institutions.
6. Harnessing of the citizen engagement spaces opened because of this commitment to generate input and efforts that will contribute to the drafting and advocacy of a Territorial Planning Law to be presented before the Legislative Assembly.



How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?

The commitment contributes to solve the problem because:

1. GEOexplora+I will allow different institutions to have a complete view of the territory, make better decisions and advance more effective and informed processes regarding territorial planning and mitigation of climate change's causes and effects.
2. The information of GEOexplora+I may be used by citizens, civil society organizations and the private sector to generate projects and solutions to the territorial planning problems they face, particularly in the territories most affected by climate change or where more emissions are generated.





3. The mechanisms or spaces for participation related to territorial planning in the different institutions will be encouraged, promoted and brought closer to the citizens, so that these mechanisms can be relevant again and citizens can have a direct impact on territorial planning and related issues. In addition, new spaces for participation will be created to accompany and influence the different actions proposed by the institutions.

GEOexplora+i will be developed as a platform for the exchange of geospatial information at the institutional level, but also as an informative display promoting transparency and accountability towards the citizen, complying with Open Government principles. Therefore, the way to measure its impact is related to product indicators such as:

-  Number of citizens accessing GEOexplora+i for information queries.
-  Number of citizens requesting the publication of information in GEOexplora+i, regarding studies or research.
-  Number of citizens downloading information to compare it with the information they have as reference for a study or a university, high school, or elementary school project.
-  Number of government institutions that, as a working group, access GEOexplora+i to define projects that meet some of the 10 decarbonization axes.
-  Number of municipalities and consulting groups that, as a task group, access GEOexplora+i to develop their master plans.

Likewise, effectiveness indicators related to the number of projects developed or works built that considered information from GEOexplora+i, as well as the amounts invested in them per a given unit of time (annual or every 4 years), can also be considered.

Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?

 The commitment is relevant to transparency because it is integrating, publishing, making accessible and visualizing new and better geospatial





	<p>information on territorial management and its conditions.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to civic participation because it fosters opportunities to access participatory spaces, it is strengthening capacities and knowledge for those who wish to participate in these spaces, and it is also creating new spaces linked to the evaluation and use of data from GEOexplora+i.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant for accountability because through the information that citizens, organized groups, local governments, and public institutions will receive, all users will have the possibility to refer to the corresponding institution or sector in order to assert their opinions regarding the attention received by their canton, district or area of residence; or to oversee the projects developed in the field of territorial planning.</p>
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Additional information	<p> The commitment is linked to the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050 and the National Urban Development Policy 2018-2030.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022, which includes the Decarbonization of the economy as one of its national goals, and it has a strategic area of <i>“Infrastructure, Mobility and Territorial Planning”</i>.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to Sustainable Development Goal N° 13: <i>“Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”</i>, and N° 15: <i>“Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”</i>.</p>
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Milestone activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date
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Forums with expert actors and consultations to evaluate the beta version of GEOexplora+i and receive feedback. <i>Deliverable: Report with a summary of the collected recommendations.</i>	06/01/2020	28/02/2020
Launch of GEOexplora+i. <i>Deliverable: Online platform accessible to the public.</i>	02/03/2020	01/03/2021
Co-creation of the Citizen Participation Guide for Territorial Planning <i>Deliverable: Document with the Citizen Participation Guide published on the MIVAH website</i>	06/01/2020	06/12/2021
At least three workshops with the community of expert users to harness the use of data available in GEOexplora+i and generate solutions. <i>Deliverable: Reports of the workshops.</i>	01/06/2020	23/03/2022
Articulation and coordination actions with other institutions to integrate information relevant to territorial planning that contributes to decarbonization and climate change. <i>Deliverable: New information added to GEOexplora+i under a category or section dedicated to decarbonization and climate change.</i>	01/06/2020	29/05/2022

Contact Information

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Other actors involved	Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Institute of Municipal Development and Advisory, Costa Rican Institute of Tourism, National Commission on Risk Prevention and Emergency Response
<i>State actors involved</i>	

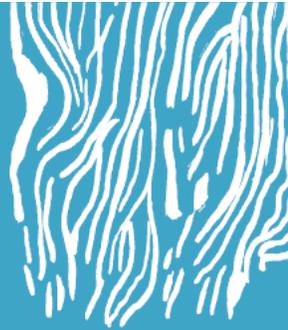




		(CNE), Open Government Office of the Ministry of Communication
	<i>OSCs, private sector, multi-lateral, working groups</i>	ACCESA Asociación Proyecto Camino Verde Costa Rica Íntegra

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements, 2020.





Social Inclusion

Institute for Rural Development (Inder)

| Social Inclusion

This thematic area includes initiatives that seek to meet the essential needs of people to ensure a dignified life and their human development. Social programs to address poverty, protection of children in social risk, policies in favor of equality, among others, are actions that could be part of this thematic area.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, people were asked about the main problems related to this area, which were grouped in the categories of: Social problems; Gender equality; Specific populations; Lack of articulation; Intolerance; Recreation and culture; and Right to communication. In addition, problems such as a lack of awareness about the reality of people with disabilities, lack of policies and guidelines aimed at the regions, conflicts over land tenure and lack of regional development agencies were identified in the regional workshops..

These contributions were integrated and synthesized into eleven different problems, which were ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of the co-creation process:

Table 9 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Social Inclusion area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Lack of information and articulation among the social programs provided by the different public institutions.	108
2	Lack of mechanisms to track and monitor the social programs provided by the state.	92
3	Absence of social, cultural and recreation spaces and programs in the urban-rural and rural areas.	55
4	Lack of housing for low-income population.	49
5	Lack of recognition of the population’s right to communication, which restricts community, local and regional groups their access to channels and radio frequencies in conditions according to their nature and limits the power of citizens to demand their rights and communicate their needs.	48

Source: Prepared by the authors with input of the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:



Lack of design and execution of programs co-created with target populations and of a mechanism for delivering information also intended for the target populations.

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by a number of deficiencies or omissions such as: conflict of economic and personal interests; poor communication with the population to obtain an evaluation of the implemented programs; lack of coordination among government institutions, social organizations and municipalities; and lack of consultation, communication and effective consideration of vulnerable populations. This results in excessive spending of resources, duplication of government programs that fail to reach those in need, and inadequate solutions for these problems.

The prioritized problem was submitted to consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose solution ideas. These proposals include: the creation of sectoral commissions in the territories; promotion of local development and planning with citizen participation; development of spaces for participation in communities to build proposals for local and national plans; follow-up and evaluation of government plans or programs directly with the beneficiaries; and making the information about these plans and programs accessible through means that effectively reach the entire population, especially the most vulnerable people.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solutions:

- 1. Creation of sectoral and regional commissions with institutions and target populations.**
- 2. Availability of information through multiple channels and media (local television, local radio, municipalities, churches, etc.).**

The ultimate goal of these solutions would be to increase the involvement and influence of the target populations, a better use of government and organizational resources in favor of at-risk populations, higher equity and quality of life, and respect for the dignity of people, their rights and freedom to live a decent life.

Based on these solution proposals, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that seeks to strengthen the figure of the Rural Development Territorial Councils as a participatory territorial planning body, to ensure they are more inclusive and representative, communicate and disseminate information about their actions in a more accessible way, and involve citizens more actively in the process of co-creation of territorial plans.



Table 10 Commitment of the Social Inclusion area

Commitment of the Social Inclusion area

04. Inclusive and participatory rural development

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 08/31/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Institute for Rural Development (Inder)

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Costa Rica suffers from a deeply unequal territorial development, where the greatest opportunities in terms of education, health, employment, infrastructure and economic growth have been concentrated in the central provinces, while rural and coastal areas languish with the worst social and development indicators of the country.

The Costa Rican state has sought to mitigate this gap by means of social and productive policies that seek to favor disadvantaged populations in these territories, but the opinion among citizens is that these target populations are not really benefiting adequately from these programs, which are deemed ineffective and unable to solve the underlying social problem of uneven development of the country.

This ineffectiveness partly has to do with the fact that these programs are developed without considering the views of the target populations in the territories in greatest need; programs are executed without providing target populations with adequate information for them to know about the programs, therefore, they cannot monitor them; and there is not the necessary coordination among government institutions, community organizations and municipalities, so efforts are duplicated and resources wasted.

Given this situation, from 2012, with the enactment of Law No. 9036 and its regulations, the Institute for Rural Development started a process for the establishment, facilitation and





accompaniment of the Rural Development Territorial Councils (CTDR), as the main territorial instance of coordination and articulation of rural development. The main function of these Councils is to foster citizen participation in the formulation of Territorial Rural Development Plans in the twenty-nine rural territories established by Inder, so as to guide and enhance efficiency in the use of public resources in projects of territorial interest, and facilitate management and inter-institutional coordination in the territories for the execution of development projects.

The Second Open Government National Action Plan included a commitment linked to the CTDRs, which sought to expand them to all the territories of the country and promote them as spaces ensuring citizen participation in territorial development processes. When OGP's Independent Review Mechanism (MRI) evaluated said action plan, it determined that this commitment advanced substantially; however, it noted that the commitment did not account for initiatives aimed at improvement in the areas of access to information, participation or accountability. Regarding citizen participation, no activities were held to increase the number of citizens involved or to improve the levels of influence of participants in the initiatives developed.

CTDRs have also encountered difficulties in these first years of implementation, which have prevented them from consolidating as true spaces to fortify the development of rural territories and encourage the creation of new opportunities for their populations.

These difficulties include the following: the CTDRs work on the participatory construction of Territorial Rural Development Plans, but these are not binding for public institutions (with the exception of Inder), thus, their involvement and commitment can vary; CTDR Steering Committees are not necessarily representative of the different sectors of the territory, and they do not establish direct communication and advocacy channels with the rest of the population; the methodology to prepare the plans should facilitate territorial planning and resource orientation, as long as it is possible for the population to participate in their preparation, execution and monitoring (which doesn't always happen); lack of transparency and accountability with regard to the projects developed by the CTDRs.

This commitment seeks to strengthen the Steering Committees of the Territorial Rural Development Councils as





<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>spaces of articulation between institutions and representations of the populations of the territory for the co-creation and socialization of territorial rural development plans with an Open Government approach.</p> <p>For that purpose, the following main actions are proposed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Training and awareness raising on citizen participation and Open Government for citizen members in all twenty-nine Territorial Rural Development Councils of the country and the representatives of public institutions participating in them; for this purpose, an Open Government module will be included in the training programs that Inder is already developing.2. Implementation of a pilot program in six CTDRs that will be renovating their Territorial Rural Development Plans in 2021, including the following actions:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. New assertive communication processes and strategic dissemination practices to ensure a more representative participation of communities in the different organs of the CTDRs, with a special emphasis on including vulnerable or underrepresented populations.b. Incorporate more accessible, ludic, and participatory co-creation methodologies in the process of constructing territorial rural development plans.c. Open communication channels and online and face to face consultations that will allow CTDRs and their Steering Committees to consider the opinion of the people living in the territory in their decision making processes, including people that don't belong in the CTDR's formal bodies.d. Presentation and socialization of the territorial rural development plan and the project portfolio of each CTDR in formats and media that are more visual and appropriate for the populations in the territories, and more suitable to their needs and preferences for information consumption.
<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<p>This commitment will promote the Rural Development Territorial Councils, so that they can become truly inclusive, participatory co-creation and articulation spaces, that can contribute to the reduction of the important gaps among the territories of the country through their territorial rural development plans and project portfolios.</p>



More specifically, this commitment solves current problems in the management and development of the CTDRs in the following way:

1. Training on Open Government will aim for all CTDRs to be transparent, open to communication and collaboration with citizens, and accountable on a regular basis on the advancement of the plans and the projects they implement.
2. The new communication strategies to be used in this pilot program will improve CTDR representativeness, seeking greater inclusion of different sectors and better selection of the Steering Committees.
3. The use of the Open Government approach for the co-creation of territorial rural development plans in this pilot program seeks to ensure that these plans reflect more directly the needs and priorities of the territories and their inhabitants.
4. The opening of new communication and consultation channels aims to expand the reach of the CTDRs towards those sectors of the population that do not participate in organized groups accredited before Inder, but who are the main beneficiaries of the plans and projects developed by the CTDRs, in order to take their voice and views into account and to start creating a social fabric that can be formally incorporated into the CTDRs in the future.
5. The dissemination of CTDR actions in friendlier formats and media will allow a greater outreach with communities, especially in those sectors currently facing obstacles to access information due to technological or educational difficulties, promoting better knowledge about what is being done in the territories and encouraging informed participation.
6. Although the commitment initially includes only one pilot program in some key CTDRs, it is expected that these actions can be improved and expanded progressively to the twenty-nine territories of the country as a result of this commitment.

Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?



The commitment is relevant to transparency because it is promoting publication and dissemination of more and better information about CTDRs and their plans for territorial rural development through training, new outreach strategies, and the publication





	<p>of key documents in formats and media that are friendlier with the target population.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to civic participation as it strengthens the existing participatory spaces through new methodologies and the formation of capabilities, while creating new spaces and tools for linking and consulting with the population that is not yet part of the CTDRs.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant for accountability because it will be enhanced by the increased participation in the execution of the plans and projects, training on Open Government, publication of additional information such as accountability reports, and development of spaces for dialogue about such reports.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>	<p> The commitment is linked to the Plan for Strengthening Territorial Governance.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to the State Policy on Territorial Rural Development and its respective Action Plan.</p> <p> The commitment responds to Sustainable Development Goals N°1: “<i>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</i>”, and N°10: “<i>Reduce inequality within and among countries</i>.”</p>	
<p>Milestone activity with verifiable deliverables</p>	<p>Start Date</p>	<p>End Date</p>
<p>Joint development of the Open Government module for the training program of the CTDRs (4 meetings with INDER).</p> <p><i>Deliverable:</i> <i>Document containing the details of the Program of the Open Government Module together with the educational materials.</i></p>	<p>01/06/2020</p>	<p>30/10/2021</p>
<p>Development and implementation of an outreach and dissemination strategy to increase sectoral representativeness and presence of specific populations among organizations accredited to the CTDRs.</p>	<p>01/06/2020</p>	<p>20/12/2021</p>





Deliverable: <i>Document with the strategy.</i>		
Inclusion of the Open Government approach in the co-creation of 6 CTDR plans.	01/01/2020	31/12/2021
Deliverable: <i>Documents with the territorial rural development plans and their respective methodology.</i>		
Online or face to face consultations with citizens about the new territorial rural development plans.	01/01/2020	31/12/2021
Deliverable: <i>Report with results of the consultations explaining the way in which the comments of citizens were considered by the CTDR.</i>		
Visual presentation of the contents and progress of the territorial plans for their dissemination through the most common media channels used in each territory.	30/07/2021	20/12/2021
Deliverable: <i>Infographics with contents and progress of the territorial plans.</i>		
Preparation of final report on the progress and results of the commitment.	01/01/2022	30/06/2022
Deliverable: <i>Document with the report on the progress and results achieved.</i>		

Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Gregory Garro Jiménez	
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Other actors involved	<i>State actors involved</i>	Territorial Rural Development Councils, Territorial Consultants - INDER, Open Government office of the Ministry of Communication
	<i>OSCs, private sector,</i>	



*multilaterals,
working
groups*

ACCESA

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Rural Development Institute, 2020.



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Integrity and Anti-corruption

Ministry of Communication

| Integrity and Anti-corruption

This thematic area includes initiatives focused on the fight against corruption. Influence peddling, illicit enrichment, embezzlement, abuse of power, bribes, among others, are some of the practices that can be combatted in this thematic area.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, this thematic area was not submitted for consultation since it had not been pre-selected by the Executive Branch and the National Open State Commission.

However, when given the opportunity to propose new thematic areas, citizens contributed several concerns related to integrity and anti-corruption that were synthesized into seven different problems that were ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of the co-creation process:

Table 11 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Integrity and Anti-corruption area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Tax evasion	88
2	Lack of trust in the Costa Rican political system	83
3	Lack of rules to regulate the accountability of all public institutions	55
4	Lack of supervision of the execution of institutional budgets	53
5	Payment of bribes to speed up/avoid processes	37

Source: Prepared by the authors with input of the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:

Lack of strategies to align, coordinate, standardize, and prioritize actions in the field of corruption prevention.

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by a number of deficiencies or omissions such as: lack of education, institutional ethics and values; lack of budgetary, human and technological resources to address prevention; absence of a single governing body responsible for anti-corruption, with autonomy and long-term vision; and poor understanding of the subject in a systematic and structural way. This results in poor institutional administration and management gaps.



The prioritized problem was submitted to consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose solution ideas. These proposals include: co-creation of a national strategy or public policy to articulate institutions at different levels and involve citizens; strengthening of the structures of the Internal Control Units in each public institution; fostering a culture of integrity and anti-corruption starting from primary school; and the conformation of citizen audits to oversee budgets and decision making processes at public and private entities.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solution:

Develop a strategy for integrity and prevention of corruption.

The end goal of this solution would be to integrate various institutional initiatives in the fight against corruption, articulate good practices that public institutions are already implementing, and achieve more legitimacy, more democratic quality, and better use of public resources.

Based on this solution proposal, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that was to be integrated into the process of developing a strategy for corruption prevention that is currently being conducted in a separate working table with public institutions and civil society organizations.

However, this separate process has its own pace and schedule that cannot be adapted to the timeframe of this action plan; thus, an alternative commitment was developed. It combines capacity strengthening, the publication of information in plain language, and improved channels for complaints to empower citizens in the field of prevention and fight against corruption, through the publication and use of data.



Table 12 Commitment in the Integrity and Anti-corruption area

Commitment in the Integrity and Anti-corruption area

05. Strengthening of citizen capacities and mechanisms for the prevention of corruption in the Public Administration based on open data.

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 08/31/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Ministry of Communication

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

From the perspective of citizens, corruption is one of the main problems affecting the country. In several opinion polls corruption appears as one of the main problems of the country, along with unemployment, the cost of living and security. In Transparency International's *Global Barometer of Corruption: Latin America and the Caribbean*, published in October 2019, 49% of respondents argued that corruption increased in Costa Rica over the last 12 months and 59% said that the actions of the government in the fight against corruption are wrong. In the *Corruption Perceptions Index 2018*, meanwhile, the country underwent a three-point drop compared to the previous year (from 59 to 56), ranking 48th among 180 countries.

This citizen perception of increased corruption, most likely, has been stirred by recent high-profile cases, such as the so-called *Cementazo*, however, it is difficult to pin down the true state of corruption in the country and the impact of the actions implemented to prevent, detect and punish it.

This occurs for several reasons. On the one hand, although the country has anti-corruption regulations, these are scattered, in some cases they are unevenly applied among





institutions and there is not enough clarity and knowledge for their effective implementation; on the other hand, there is no single governing body responsible for anti-corruption with the systemic vision, autonomy and sufficient powers to make decisions for the entire public sector. Governance on this area is disaggregated among different control bodies and institutions, such as the Procurator of Public Ethics, the Comptroller General of the Republic, the Adjunct Prosecutor on Probity, Transparency and Anti-Corruption, the Ombudsman's Office, the National Commission on Ethics and Values, among others.

This situation has led to a lack of strategies to align, coordinate, standardize and prioritize actions to fight corruption, which has been considered one of the main obstacles that prevent the country from attaining better results in this area.

This lack of articulation has also led to a limited or insufficient publication of data that may be used by institutions and control bodies to measure and clarify the impact of their initiatives. This lack of available information colludes with low technical capacities in institutions to ensure opacity in terms of data disclosure on possible areas of corruption, which, in turn, fuels citizen's perception of corruption.

These scattered capacities and low availability of information also makes it difficult for citizens, the media and civil society organizations to exercise an active role in the prevention, monitoring, detection and reporting of corruption; thus, there is a need to focus actions beyond public institutions, so that citizens themselves can help generate and maintain an upright honest environment.

What is the commitment?

This commitment aims at strengthening the capacities of the public institutions and citizens for the prevention and fight against corruption through the dissemination of the existing regulations using plain language, boosting training and education activities, opening new channels and means for supervision and reporting, as well as the publication and use of open data to encourage a culture of transparency so citizens can exercise an evidence-based, versatile, and effective oversight.

To achieve this goal, the following actions are proposed:

1. Co-creation of a protocol for the publication of open data against corruption, which will be based on the





“Open Up Guide: Using Open Data to Combat Corruption”, published by the Open Data Charter. This guide contains the list of the thirty priority databases for the fight against corruption with their respective attributes, including budgets, contracts, declarations of assets and interests, real beneficiaries, political finance, protection of whistleblowers, health, extractive industries, and lobbying. This co-creation will be carried out with citizens, public officials of relevant institutions, journalists and experts, and it will adjust to the particular characteristics of the national legal framework and the *Guide for Opening Public Data*, prepared by the National Open Data Commission.

2. Publication of this open data in a unified platform that allows free downloading and includes user-friendly display interfaces, as well as access to all relevant regulations in plain language. This platform will be regularly assessed by its main users (journalists, researchers, students, civil society organizations) to ensure that it responds to their needs and interests.
3. Opening of new or enhanced mechanisms and channels for the supervision and oversight of the use of public funds and the reporting of acts of corruption that can take advantage of the newly opened data. These new mechanisms and channels will be designed based on a citizen consultation intended to collect views on the existing channels and how these can be improved to provide a more appropriate response to citizen needs. These mechanisms and channels will be promoted widely.
4. Holding workshops with journalists and community, civil society, and private sector organizations to expand their knowledge on probity and anti-corruption regulations, the channels and means available to them to control and report, and new methods to analyze and use the new information and data published for monitoring corruption.
5. Opening spaces with computer specialists, experts, entrepreneurs and journalists for the co-creation of technological solutions based on the opened data (hackathons, data expeditions, innovation contests, etc.) that can then be used by community organizations and citizens interested in supervising, monitoring and reporting possible acts of corruption on certain areas or important issues in their communities.





	<p>The main institutions responsible for executing these actions will be the Ministry of Communication, for its role as the entity responsible for the Open Government and Open Data agenda; the Procurator of Public Ethics, for its role as counsel to the state and expertise with training in this subject; and the Comptroller General of the Republic, the institution responsible for looking after the Public Treasury, and which is already implementing actions for citizen involvement under the program “Juntos Somos Más”.</p> <p>In addition, the objective is to incorporate commissions and/or civil society organizations, whether national or international, as counterparts of the commitment and leverage their expertise to provide success stories and/or concrete solutions on how to encourage integrity by harnessing technological developments.</p>
<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<p>The results expected from this commitment include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The publishing and dissemination of the regulations on probity and fight against corruption in plain language will allow citizens to learn easily about the duties and rights of public officials in terms of probity and about which actions are permitted or banned. 2. The publication of new and better data in priority areas for the fight against corruption will allow public institutions and control bodies to make better decisions on where to focus their actions and, thus, to design more successful interventions in their fight against corruption. On the other hand, it will allow journalists and civil society and private sector organizations to better monitor institutional behavior in areas that are susceptible to corruption and will open the possibility of creating new solutions or tools to that end. In turn, the fact that the process of data publication is collaborative will encourage coordination among institutional actors that are presently unconnected. 3. The opening of new channels and means for supervision and reporting, as well as the training in the use of these channels and the opened data, will provide new tools for citizens to monitor the integrity





	<p>of the actions of the public institutions and will strengthen their capacities and knowledge to detect possible acts of corruption and report them effectively.</p> <p>4. The inputs created in this process can be integrated into the <i>National Integrity and Corruption Prevention Strategy</i>, which is the responsibility of a multi-stakeholder group that includes various state powers, control bodies, private sector and civil society.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p> The commitment is relevant to transparency as it involves the publication of more and better data that will be useful in the fight against corruption, in open formats that will be easily understandable by citizens and public institutions.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to civic participation as it comprises different phases for the co-creation of protocols and solutions, as well as training spaces where actors from academia, civil society and the private sector can participate.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to accountability because reporting channels and supervision mechanisms will be created or enhanced, This will allow citizens to have direct influence in the prevention and detection of possible corrupt actions and to monitor more effectively the probity of public institutions.</p>
<p>Additional information</p>	<p> The commitment is linked to a number of efforts the country is undertaking to update its policies and regulations to fight corruption in the process of joining the OECD.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to the Inter-American Open Data Program to Fight Corruption (PIDA) of the OAS Summit of the Americas, which aims at strengthening regional commitments on the use of open data to fight corruption, as well as fostering</p>





	<p>open data and multi-sector collaboration policies to facilitate inclusiveness and transparency.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to the efforts that control bodies are conducting to empower citizens in the defense of their rights, foster the value of probity, and strengthen citizen supervision.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to Sustainable Development Goal N°16: “<i>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</i>”.</p>
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Milestones activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date
<p>Establishment of the work team consisting of institutions and civil society organizations that will develop the commitment.</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Work Plan prepared by the work team</i></p>	07/01/2020	01/07/2020
<p>Development of the methodology for translating regulations into plain language.</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Methodology for translating regulations into plain language.</i></p>	21/07/2020	30/06/2021
<p>Preparation of materials in plain language about the regulations relevant to integrity and the fight against corruption for publication, dissemination and use in training activities.</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Materials produced</i></p>	01/07/2020	31/08/2021
<p>Conduct citizen consultations on the existing mechanisms and channels to supervise the management of public funds and report acts of corruption, and determine how these can be improved to respond more adequately to citizen needs</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Plan to improve mechanisms and channels</i></p>	21/07/2020	31/03/2021
<p>Dissemination and promotion of the existing channels and mechanisms for supervising the management of public funds and reporting acts of corruption.</p>	12/04/2021	31/08/2022





Deliverable: *Materials produced*

Develop three training activities aimed at public officials, journalists and civil society about the regulations of probity and fight against corruption; the channels and mechanisms they can use to supervise and report, and the methods to analyze and use the new information and data published for monitoring corruption.

01/01/2021

17/12/2021

Deliverable: *Programs of training activities.*

Co-creation of a guide for the publication of open data on corruption

14/05/2020

31/05/2021

Deliverable: *Guide for the publication of open data on corruption*

Publication of the identified datasets on a unified platform that will allow free downloading and include user-friendly display interfaces, as well as access to all relevant regulations in plain language.

01/03/2021

29/10/2021

Deliverable: *Datasets published on the platform.*

Development of activities for the promotion and use of the newly released open data to generate technological solutions that will allow for the supervising, monitoring and reporting of possible acts of corruption.

01/03/2021

31/08/2022

Deliverable: *Program of activities and solutions generated in the activities*

Contact Information

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Other actors involved	<i>State actors involved</i>	Ministry of Communication, Procurator of Public Ethics, Comptroller General of the Republic, Ministry of Justice and Peace, National Commission on Ethics and Values, Center for Training and Development (CECADES) of the Civil Service.
	<i>OSCs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (HIVOS), The Trust for the Americas (OAS), Costa Rica Integra, ACCESA.

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Ministry of Communication, *Procurator* of Public Ethics, and Comptroller General of the Republic, 2020.



Economic Recovery

Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC)



| Economic Recovery

This thematic area seeks to include actions aimed at increasing national productivity and competitiveness through the promotion of innovation, entrepreneurship, human resources training and insertion into the international market. It comprises efforts such as procedure simplification, articulation of production chains, accompaniment to SMEs, attraction of investments, among others.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, citizens were asked about the main problems related to this area, which were grouped into the categories of: Procedures; Lack of support for business; High costs/Lack of competitiveness; Insufficient or poor quality jobs; and Local governments. In addition, problems such as lack of incentives and support for small entrepreneurs, high social and tax burdens, excessive procedures and requirements, lack of investment, and weakness in value production chains were identified in the regional workshops.

These contributions were integrated and synthesized into seven different problems, which were ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of co-creation:

Table 13 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Economic Recovery area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Excessive procedures for entrepreneurship initiatives	88
2	Disarticulation of government efforts for economic recovery	62
3	High production costs for the business sector	44
4	Insufficient access to financing for SMEs	35
5	Inflexibility of regulations regarding social benefits for entrepreneurs, freelancers and micro-businesses	30

Source: Prepared by the authors with input of the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:





Excess of rigid procedures and bureaucracy that has an impact on high costs for the private sector, which encourages corruption and limits entrepreneurship at every stage.

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by a number of deficiencies or omissions such as disarticulation and limitations in the public institutions and the lack of use of technologies and digitalization. This results in disincentives to investment and entrepreneurship, labor informality and indebtedness.

The prioritized problem was submitted to consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose solution ideas. These proposals include: force all institutions to accept digital signature; propose flexibility, incentives and agility in procedures for entrepreneurship; evaluate whether the proposal to "eliminate excess procedures" within government institutions is being implemented; open an online portal for real-time tracking of procedures; implement a system where citizens can evaluate the service they receive; and promote spaces and mechanisms for the identification of MSME's real needs.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solution:

Optimization of procedures based on efficiency/effectiveness criteria and creation of an indicator-generating program to show compliance with Law N°8220 (for all institutions, including Municipalities).

The end goal of this solution would be to increase entrepreneurship, enhance confidence, reduce opportunities for corruption, generate greater economic dynamism and reduce the time it takes to complete procedures and obtain permits.

Based on these solution proposals, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that establishes a mechanism for participatory evaluation of the simplification of critical procedures for economic recovery, while also promoting the exchange of positive experiences among institutions and the application and dissemination of evaluations, such as the new Regulatory Management Index.



Table 14 Commitment of the Economic Recovery area

Commitment of the Economic Recovery area

06. Evaluation of simplified procedures from the citizens' experience

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 08/31/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC)

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

The excess of procedures required to invest, open a business, expand a business, or start a construction has been considered by businessmen and authorities as one of the most important obstacles for economic activity in the country. These excessive, rigid, and bureaucratic procedures increase investment and production costs in the private sector, limiting entrepreneurship initiatives at all stages, and even inciting corruption.

A reflection of this situation can be found in the *Doing Business Index 2020* prepared by the World Bank, which ranks Costa Rica in the 74th place among 190 countries, a decline of 7 positions when compared to the previous year, and 14 positions when compared to 2016. The results of Costa Rica show a particular lag in the field of Opening a business, where the country is ranked 144th.

In response to this situation, the national government has undertaken as a priority the promotion of actions and initiatives on regulatory improvement and procedure simplification, which can result in greater facilities for opening a business.

Some efforts that have been made include *Law No. 8220 on the Protection of Citizens from Excessive Administrative*





Requirements and Procedures and also, in the current administration, the guideline issued by the President of the Republic that establishes a regulatory moratorium preventing the creation of new procedures, requirements or formalities to obtain permits, licenses or authorizations until May 2022. Likewise, Executive Decree No. 41795-MP-MEIC was issued with the aim of promoting the use of a legal instrument called "affidavit" as a mechanism to generate efficiency in the requirements, procedures and formalities that citizens complete at public institutions, as this allows to speed up the resolution to their requests and facilitates effective compliance with institutional response times.

The Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC) is the institution responsible for enhancing the competitiveness of the business sector through procedure simplification, and to achieve that goal it has a Directorate of Regulatory Improvement (DMR). Some of the existing initiatives developed by this institution are the digital platform *Trámites Costa Rica*, which publishes an extensive catalogue of procedures with their respective information, as well as the Plans for Regulatory Improvement of all institutions and the Critical Procedure Methodology, which identifies the procedures that have a significant impact in the competitiveness of the business sector and citizen well-being. According to the goals established by the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022, at least three of these critical procedures must be simplified every year.

However, weaknesses still prevail, such as the lack of adequate assessments of the effects and impacts of simplified procedures and the lack of meaningful consultation and citizen participation that may allow to identify the real needs of users and gather their views on the changes in procedure simplification that have been completed, and how they can be improved.

To solve this lack of evaluation and assessment, MEIC has developed a Regulatory Capacity Index, which measures four different elements: Institutionalization, Tools, Administrative Simplification, and Institutional Performance. This index was first applied in 2019, initially to the municipal sector, and the plan is to apply it on a yearly basis and to gradually include the rest of public institutions. However, until now it has not been possible to move forward regarding consultations and citizen evaluation of procedures from the users' experience.





What is the commitment?

This commitment seeks to evaluate, based on the experience of its users, the implementation of improvements applied to critical procedures that are of key importance for economic recovery and competitiveness. This citizen evaluations will be aligned with the assessments made by MEIC (Critical Procedure Methodology, Regulatory Capacity Index, among other instruments) and the improvement and simplification projects executed by the institutions.

To this end, the following three main actions are proposed:

1. Holding workshops with citizens (based on the user experience framework) to evaluate the implementation of the improvements applied to the six critical procedures that are being simplified during the period of execution of the commitment, according to the goal incorporated into the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022. Parallel to those activities, interactive forums will be opened on the *Trámites Costa Rica* website, so that people can also comment about their experience on the progress of simplification of critical procedures. The input, recommendations and proposals collected in these spaces will be examined and implemented by the institutions responsible for the improvement of these procedures.
2. Articulation of networks for dissemination and communication of the results of the instruments (such as the Regulatory Capacity Index) developed to evaluate actions for procedure simplification and regulatory improvement by public institutions. The results of the application of these instruments will also be published and displayed in open formats on the website of MEIC.
3. Facilitation of spaces or meetings to exchange good practices among public institutions and promote cooperation for the improvement of procedures, processes, and paperwork that have an impact on citizens and businesspersons. Representatives of citizens that use these procedures will also be included in these meetings, where they will share feedback with the participating institutions.

This commitment will allow for a more precise monitoring and evaluation of the impact of simplified procedures, help to identify areas for improvement, support better implementation of the actions of different institutions in





	<p>terms of regulatory capacity, and enhance the work of MEIC as an articulator and driver of regulatory improvement and procedure simplification.</p> <p>In addition, the participatory approach and the user experience framework that will be implemented in this commitment will foster citizen involvement in critical procedure simplification, thus counteracting the excessively institutional approach that currently prevails in this area.</p>
<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<p>The successful implementation of this commitment will allow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To evaluate actions more rigorously in terms of regulatory improvement, and strengthen capacities for the simplification of procedures that public institutions are implementing, so as to identify, together with citizens, the actions that should be taken to strengthen these processes. 2. To centrally include the experience and perspective of citizens to improve critical procedures, so that they respond to the needs of the people who must carry them out, through a continuous improvement approach. 3. To publish and disseminate in open and accessible formats all information resulting from these actions. <p>This will generate a more transparent and participatory process for procedure simplification and regulatory improvement that will involve citizens in an active, supervisory role in the implementation of simplification projects.</p> <p>The impact of this commitment will be the efficient adjustment of public policy in accordance with users' views regarding the identification of gaps and corrective actions in the initiatives for regulatory improvement and procedure simplification undertaken by public institutions.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p> The commitment is relevant to transparency because it proposes the publication of new information in open formats on the progress and evaluations regarding procedure simplification and regulatory improvement of public institutions.</p>



	<p> The commitment is relevant to civic participation because it opens new spaces for greater citizen involvement in the evaluation and monitoring of simplified procedures.</p> <p> The commitment is relevant to accountability because it enhances evaluation instruments (such as the Regulatory Capacity Index) that measure how public institutions are acting in terms of regulatory improvement and procedure simplification; and it also opens spaces for citizens to provide feedback on the simplification of critical procedures by the institutions.</p>
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Additional information	<p> The commitment is aligned with the actions that MEIC has been implementing through the Regulatory Improvement Directorate in terms of procedure simplification and the strategy of articulation with other institutions, academia, the private sector, and civil society.</p> <p> The commitment responds to the strategic area of “<i>Innovation, Competitiveness and Productivity</i>” of the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022, which has as a goal the simplification of twelve procedures that impact the competitiveness of the business sector and citizenship well-being by the year 2022.</p> <p> The commitment responds to Sustainable Development Goal N° 8: “<i>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</i>”.</p>
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Milestones activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date
Development of the methodology for the participatory spaces. <u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Document with the methodology.</i>	07/01/2020	31/03/2020
Six exercises to evaluate critical procedures from the experience of citizens, both face-to-face and online (1 for each critical procedure, 3 per year). <u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Report of each exercise and its collected inputs.</i>	01/04/2020	30/06/2022



Three institutional encounters (one per semester) related to best practices in regulatory matters and procedure simplification. <i>Deliverable: Report of each institutional encounter.</i>	01/06/2020	02/04/2022
Implementation of the recommendations provided by the citizens to improve the simplification of critical procedures. <i>Deliverable: Report evidencing the direct influence of the inputs that were collected with citizens regarding the improvement of the six critical procedures that were simplified during the period of the commitment, as well as any other relevant actions that have resulted from the exchanges between citizens and institutions in the participatory spaces.</i>	01/07/2021	29/07/2022
Preparation of the report on the final progress and results of the commitment. <i>Deliverable: Document with report on progress and results.</i>	01/08/2021	31/08/2022

Contact Information

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Other actors involved	<i>State actors involved</i> Open Government Office of the Ministry of Communication
	<i>OSCs, private sector, multi-lateral, working groups</i> Costa Rica Integra Collaborative Laboratory of Public Innovation (Innovaap) of the School of Public Administration of the University of Costa Rica

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce, 2020.





Citizen Security

Ministry of Public Security (MSP)



| Citizen Security

This thematic area considers initiatives that guarantee the right of people to live in safe, protective, and inclusive environments. The promotion of public spaces, prevention of violence and crime, the fight against money laundering, among others, are the type of actions that can be addressed by this thematic area.

In the online consultation of the first stage of the co-creation process, citizens were asked about the main problems related to this area, which were grouped into the categories of: Values and social problems; Manifestations of insecurity; Legislation; Police resources; and Public spaces. In addition, problems such as lack of organization in community security, lack of information on what can and cannot be done to report crimes, and distrust of the security forces were identified in the regional workshops.

These problems were integrated and synthesized into nine different problems, which were ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation of the second stage of the co-creation process:

Table 15 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Citizen Security area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Increase in organized crime and gangs	110
2	Impunity (lack of punishment for criminal acts)	74
3	Weak legislation to attack common crime	61
4	Lack of prevention programs starting in childhood	60
5	Low levels of specialized equipment and capabilities of officers related to justice enforcement and security	42

Source: Prepared by the authors with input of the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:





Need of a comprehensive approach for crime prevention³.

The prioritized problem was submitted to consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose ideas for solutions. These proposals include: the articulation of efforts to address security with a more comprehensive, preventive approach based on the identification of local needs; reactivation or strengthening of Community Security programs; promotion of citizen participation through debates and round tables to learn about the reality of security; geolocation and disclosure of the areas with greater incidence by type of crime; and to develop a new reporting application that allows to follow up on the cases.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solutions:

1. Articulate the institutional capacities of the public and private sector for the intervention of specific security problems.
2. Encourage prevention through education, starting from childhood and through all other stages up to adulthood.

Based on these solution ideas, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that arises from *Sembremos Seguridad*, the main comprehensive security prevention strategy that is currently being implemented in the country, in order to strengthen the articulation, inclusion and outreach aimed at solving the security issues prioritized in each canton⁴.

³ The problem originally prioritized in this thematic area was impunity; however, later it was changed with the consensus of the participants of the thematic table, because that problem is not an attribution of the Security area, but of the Judiciary.

⁴ At the time of drafting the commitment, the decision was made to set aside the solution idea that proposed to encourage prevention from childhood through the education system because education is the responsibility of other institutions and because of the difficulty of complying with such a solution within the timeframe available for the plan.



Table 16 Commitment of the Citizen Security area

Commitment of the Citizen Security area

07. Sembremos Seguridad as a bridge in the institutional articulation for the fulfillment of security action lines with transparency and accountability

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2019 - 31/08/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Ministry of Public Security (MSP)

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Costa Rica has faced an increase in crime in recent years. This increase has been particularly reflected in the rate of intentional homicides (which amounted to 11.7 homicides per every 100,000 people in 2018), but it is also evidenced in other crimes affecting more closely the daily life of most citizens. That is the case of assaults, of which 16,490 were reported in 2018, showing a 10.8% increase when compared to the previous year. In addition, in 2018, 7,264 reports of home burglaries were filed, for a daily average of 19.9 reports.

This situation creates a growing sense of insecurity, frustration, helplessness, and lack of protection among citizens, and it also results in a loss of credibility in laws and the security system.

Due to the complexity of the crime phenomenon and the multiple socio-economic and criminal factors that affect it, there is a need to adopt a security prevention approach that integrates consistent, assessable, sustainable and comprehensive policies, with a multi-dimensional focus arising from the study of the problems concerning public safety, human development, and citizen security.

For that purpose, the Ministry of Public Security is currently implementing *Sembremos Seguridad*, a comprehensive





	<p>prevention strategy for public safety that is gradually expanding to the 82 cantons of the country.</p> <p><i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> aims to identify, prioritize and target the main problems that affect and influence citizen security and peaceful coexistence, based on local diagnoses for the understanding of violence, social risk, and crime phenomena and other factors generating insecurity, through the integration of institutional capacities, public policies and community management.</p> <p>The result of these diagnoses is the definition, prioritization, and execution of a number of particular lines of action for each canton to be implemented by the Ministry of Public Security, municipalities and other relevant institutions or organizations. Presently, the fulfillment of these lines of action is 63%.</p> <p>However, despite this progress, the strategy has faced significant challenges in terms of monitoring these lines of action. On the one hand, the MSP has encountered some difficulties in complying with these actions. On the other hand, it faces barriers to articulate effectively with other institutions responsible for implementing actions. Finally, it needs to expand the publication of accessible and clear information regarding compliance with the lines of action in each canton, since the lack of this information makes it impossible for citizens to follow up on the progress or delays that are occurring.</p>
What is the commitment?	<p>To strengthen the articulation around the comprehensive strategy of public safety prevention <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> in order to address more effectively the citizen security issues affecting each canton.</p> <p>This will be achieved through the following priority actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strengthening the articulation between the public institutions involved in the lines of action of <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> in each canton, depending on their authority and capacities, in order to advance toward compliance with the lines of action and be accountable for their progress.2. Transparency of the progress and status of compliance with the lines of action of each canton through the publication of relevant information in open, accessible and territorially disaggregated





	<p>formats on the website of the Ministry of Public Security.</p> <p>3. Improving the dissemination of information, events and activities related to the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy among organizations and communities through the most appropriate channels.</p> <p>The commitment aims at ensuring prompt compliance with the lines of action in those cantons where the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy is being implemented, with a more active involvement of public institutions and citizens.</p>
<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<p>This commitment is linked to an already existing public policy, which is the comprehensive prevention strategy for public safety <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i>. This program has a rigorous five-stage process that combines a number of techniques and methodological tools to define, with the support of citizens, institutions and experts, relevant problems for the canton and the lines of work that must be executed to solve them. Thus, the strategy contributes to the solution of social problems related to crime and citizen insecurity, with actions that are linked to the needs of each canton.</p> <p>Therefore, this commitment is fully aligned with the ultimate objectives of the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy, but it adds a more vigorous component of institutional participation and collaboration, especially in the stages of monitoring, execution and evaluation of the lines of action, as well as of transparency and accountability by improving the access to information regarding compliance with the strategy.</p> <p>This will help to develop a community interest in the execution of the action lines of the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy in each canton, which will contribute to improve compliance, enhance strategy and achieve a more sustainable approach to prevention, thus resulting in an improvement in security perception and crime rates in the cantons.</p> <p>The ultimate impact of the commitment will be to reach at least 80% progress in the fulfillment of the internal and external lines of action of the cantons assessed by <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> as of August of 2020 (including the diagnoses made from 2017 up to the indicated period).</p> <p>This impact can be verified by measuring the percentage of total progress of the lines of action (the sum of the percentage of the lines of action in process plus the internal and external</p>





	lines of action that are already fulfilled) in each canton compared to the level of progress they had prior to the commitment.	
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	<p> The commitment is relevant to transparency because it proposes to publish information and data in open, accessible formats about the progress in the implementation and compliance with the lines of action of the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy at the canton level. Presently, most of that information is not published and the little information available is not in open formats.</p> <p> This commitment is relevant to accountability because it includes actions that seek to generate greater citizen scrutiny and monitoring of the lines of action undertaken by the different actors within the framework of the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy. This scrutiny is expected to promote corrective actions regarding implementation lags or weaknesses.</p>	
Additional information	<p> The execution of this commitment will be funded with the budget of the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy, a program of the Ministry of Public Security and the United States Embassy with which it is fully linked and aligned.</p> <p> This commitment is linked to the strategic area of Human Security of the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022, the goal of which is to have the <i>Sembremos Seguridad</i> strategy implemented in 64 cantons during the 2019-2021 period.</p> <p> This commitment is linked to Sustainable Development Goal N°16: <i>“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”</i>.</p>	
Milestones activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date





Publication on the website of the Ministry of Public Security of information and data in open and accessible formats about progress in the implementation of the *Sembremos Seguridad* strategy and compliance with its lines of action, territorially disaggregated for each canton. These data should be updated on a monthly basis.

01-01-2020 **31-08-2020**

To be updated on the 7th day of every month

Deliverable: *Section with open data for Sembremos Seguridad to be published and updated monthly on the MSP website.*

Quarterly follow up of the lines of action of each canton, through field visits or virtual meetings with local governments, to verify and demonstrate compliance with the lines of action.

01-01-2020 **31-08-2021**

Months of publication: April, July, October, January, April, July

Deliverable: *Reports and displays of quarterly progress of the lines of action of the Sembremos Seguridad strategy published on the MSP website.*

The Ministry of Public Security, along with municipalities, organized civil society and state institutions present in the area, will incorporate 30 new cantons into the Comprehensive Strategy for Public Safety Prevention *Sembremos Seguridad*.

01-01-2020 **31-12-2021**

Deliverable: *Information published in the open data section of the website of the Ministry of Public Security about each new canton.*

Accountability report at the end of the implementation period of the commitment evidencing compliance with execution of at least 80% of the internal and external lines of action of the cantons diagnosed as of August of 2020 (including the diagnoses made from 2017 up to the indicated period), with the comprehensive participation of all involved actors.

01-01-2021 **31-08-2021**

Deliverable: *Final report on compliance with the commitment published on the MSP website.*

Contact Information

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Other actors involved	<i>State actors involved</i>	
	<i>OSCs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Ministry of Public Security, 2020.





Judicial Branch



| Open Justice

This thematic area integrates the efforts of the justice system to promote its modernization and continuous improvement in order to provide prompt, effective and accessible justice within the framework of the guiding principles of transparency, participation and collaboration.

The Judiciary was incorporated into the co-creation process until the second stage; therefore, the five problems that were submitted to consultation at that stage were selected by the National Commission for the Improvement of the Justice System (Conamaj). The following are the problems ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation:

Table 17 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Open Justice area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Delay in resolution of court cases	58
2	Limited sensitization of judicial staff and inadequate attention to users	42
3	Weak coordination between the Judiciary and other institutions	31
4	Limited spaces to exercise citizen participation in the Judicial Branch	27
5	Lack of knowledge of the services made available by the Judicial Branch	19

Source: Prepared by the authors with input of the online consultation, 2019.

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:

Delay in the resolution of judicial cases.

According to the thematic table, this problem is caused by what seems to be poor resource management and lack of commitment of those in charge of making remedial decisions. This results in an increase in impunity recidivism and in people not reporting and not suing because they think that the system is ineffective.



The prioritized problem was submitted for consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where citizens could propose solutions. These proposals included: giving more impetus to ADR and restorative justice methods to avoid the judicialization of problems and conflicts that overwhelm the court system; and improving the efficiency and attention of judicial staff.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solution:

Citizen oversight of the programs of the Judiciary (Citizen Observatory).

The end goal of this solution would be reducing delay in judicial processes, strengthening democracy and increasing society's confidence in the justice system.

Based on these proposed solutions, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that opens a new technology platform called Judicial Observatory, which will publish data on the operation and performance of the judicial offices, to be accompanied by participatory spaces to analyze said data and suggest proposals to reduce delay in judicial processes and other relevant issues.



Table 18 Commitment of the Open Justice area

Commitment of the Open Justice area

08. Judicial Observatory for monitoring judicial management

Commitment start and end dates: 01/01/2020 - 08/31/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Judicial Branch

Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

The problem to be addressed is the delay in the resolution of judicial cases.

According to citizen views, the annual reduction of circulating cases is not considerable, and to this must be added the new cases filed every year. Poor resource management and lack of commitment of those in charge of making remedial decisions is also perceived. This is due partly because citizens do not have precise information on how the judicial processes are developed according to their subject matter, the instances involved, time frames, among others.

The Judiciary has identified that the number of cases in progress and under execution is 25,237 as of November 2019. It should be mentioned that the average monthly number of incoming cases is 89,671.8, and an average of 82,932.2 cases are solved, that is, on average 7.51% of incoming cases remain pending.

However, the problem has been addressed since 2014, when the Supreme Court agreed to establish a "Protocol to





Redesign Processes in Court Circuits, Offices or Chambers”, because it found that the number of court files entering every year had grown 6.11% since 2015. By 2018, 1,170,372 new cases entered, while the number of the staff designated to handle them is distributed as follows:

29	12	11	32
Judges per every 100,000 inhabitants	Prosecutors per every 100,000 inhabitants	Defense counsels per every 100,000 inhabitants	Investigators per every 100,000 inhabitants

Therefore, there is little correspondence between the demand for judicial services and the capacity of human resources to respond to the growing number of court cases.

Regarding access to information on these processes and the monitoring of progress or delays in terms of resolution of judicial cases, the Judiciary currently has a Georeference System integrating information on the territorial competence of the jurisdictional offices and auxiliary offices of justice, budget formulation, contact information for offices, judicial staff disaggregated by sex, status and type of position, list of office assets, general statistical balance, statistics of gender, data and INEC population projections. However, there is a need to create an interface that can allow users to view the information in a more graphic and simple way, reusing the information existing already and adding strategic information relevant for decision making.

What is the commitment?

To develop a Judicial Observatory for citizen consultation that facilitates institutional management, with an emphasis on delay of judicial processes, through data preferably displayed in open formats and integrated with the Georeferenced System that the Judiciary operates in the administrative and jurisdictional field.





This commitment aims at designing and launching a platform that will show judicial indicators and statistics on the number of judicial processes existing in each judicial office, the number of officials working in each court office, among others, with all this information integrated into the information contained in the Georeferenced System.

This information will be available through the website of the Judicial Branch following the criteria of territorial competences by circuit, subject matter, and court office, in order to provide users with transparent, accurate and reliable information on the operation of the institution, through a friendly and easy-to-operate tool, enhancing the publication of data in an open format, as well as the use of georeferenced maps and graphical interfaces that facilitate the understanding of information.

On the other hand, addressing a social problem requires not only public institutions for the implementation of public policies, plans and projects, but also citizen participation. For this purpose, focus groups will be held, and consultation and co-creation spaces will be opened, so that users of the court system can propose improvements to the platform, analyze the available data and provide the institution with recommendations related to the problem of delay of judicial processes. These recommendations will be analyzed, systematized, and evaluated, and those judged to be viable will be implemented.

To meet these objectives, the commitment includes the following actions:

Stage I: Development of the Judicial Observatory, creation of the technological solution, integration of the information and transfer of the information from the Georeferenced System to the Observatory.

1. Definition, analysis, design and development of the compendium of court indicators and statistics:
 - 1.1.1. Staff composition (male and female)





- 1.1.2. Active cases (execution, resolution and pending)
- 1.1.3. Duration of proceedings
- 1.1.4. Productivity (number of cases completed)
- 1.1.5. Number of documents received
- 1.1.6. Number of notifications served
- 1.1.7. Annual indicators of budget execution
- 1.1.8. Statistics on Technological Services

In this first stage, only priority information available in the SIGMA system will be considered. Incremental deliveries of indicators will be made, so that value is generated as soon as possible.

- 2. Documents of control bodies: incorporation into the platform of documents related to the control bodies of the Judiciary. Display of these documents is subject to the way the information is treated to classify documents according to the control body that sends them and their recipient, which is a task in charge of the Secretariat of the Court.
- 3. Integration of documents and reports from the control bodies.
- 4. Migration of the Georeferenced System to the new Judicial Observatory platform: It will show centralized information of interest related to the operation of the Judicial Branch by office, circuit or subject matter, allowing information to be displayed graphically and in geo-referenced maps for applicable cases.

Stage II: Launching the Judicial Observatory

- 5. Integrating citizen participation mechanisms by holding focus groups with users and court staff to find proposals to improve the Judicial Observatory in relation to aspects such as: display, location of information, topics of interest, accessibility, information needs, among others.
- 6. Facilitate consultation spaces intended for those populations interested in the judicial system, so that they can follow up and supervise judicial processes, in





	<p>order to issue recommendations and proposals for improvement, within the framework of the mechanisms to consolidate a permanent dialogue between the Judicial Branch and civil society.</p> <p>7. Co-create a dissemination and promotion strategy for the digital platform so that internal and external users, NGOs, and institutions may have knowledge about the existence of this website.</p>
<p>How will this commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</p>	<p>With this commitment, the Judicial Branch shows its support and interest in generating a change in the delay of judicial processes by promoting citizen inclusion through accountability and control of institutional management, in addition to encouraging transparency through access to the information that will be published in the digital platform in question.</p> <p>Therefore, starting from the Judiciary and its institutional policies of Open Justice and citizen participation, the goal is to strengthen the relationship between the state and its citizens with the support of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to open channels of interaction and incidence. This is why Open Government and Open Justice initiatives refer to a co-responsibility of citizens in judicial management, and ICTs are the tools that facilitate this process.</p> <p>By broadening the opportunities for consultation, populations interested in judicial management are expected to provide follow up and control of judicial processes, so that they can issue recommendations and proposals for improvements within the framework of the mechanisms to consolidate a permanent dialogue between the Judicial Branch and civil society, as approved by the Supreme Court in Minutes N° 033-2019, dated August 12, 2019.</p> <p>The target population of this new technological tool is the users of the judicial system, offices, chambers, judicial authorities, among other high and mid-ranking administrators of the Judicial Branch that intend to monitor</p>



institutional management and the efforts implemented to reduce the delay in judicial processes and to allow for better institutional decision making.

Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?

 This commitment is relevant to transparency as it is committed to the publication not only of additional information, but of data that contemplates quality and usability criteria for the different audiences of interest, thus improving accessibility to information.

 Furthermore, the commitment is especially important for accountability as it will generate a mechanism for citizens to monitor the progress or delay in judicial processes.

 The commitment also has a high component of citizen participation. By making information of great relevance available to users, especially to those who are interested in incidence, following up and oversight, it aspires to foster a democratic process that seeks responsible, active and sustained involvement of the population in the design, decision making and execution of the policies of the Judicial Branch, especially the Strategic Institutional Plan 2019-2024, which aims to gradually reduce the delay in judicial processes and the modernization of judicial management.

 Through this commitment, the principle of collaboration is put into practice because collaborative work among the numerous offices of the Judicial Branch is needed to define, analyze, design and develop a digital platform that will work as a judicial observatory for different audiences of interest.

Additional information

 Commitment budget: Ninety-one million eight hundred ninety-six thousand six hundred sixteen colons (₡91,896,616.32), divided into forty-five million nine hundred forty-eight thousand three hundred eight colons (₡45,948,308.16) per year.



	<p> The commitment is linked to official document DP-714-2018 of the Presidency of the Court, which requests the development of the Judicial Observatory project; the Citizen Participation Policy and the Open Justice Policy, the latter having resulted from the Third Open Government Action Plan.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to the Strategic Institutional Plan 2019-2024 of the Judicial Branch, and more specifically, to Strategic Theme 301 of Modernization of Judicial Management, the objective of which is <i>“To provide technological solutions to meet the needs of the Judicial Branch”</i>; and to Strategic Action 926: <i>“To develop effective information systems to support decision making”</i>.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to Sustainable Development Goal N°16: <i>“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”</i>.</p>
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Milestone activity with verifiable deliverables	Start Date	End Date
Development of the Judicial Observatory (creation of the technological solution, integration and portability of the information from the Georeferenced System to the Observatory). <u>Deliverable:</u> <i>The digital platform.</i>	01/01/2020	31/06/2020
Implementation of the Judicial Observatory. <u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Report on the implementation of the Judicial Observatory.</i>	01/07/2020	29/01/2021
Co-creation and implementation of an outreach and promotion strategy for the Observatory.	01/02/2020	30/09/2020



Deliverable: *Document describing the co-creation process, and the outreach and promotion strategy.*

Implementation of citizen participation mechanisms to receive feedback on the aspects considered susceptible to improvement and to identify information needs, and opening of consultation spaces so that the populations interested in judicial management can provide monitoring and control of judicial processes, in order to provide recommendations and improvement proposals.

01/03/2021 31/05/2021

Deliverable: *Report on the results of the participatory mechanisms.*

Analysis, systematization, and evaluation of citizens' recommendations, as well as of the viability for their implementation.

01/06/2021 31/08/2021

Deliverable: *Document with analysis and assessment of the observations proposed by citizens.*

Implementation of the technically viable recommendations made by citizens, as per the timetable of the project.

01/09/2021 31/08/2022

Deliverable: *Digital platform with the implemented recommendations.*

Contact Information

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Other actors involved	<i>State actors involved</i>	Supreme Court, Presidency of the Supreme Court of Justice, Presidency's Office, High Council, Jurisdictional offices: chambers, tribunals and courts, Auxiliary justice offices, Secretariat General of the Court, Comptroller of Services, Judicial Audit, Directorate of Information Technology, Directorate of Planning, Executive Directorate, Human Resources Management Directorate, CONAMAJ, Department of Press and Organizational Communication, Central Government, International entities.
	<i>OSCs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	National media, <i>Estado de la Nación</i> , users, NGOs, Others

Source: Prepared by the authors with input and reviews from the Judicial Branch, 2020





**ASAMBLEA
LEGISLATIVA**
de la República de Costa Rica

Legislative Branch



| Open Parliament

This thematic area includes efforts that seek to ensure the incorporation of the principles of transparency, citizen participation, accountability, ethics and probity into all activities of the Legislative Branch, in order to strengthen Costa Rican democracy by establishing an open institutional relationship, improving service delivery, and fulfilling functions to ensure a better quality of life for people.

The Legislative Assembly joined the co-creation process in the second stage; thus, the seven problems that were submitted to consultation in that stage were selected by the Technical Team in charge of this Plan with the approval of the Department of Citizen Participation of the Legislative Branch. The main five problems ranked according to their importance by the people participating in the online consultation were the following:

Table 19 Five main problems according to the highest scores in the Open Parliament area

N°	Problem	Score received
1	Absence of spaces for dialogue and collaboration between the Legislative Assembly and citizens	48
2	Lack of channels for interaction with citizens	34
3	Absence of initiatives for outreach in the communities	33
4	Lack of spaces for training on legislative work and mechanisms of citizen incidence	27
5	The website of the Legislative Assembly is difficult to navigate (counterintuitive and not friendly for users)	20

Source: Prepared by the authors with input of the online consultation, 2019

In the National Workshop for Problem Prioritization, the results of this consultation were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following problem:

Lack of dialogue and collaboration in the Legislative Assembly, from both political and administrative areas.



According to the thematic table, this problem is caused because the structure of the Legislative Assembly does not include in its design and composition any spaces for dialogue and collaboration, neither in the political nor administrative areas. This results in mistrust between the institution and the population, citizen frustration, violation of rights, and loss of credibility.

The prioritized problem was submitted for consultation in the third stage of the co-creation process, where the citizens could propose solutions. These proposals include: establishing a comprehensive and multi-channel strategy with periodic face-to-face and online forums; dissemination strategies and community outreach; opening spaces in the Legislative Plenary so that sectors, groups or individuals can express themselves on topics of country-wide relevance and importance; citizen audits and the requirement of accountability on the work done by members of Parliament; strengthening information and communication mechanisms; and design of a real time legislative monitoring platform.

Then, in the National Workshop for Solution Design, these contributions were used as non-binding input by the participants of the thematic table, who decided to define and prioritize the following solution:

Establish a comprehensive, multi-channel strategy that includes periodic in-person and online forums, as well as permanent mechanisms (for example: a website where bills can be consulted and commented), dissemination strategies and community outreach.

The end goal of this solution would be to create a direct coherence between representative and participatory democracy in the political system, creating a closer relationship with civil society, ensuring that laws and political control are accountable to civil society, and increasing the legitimacy and governance of the political system.

Based on these solution proposals, the task group in charge of this commitment worked on designing a commitment that proposes to co-create an innovative strategy of citizen participation for the Legislative Assembly, based on a participatory evaluation of the Legislative Portal and the establishment of an Open State Citizen Parliament to be in charge of assessments, proposing reforms and recommending new regulations to strengthen openness and participation in the Legislative Branch and other public institutions.



Table 20 Commitment of the Open Parliament area

Commitment of the Open Parliament area

09. Co-creation of a comprehensive, innovative, and multichannel citizen participation strategy for the Legislative Assembly on the basis of opening collaborative spaces and processes

Commitment start and end date: 01/03/2020 - 31/08/2022

Lead implementing agency/actor

Department of Citizen Participation, Legislative Assembly

Commitment description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

In the study of sociopolitical opinion of the *Centro de Investigación y Estudios Políticos* (CIEP) for November 2019, the Legislative Assembly scored a 4.7 in terms of citizen approval; only the central government and the political parties received a worse result. Furthermore, citizens consider that their demands are not heard nor represented by the institution, as was revealed by *the Study on legitimacy and efficacy of the Legislative Assembly* conducted by the organization ACCESA in 2017, which showed that the main weaknesses of the Legislative Assembly from the interviewees point of view are problems of representativeness and lack of commitment with citizens. This study also evidences that what citizens most seek from the Legislative Assembly and its congresspersons is greater transparency and a deeper consideration of public opinion, especially in the process of drafting and approving legislation.

In response to this situation, the Legislative Assembly has acted to include citizens and make more transparent its operations. For example, in 2015 and 2016 it created, along with the Alliance for an Open Assembly, two action plans to promote the adoption of Open Parliament principles in the institution, and in April 2019 the





	<p>Legislative Directorate approved an Open Parliament Institutional Policy (PIPA). Nevertheless, the degree of execution of these initiatives has been irregular and they have not had enough follow-up.</p> <p>In addition, since 2014 the Assembly has a Department of Citizen Participation with the task of promoting active social participation through the opening of communication channels that allow for greater engagement with the popular representatives and interaction in the legislative processes. Among the main initiatives of this Department is the Civic Parliaments Program, which promotes the conformation of sectoral citizen parliaments that can function as spaces for training and political incidence. However, this Department has faced budgetary constraints and lack of institutional support to disseminate and communicate its actions and to evaluate their impact strategically.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Legislative Assembly is one of the national institutions that possesses mechanisms for citizen engagement in its website, though according to many of its users, said website has problems related to accessibility and its information platform.</p> <p>Despite the actions previously described, in general the perception of the citizens is that the structure of the Legislative Assembly contemplates very few spaces for meaningful dialogue and collaboration. This perception is reflected in the results of the <i>Legislative Transparency Index 2018</i>, in which Costa Rica, even though in general it attained a privileged position, obtained a score of only 33,3 in the indicator of Citizen Participation, since it was assessed that there were no adequate spaces for citizens to be consulted about the bills under discussion.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>This commitment seeks the opening of collaborative spaces and processes in the Legislative Assembly through a comprehensive, innovative, and multichannel citizen participation strategy.</p> <p>According to agreement number 10 of the ordinary session No. 093-2020 of the Legislative Directorate⁵, to</p>

⁵ This session took place on February 18, 2020.





	<p>accomplish this commitment the following actions will be implemented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a public consultation of the Legislative Portal under a universal accessibility framework, to identify the failings of the current website in terms of publication, location, usability and access to information, as well as in terms of clarity of language and citizen engagement so as to propose actions and recommendations for improvement. <p>Accordingly, the Open Parliament Institutional Commission will be responsible for planning, executing and evaluating this consultation with the support of the Citizen Participation, Public Relations, Press and Protocol, and IT departments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Establish an Open State Civic Forum that will summon citizens and civil society organizations to evaluate the current legislation on transparency, access to information, accountability, and citizen participation. This civic forum will also be able to propose reforms to the legislation and new bills, that will then be presented to the members of congress for their assessment and possible adoption.
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The commitment aims to strategically define (with goals and indicators) clear and measurable actions for the Legislative Assembly to open multichannel spaces that can allow citizens to get involved in different areas of the legislative arena, so the institution can harness their collective intelligence for the improvement in the quality and representativeness of its legislation and policies.</p> <p>The commitment will contribute to the creation and institutionalization of innovative spaces for citizen participation, as well as to the articulation of all these spaces under a single strategic focus, with the ultimate purpose of improving citizen opinion of the representativeness, transparency and outreach of the Legislative Assembly.</p> <p>By virtue of being co-created with civil society, these actions seek to ensure that these participatory spaces not only respond to an institutional or legislative logic, but also to the needs and interests of citizens.</p>





Furthermore, by adopting a multichannel approach that includes both in-person and digital mechanisms that can stimulate the involvement of different sectors (particularly the youth), the expectation is that this commitment will help achieve an advancement toward a more participatory democracy that can be able to produce more legitimate, effective and higher-quality legislation and policies.

In this sense, the activities of public consultation on the Legislative Portal and the establishment of the Open State Civic Forum are crucial, since these actions not only can help in identifying current weaknesses and propose recommendations for improvement, but they'll also boost the articulation, strengthening and empowerment of civil society actors in order to create the conditions for the members of congress to commit to a stronger participation and interaction with citizens through both in-person and virtual channels.

Stemming from the COVID-19 epidemic, the use of technology is now, more than ever, essential to guide public policy and migrate from a “paper culture” toward new forms of accountability.

In this context, congresses are summoned to pursue the lessons and practices necessary to migrate toward a smart state that can encourage citizen engagement through the use of new information and communication technologies to make public service more transparent.

In that sense, not only the final outcome, but all the activities that are part of this commitment, are participatory, innovative and multichannel processes that are expected to consolidate replicable experiences for engagement between the Legislative Assembly and citizens.

Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?



The commitment is relevant to civic participation since, through the Open State Civic Forum, it creates new opportunities and tools for people to influence the discussions and bills that are approved by the Legislative Assembly, and it enhances existing participatory mechanisms through a more comprehensive and strategic





	<p>approach. In addition, it opens opportunities to collaboratively evaluate the information that the Legislative Assembly publishes and to directly influence the citizen participation strategy that will be adopted by the institution.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>	<p> The commitment is linked to the Open Parliament Institutional Policy (PIPA) and the action lines that the Department of Citizen Participation has been implementing, such as the Civic Parliaments Program.</p> <p> The commitment is linked to the Sustainable Development Goal N°16: <i>“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”</i>.</p>	
<p>Milestone activities with verifiable deliverables</p>	<p>Start Date:</p>	<p>End Date:</p>
<p>Development of a Protocol for convening civil society to the activities of the commitment.</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Protocol for convening civil society.</i></p>	<p>01/01/2021</p>	<p>31/03/2021</p>
<p>Open call for the co-creation of the Rules of Procedure for the Open State Citizen Parliament and the Methodology for the citizen evaluation of the Legislative Portal.</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Open call published and document with the Methodology for the citizen evaluation of the Legislative Portal.</i></p>	<p>01/04/2021</p>	<p>31/05/2021</p>
<p>Formation and inauguration of the Open State Citizen Parliament.</p> <p><u>Deliverable:</u> <i>Documents with the Rules of Procedure for the Open State Citizen Parliament and minutes of the first plenary session.</i></p>	<p>01/06/2021</p>	<p>31/07/2021</p>





Development of a methodology for the citizen consultation of the Legislative Portal. Deliverable: <i>Document with the methodology of the consultation</i>	01/01/2021	30/03/2021
Ongoing work in the commissions and thematic forums of the Open State Citizen Parliament. Deliverable: <i>Minutes, opinions, and reports of the commissions.</i>	01/08/2021	15/12/2021
Completion of the second and third plenary sessions of the Open State Citizen Parliament to evaluate the work done on the commissions and their requirements for convening audiences. Deliverable: <i>Minutes of the agreements of the plenary session.</i>	01/01/2022	30/03/2022
Logistics and implementation of the citizen evaluation of the Legislative Portal. Deliverable: <i>Report with results and recommendations.</i>	01/04/2021	31/08/2021
Online consultation of the bills approved by the commissions and the plenary of the Open State Citizen Parliament. Deliverable: <i>Report with citizen feedback on the bills and policy proposals.</i>	01/04/2022	31/05/2022
Public presentation of the final report of the Open State Civic Parliament before the authorities of the Legislative Assembly, the National Open State Commission, interested actors and citizens in general. Deliverable: <i>Press release on the presentation and document with the final report of the Open State Civic Parliament.</i>	01/06/2022	31/06/2022
Co-creation of a comprehensive, innovative, and multichannel citizen participation strategy for the Legislative Assembly. Deliverable: <i>Document with the strategy published and delivered to the political and administrative authorities of the Assembly.</i>	01/07/2022	31/07/2022
Preparation of a final report on the progress and results of	01/07/2022	15/08/2022





the commitment.

Deliverable: *Document with final report on progress and results of the commitment.*

Contact information		
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Other Actors Involved	<i>State actors involved</i>	Congressman Wagner Alberto Jiménez Zúñiga, Coordinator of the Open State Institutional Commission Ministry of Communication
	<i>CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	Omar Dengo Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, National Council of People with Disabilities (Conapdis), National University (UNA), Distance State University (UNED) University of Costa Rica (UCR), Alliance for an Open Assembly (AAA), National Open State Commission, Sustainable Development Association LGTBI-ADS, <i>Territorios Seguros</i> , Environmental Parliament, Agricultural Parliament, Cristal Foundation

Source: Prepared by the authors with inputs and revisions from the Department of Citizen Participation of the Legislative Assembly, 2020.



What's next?

Over the next several months, the institutions responsible and their counterparts will be working to implement the nine commitments of the Fourth Open State Action Plan. The National Open State Commission will be the body in charge of accompanying and following up on these commitments regularly and of ensuring that they're being executed according to Open Government principles.

In addition, a tool to view commitments is available on the Open Government Costa Rica website, which can be accessible to all those interested in knowing the progress of each commitment, as well as any other relevant documentation and information.

The Independent Review Mechanism of the Open Government Partnership, in turn, will submit two evaluation reports on the plan: a mid-term report that analyzes the process of the co-creation and preparation of the plan, and another at the end of the period that will assess the implementation of the plan and its commitments. These reports will be submitted for public consultation prior to publication of their final version.

However, beyond these formal mechanisms and obligations, the most important role in this implementation process is played by citizens. If we want a public sector that governs with citizens and not only for citizens, the active involvement of all people is necessary to promote these initiatives, participate in collaborative spaces, monitor their compliance, support institutions in their different activities, and contribute their collective intelligence to influence the improvement of these processes.

Because the Open Costa Rica of the Bicentennial is made by you, by us, by everyone.