



OUTCOME OF THE WORKSHOP:

**“USE OF THE INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY IN COSTA RICA’S DEVELOPMENT PLANNING”**

March 4-5, 2015
San Jose, Costa Rica

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I. INTRODUCTION

The complex global environmental crisis the world now confronts is the result of prioritizing human wellbeing tied to economic growth. Because of the fragmented, sectoral approach used, effective and balanced incorporation of social, economic and environmental dimensions has not been possible. This has generated important externalities with respect to environmental degradation and social exclusion.

Both the Río+20 conference in 2012 and the progress in the definition of the Post-2015 Agenda illustrate how the international community is recognizing that: sustained and irreversible socioeconomic development cannot be achieved without integrating environmental sustainability in national and global policies.

With this great challenge in mind, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) launched a new project called, “*Integrated Approach for Environmental Sustainability in Development Planning*,” which is gathering case studies and lessons to promote this approach globally through South-South cooperation.

In Costa Rica, the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), with the collaboration of different stakeholders and sectors, has been spearheading policies and instruments to integrate environmental sustainability in development planning at the sectoral and intersectoral level. Strides have already been made in applying an integrated approach to strengthen policies and support more coherent policy implementation, while encouraging greater spirit of collaboration among national institutions of different types.

The country’s new National Development Plan (2015-2018) reflects the commitment of national authorities towards reconciling short-term development imperatives with a long-range vision that optimizes natural resource management and ensures inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic and social growth. With this plan, Costa Rica is seeking sustainable human development and social cohesion based on a shared vision of the future.

The plan’s structure makes it possible to promote sustainability in a participatory and inclusive form. The proposal of multisectoral institutional interlinkage lays the foundation for efficient resource use, generating growth and outcomes that support the wellbeing of the Costa Rican population.

National, sectoral and territorial coordination and complementarity are contemplated in the National Development Plan, which defines “strategic sectors” comprised of groupings of public institutions responsible for operationalizing different programs and projects. This sectoral organization complements traditional State architecture and public resource management organization, encouraging interlinkage and multisectoral response to complex development challenges.

Costa Rica has therefore already moved this integrated approach forward by promoting initiatives with shared visions, and can make use of its experience and lessons learned to support their promotion in other countries and regions of the world.

This report brings together the reflections and results of the national workshop held March 4-5, 2015, in San Jose, Costa Rica. During the event, three case studies or good practices were shared as a basis for a participatory analysis of the implications in applying an integrated approach for development planning, and identify challenges to its strengthening during upcoming years.

II. COSTA RICAN EXPERIENCE AND THE GOOD PRACTICES SELECTED

Prior to the workshop, the coordinating team (MINAE-UNEP) identified three recent good practices whose genesis and formulation incorporated an integrating approach. The following criteria were applied to select the experiences:

- Planning centred on a strategic development theme for the country, with a vision based on long-range sustainability and not on simply mainstreaming environmental themes.
- Focused on resolving a complex, interdisciplinary development theme with economic, social and environmental implications.
- Several institutions and public-private alliances needed to be involved in response and therefore in planning.
- Formulation process based on participatory consultation and work, and building consensus among diverse stakeholders.
- Decisionmakers, civil society and private sector committed to the initiative's success.

The cases selected were:

- ✓ The Costa Rican National Sea Policy 2013-2028.
- ✓ Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action in the Coffee-Growing Sector.
- ✓ The National Policy for Comprehensive Waste Management (2010-2021).

1. National Sea Policy 2013-2028

Opportunity for Sustainable Development

Marine and coastal areas are managed uncoordinated and with a partial and fragmented vision. This, along with short-term planning, worsens socioeconomic and environmental problems such as the social exclusion of coastal communities, exposure to risks and over-exploitation of coastal zones and marine resources. Integrated management of the sea and marine/coastal resources will encourage the generation and use of sustainable productive opportunities, and fair and equitable sharing of their environmental benefits.

Objectives:

- Integrate and reconcile existing planning instruments
- Formulate a national vision for comprehensive management of the sea and marine/coastal resources that links national interests
- Reconcile national security, economic exploitation, social development and environmental conservation

Political-institutional Framework:

- ✓ National Strategy for Comprehensive Management of Marine and Coastal Resources.
- ✓ National Fishing and Aquaculture Plan.
- ✓ National Plan for Sustainable Tourism.
- ✓ National Land Management Plan.
- ✓ National Transportation Plan.
- ✓ Policies for Touristic Use of the Sea.
- ✓ State Policy on the Agri-Food Sector and Rural Development



National Policy on the Sea
Costa Rica 2013-2028

National Commission on the Sea:

- ✓ Coordination by the Vice-Presidency
- ✓ 4 ministries
- ✓ 3 more ministries and the Costa Rican Tourism Institute involved in the formulation process
- ✓ Includes the Ministers Forum, a Technical Secretariat and civil society representatives

Priority Themes:

- ✓ Governability and governance
- ✓ Human wellbeing and sustainable resource use
- ✓ Conservation of marine/coastal resources and risk reduction
- ✓ Security, protection and surveillance
- ✓ Scientific, technological and traditional knowledge

↳ The National Sea Policy 2013-2028 arose from an appraisal conducted for the Environment, Energy, Seas and Land Management Sector¹, which pointed to fragmented marine governance, worrisome signs of marine/coastal resource degradation and consequent increased risk to people's security. Coastal and marine zones are affected by diverse aspects including social, environmental, economic, security and legal factors.

The core objective of this policy is therefore for the Costa Rican State to manage marine and coastal spaces and their goods and services in a way that is comprehensive, sustainable, equitable and participatory, with the economic and human resources necessary for the wellbeing of ecosystems and inhabitants.

Planning for a resource such as the sea involved the need to engage and interlink different interests. The policy formulation process was thus broadly participatory and facilitated dialogue among ministries, non-governmental organizations, sectoral chambers, technical institutes and others.

It took two years to develop this policy which covers a 15-year period with periodic five-year reviews to make adjustments based on results, impacts and possible changes in context.

Facilitation of marine and coastal management through a comprehensive approach has required reconciling national security needs in marine environments with marine and coastal biodiversity conservation by:

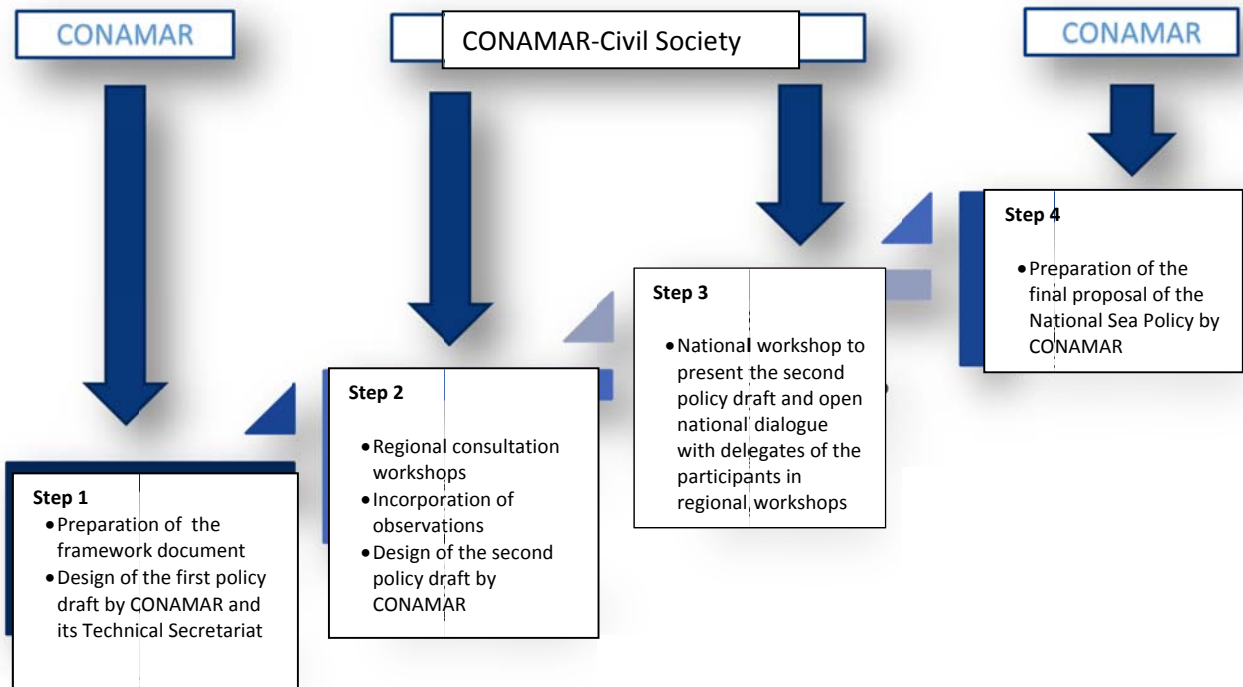
- Promoting sustainable production opportunities (both traditional and innovative, such as tourism, fishing, trade and crafts).
- Generating employment and productive chains.
- Fomenting private investment in priority areas.
- Reducing the poverty and vulnerability of coastal populations.
- Strengthening national and especially municipal governability.
- Incorporating research and innovation as key area of marine and coastal management.

Medium-term challenges in the next phases include: a) preparation of an action plan and assignment of budgetary resources in each of the institutions involved, b) broad dissemination of the policy and its implications, c) strengthen the COMAR as national supervisory agency, d) actual implementation of the policy and monitoring

¹ According to Decree 38536-MP-PLAN, article 15, section f), the sector is comprised of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), Ministry of Public Works and Transportation (MOPT), Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT), Costa Rican Electrical Institute (ICE), Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers (AyA), National Institute of Housing and Urbanism (INVU), Institute of Rural Development (INDER), Costa Rican Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture (INCOPECA), Costa Rican Oil Refinery S.A. (RECOPE), National Risk Prevention and Emergency Response Commission (CNE) and National Coast Guard Service of the Police Force, Ministry of Public Safety.

of results, e) impact evaluation, f) reporting and g) participation of relevant stakeholders.

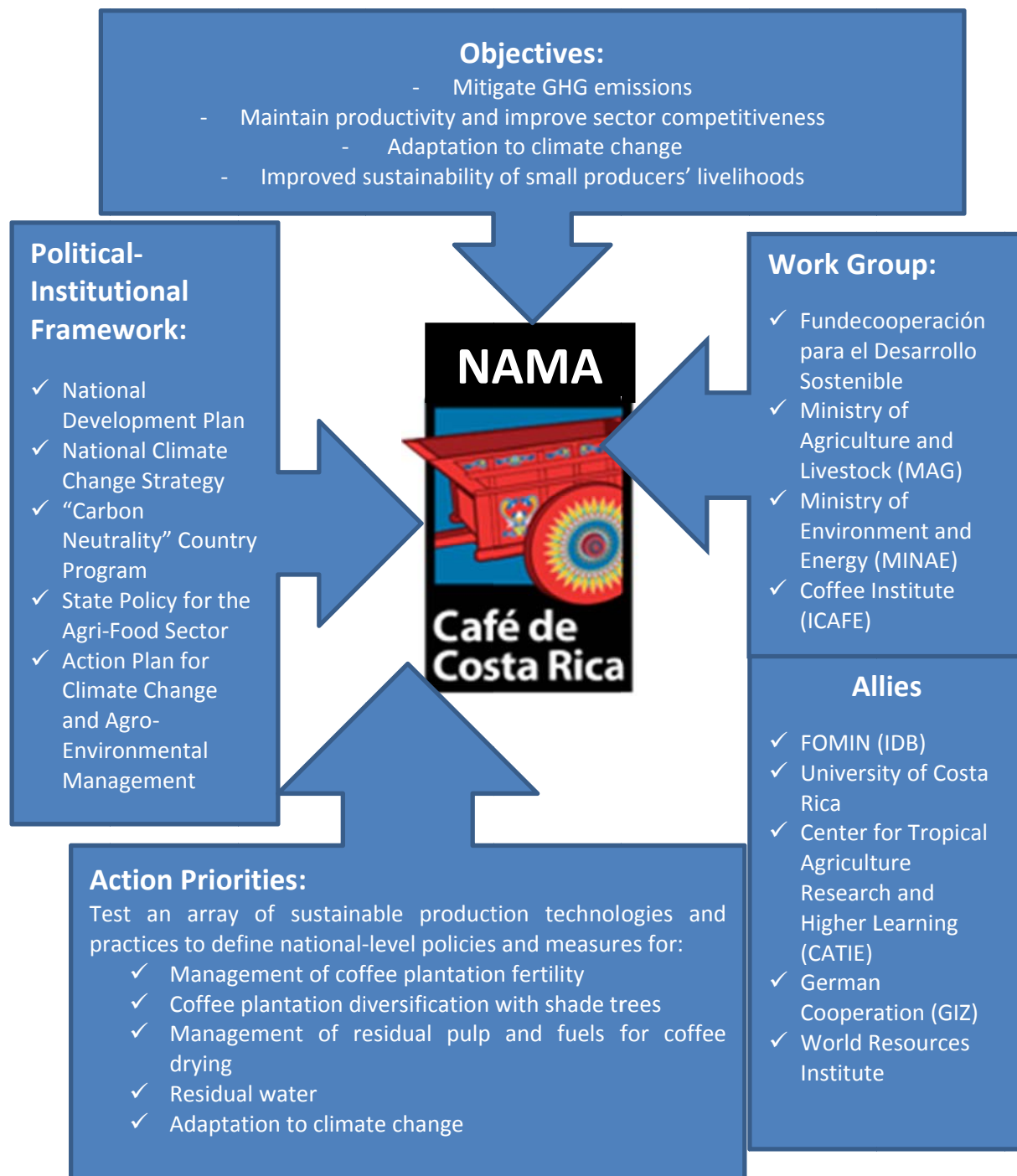
Participatory Formulation Process



2. Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action in the Coffee Sector

Sustainable Development Opportunity

Coffee production can contribute substantially to national mitigation goals. The benefits of a comprehensive intervention in this sector are: a) environmental, by reducing the impacts of coffee production and processing; b) social, since the livelihood of the national labour force, comprised primarily of small producers, is based on this sector; and c) economic, by strengthening the sector's competitiveness and opening new market opportunities.



↳ Costa Rica is the first country in the world to have a NAMA approved for an agricultural product. The design of this Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action in the coffee sector (NAMA Café) has led to an innovative approach taking into account the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sector transformation.

The challenge of this initiative goes beyond country climate change mitigation goals (the coffee sector represents 9% of national greenhouse gas emissions). Due to its scope, coffee growing has vital relevance at the local level. The adoption of more sustainable natural resource use practices in coffee growing and processing offers potential for synergy with protected areas and water resource conservation strategies. Environmentally, NAMA Café will impact at the national, local and global levels.

This sector also has a great deal of social importance. Coffee forms an integral part of national history and identity, the kingpin of an entire culture with a tradition built over centuries and representing 8% of the Costa Rican labour force. Some 50,000 families, preponderantly small producers, depend directly on coffee production (92% have a planted area of under 5 ha). Incorporating risk management and climate change adaptation measures will reduce sector vulnerability and thus enhance the sustainability of rural livelihoods.

Additionally, the initiative places an emphasis on improving sector competitiveness through combined public and market incentives that include, among others, technology transfer, capacity building and replication of successful pilot projects. It will also strengthen access to an international coffee market with more favourable prices by promoting product differentiation based on low carbon footprint, environmentally sustainable production and high quality.

The definition and implementation of NAMA Café took place between 2012 and 2014, when activities began. With the support of local partners, strategic allies and international cooperation agencies, roundtables were organized for institutional work. Engaging key stakeholders from the start has ensured easier implementation. In addition, the participation and commitment of the Government, private sector, cooperation entities and research centres have been vital to support innovation processes in climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is expected that 6,000 producers will be reached in five years, representing up to 25,000 hectares under cultivation and 50 coffee-processing plants.

Success factors of the planning process are: (1) the interest and commitment of the private sector and national government, (2) alliance-building in which the parties have clear responsibilities, (3) the combined social, economic and environmental approach, and (4) inclusion of measures for climate adaptation, not just mitigation.

Some challenges in the medium term are to: (1) strengthen the institutionality of the NAMA, through increasing capacities for its management and implementation; (2) guarantee transparent, results-based monitoring, important particularly for measures, reporting and verification of emissions reduction; (3) ensure that pilot interventions generate lessons and clear recommendations for replication throughout the sector; and (4) promote greater sectoral investment in research, accelerating carbon neutrality and increasing the environmental sustainability of production.

Benefits of NAMA Café for Sustainable Development

Economic Dimension

Improvement in sector competitiveness by:

- introducing new technologies
- lowering production costs
- diversifying plantations
- identifying and approaching new market niches based on reduced carbon footprint

Environmental Dimension

Mitigation of climate change by reducing nitrous oxide and methane emissions and promoting agroforestry systems for carbon capture and storage

Conservation of biodiversity and soil by increasing tree cover on plantations

Reduction of water contamination through decrease and more efficient use of nitrogen fertilizers, and efficient use and treatment of water and pulp in coffee processing

Social Dimension

Improvement of economic conditions of producers and their families: alleviate the crisis in this sector resulting from lower global coffee prices by raising productivity and facilitating access to new markets

Greater sustainability of production and reduction of vulnerability and thus of potential losses in the sector, by implementing **measures for climate change adaptation**

Strengthening of human and social capital through training and technical assistance for producers, cooperatives and processors

Improvement of water quality (public health impact) by decreasing use of nitrogen fertilizers and improving treatment of residual water

3. National Comprehensive Waste Management Policy 2010-2021

Sustainable Development Opportunity

Exponential growth in the generation of solid waste impacts adversely on the population's health, the environment and the economy. It is necessary to move beyond garbage disposal and a) reduce the amount of waste generated, b) valorise waste (recover its material, economic or energy value), and c) prevent inadequate management from impacting on ecosystems, polluting water, soil and air and contributing to climate change.

Objectives:

- Guarantee the right of every individual to enjoy a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, and protect public health and ecosystems.
- Define the co-responsibility of diverse actors for comprehensive waste management.
- Influence behavioural patterns of consumers and generators, incentivizing cleaner production and sustainable consumption.
- Generate micro-entrepreneurship and employment.

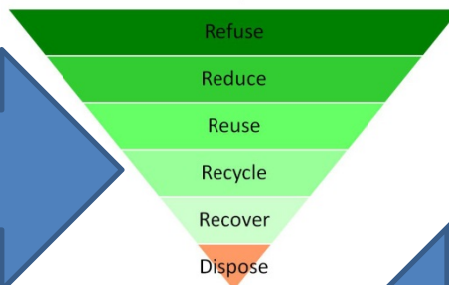
Principles:

- ✓ Social co-responsibility
- ✓ Generator responsibility
- ✓ Extended producer responsibility
- ✓ Valorisation of waste
- ✓ Reduction of pressure on natural resources
- ✓ Interinstitutional coordination and between the central and local

Stakeholders involved:

- ✓ Ministry of Health
- ✓ Ministry of Environment and Energy
- ✓ Ministry of National Planning
- ✓ Ministry of Public Education
- ✓ Institute of Municipal Promotion and Advising
- ✓ Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- ✓ National Institute of Statistics and Censuses
- ✓ Chamber of Industry
- ✓ Costa Rican Union of Private Business Associations
- ✓ Municipalities
- ✓ Universities
- ✓ Commercial and service sector
- ✓ General public
- ✓ German technical cooperation (GTZ)

Waste Pyramid



Priority Focal Points

- ✓ Maximum reduction of waste generation at its origin
- ✓ Re-use the waste generated
- ✓ Valorise waste through recycling, co-processing, re-assembly or other procedures
- ✓ Treat waste before final disposal
- ✓ Decrease the amount of waste in a sanitary and ecologically appropriate manner

↳ The National Comprehensive Waste Management Policy 2010-2021 arose from a joint effort to change the paradigm of waste management in Costa Rica. Agreement among social and civil organizations, private sector and government institutions, led by the Ministry of Health as guiding entity, was essential in the search for solutions and appropriation of action and regulatory proposals².

Inadequate waste management is one of the main environmental problems facing Costa Rican society. Analysis has revealed exponential growth of ordinary waste, but also that collection is insufficient, sorting is not practiced at the point of origin, public collection and disposal services are lacking, and the principle of waste generator responsibility is not applied.

The Comprehensive Waste Management Policy (2010-2021) is a road map with long-term vision aimed at lowering impact on environment and public health from waste management deficiencies. In addition, however, it centres on more sustainable production and consumption and realizing the economic and social potential of waste valorisation.

The transition from plans, programs and projects for “adequate waste management” to comprehensive waste management as national policy makes it possible to advance in the three dimensions of sustainable development and change the national paradigm of waste management by:

- Ensuring safe and environmentally sound management of solid waste, adopting a precautionary perspective to prevent soil, water and air pollution and improve quality of life for inhabitants
- Defining shared but differentiated responsibility in waste management among all sectors of society and at all levels (national and local)
- Adopting sustainable processes of production and consumption of waste generated in post-industrial and post-consumption processes
- Giving waste materials value as economic resources representing a new income and business opportunity, not just a public health problem

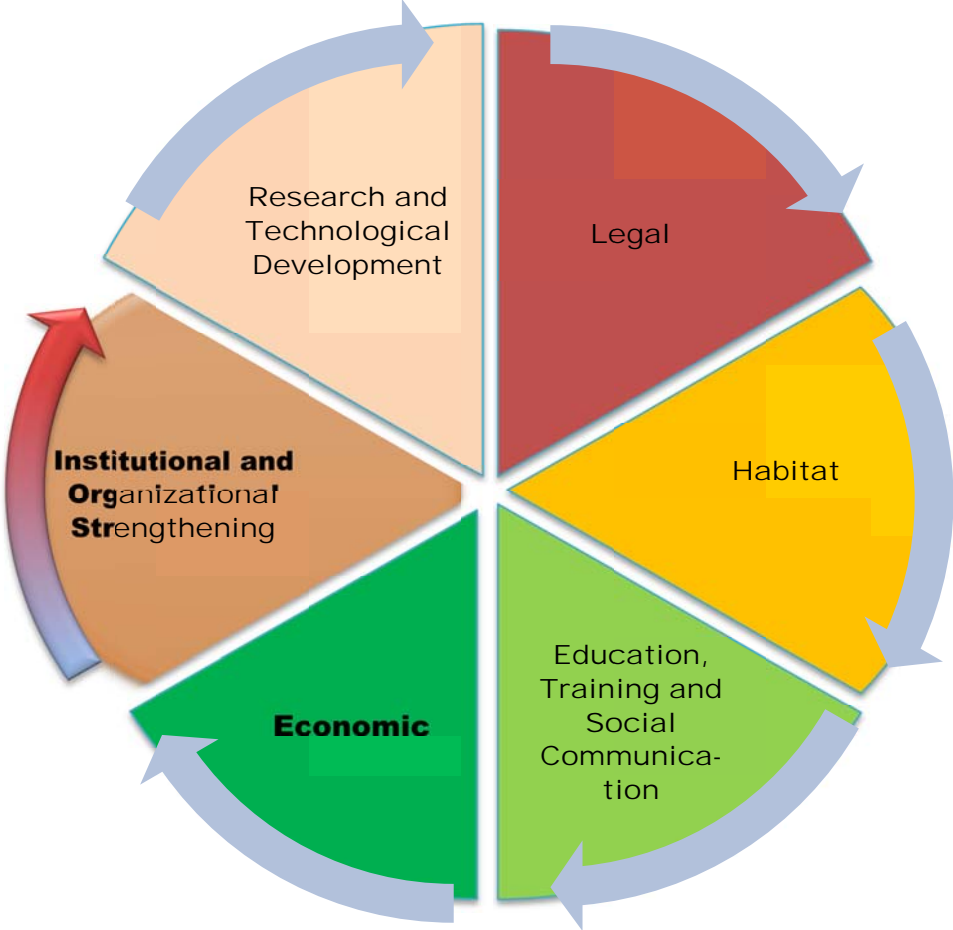
The policy consequently contemplates strategies for cultural change in government, business and citizens. Education and awareness actions to change the behavioural patterns of generators and consumers, as well as access to public information, are cornerstones of the national policy, the law and the plan for comprehensive waste management.

Also in the social arena, the policy contemplates solid waste recovery and management by family microenterprises, cooperatives, informal recoverers and other local associations, through the promotion of strengthening, training and insertion in productive chains.

² This effort is managed through the Competitiveness and Environment Program (CYMA), an interinstitutional platform with the participation of the Ministry of Health (MINSALUD), the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), the Costa Rica Chamber of Industries (CICR), the Institute of Municipal Promotion and Advising (IFAM), and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

Based on this policy, two specific instruments have been developed, also in participatory form. First of all, there is a strong regulatory arm, Law 3389, and secondly it has a specific Solid Waste Plan that sets out actions for its implementation. The plan establishes guidelines and goals to orient, systematize and integrate the different municipal plans, sector programs, projects and public initiatives. Progress is monitored by the Health Ministry as regulatory entity with direction, evaluation, and control authority.

Priority Areas of Comprehensive Waste Management in Costa Rica



III. RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP

The workshop, “*Use of the Integrated Approach for Environmental Sustainability in Costa Rica’s Development Planning*,” took place 4-5 March 2015, in San Jose. More than 100 people attended, including representatives of the executive power, sectoral technical secretariats and institutional liaisons of the National Development Plan, ministries, municipalities, civil society, private sector, universities, the United Nations System and international cooperation agencies.

The objective was to ascertain participants’ vision and recommendations guiding the use of an integrated approach for environmental sustainability in development planning. Success experiences were presented as the basis for eliciting feedback and validation of the approach, lessons learned and good practices, and foundations for their replication in preparing and executing policies, programs, and projects.

The good practices, described earlier, also stimulated reflection in two directions: 1) balancing economic, social and environmental benefits through the application of integrated methodologies; and 2) implications for national planning with an eye to more coherent transformation of development paths, based on specific policy instruments.

Participants also sought to inform and raise awareness about key structures and strategic stakeholders in Costa Rica, as well as the concept of the integrated approach and its basic principles in relation to the post-2015 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted this year by the U.N. General Assembly.

The results of the groups’ work and the plenary discussions have been classified in five categories:

- Key conditions for effective use of an integrated approach in generating public policies.
- Lessons from Costa Rican experience in formulating and implementing policies and programs with this approach.
- Bottlenecks, obstacles and challenges.
- Mechanisms used for interinstitutional and intersectoral coordination and engagement of key stakeholders.
- Proposals for monitoring advances.

1. Conditions for Advancing an Integrated Approach in Public Action

Some key conditions for instituting the integrated approach in development planning are:

- **High-level political commitment to prioritizing sustainable development.** Political will and commitment are essential, as these translate into longer-term visions and national policies that are sustainable over time. This is exemplified by the case studies explored at the workshop and presented in this document.
- **Clear, consensual goals and continuity of strategies.** Since processes are sometimes suspended when the execution of different projects lapse, short, medium, and long-term goals must be defined to ensure the sustainability of actions and their continuity over time. A system of MVR (measurable, verifiable, and reportable) metrics must be implemented, with specific indicators derived from a well-defined baseline that support concrete results.

Graphically, this can be expressed in the following manner:



- **Cultural transformation toward sustainable development.** The group identified a need to transcend an anthropocentric vision and give greater priority to environmental and natural resource protection. A more holistic approach to problem solving is also necessary, along with sustainable development priorities that are truly comprehensive. In this sense, it is essential to encourage transformation of consciousness through greater awareness, access to relevant information, technical capacity and use of technologies. The group also felt there are many successful initiatives whose results should be publicized to increase acceptance and perception of change. Some of those mentioned at the workshop include: rural community tourism as sustainable and inclusive local development, and alternative and multisectoral mechanisms such as the Green Jobs Commission, the Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) and Institutional Environmental Management Programs.
- **Greater interlinkage of sectors.** Collaboration and joint work among the institutions must be strengthened so that real synergies can be generated. Coordination mechanisms already exist, such as the Interministerial Committee on Climate Change, the Ecological Blue Flag Program and the Green Purchases Program. These should be used more systematically for the specific objectives of improving communication between the institutions' middle management and influencing decisionmaking through consensuated technical inputs.

- **Coherence between national and local policies.** This theme was repeated often at the workshop given the importance of central-municipal interlinkage to integrate public action around sustainable development, and the lack of communication perceived between the two levels of administration. On one hand, the central government needs to move towards aligning the proposals of the National Development Plan with local priorities, and on the other, development interventions must be based on local sustainability priorities; otherwise, the viability of national policies is jeopardized.
- **Participatory dialogue and convergence with all stakeholders involved in development.** Interinstitutional coordination (between sectors at the central and local levels) must be complemented and reinforced with the active engagement of academia, the private sector and civil society in policy formulation and implementation. Agreement between the parties must be based on common language and concepts around the implications of an integrated approach for sustainable development. In addition, common ground must be found to define priorities and lines of action, as well as differentiated responsibilities. The entire process must be guided by transparency in access to information, and by building trust between the parties. The active participation of decisionmakers in forums of reflection and dialogue has shown to promote ownership by participants and the trust necessary to move forward.
- **Social inclusion to strengthen local governability.** For socially responsible planning, gender needs to be integrated and minorities included in policy definition and implementation, calling for the strengthening of local capacities. This applies to objectives and instruments alike, along with mechanisms for transferring technical knowledge to promote changes in development. Specifically, municipalities must not only count on sufficient professional and technical support in their structure, but also budget and projects for execution.

2. Lessons Learned

While the multisectoral planning processes analysed require dedicating considerable time to institutional coordination and agreement, for the stakeholders participating they definitely produce more coherent and sounder public policy.

There was consensus about the importance of maintaining the interlinkage achieved in the planning process at a later implementation phase, when the number of actors involved could also expand. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are essential, along with a common results framework and joint mechanisms for monitoring and adjusting strategies.

One of the most important lessons is that such initiatives must be included in the annual operating plans of the institutions involved, with sufficient resources allocated for their implementation and achievement of the expected results.

Other lessons:

- Political commitment is indispensable to interlink sectors around common objectives and priorities. Costa Rica's National Development Plan brings together a clear vision of integrality and sustainable development, synthesized in matrices with monitoring indicators that provide basic orientation for defining pertinent policies and strategies. Led by the Presidency of the Republic, specific mechanisms were defined to operationalize institutional coordination, providing a clear mandate to drive action.
- The comprehensive planning processes carried out in Costa Rica demonstrate that mechanisms of learning by doing can generate knowledge and actual experience. While very important in themselves, their potential deepens if lessons are institutionalized and transferred to other forums/sectors. At the moment, this is non-formal and voluntary learning depends on the continued interlinkage of the officials involved thus far.
- Turning policy priorities into concrete proposals and viable social, economic, and environmental initiatives requires building consensus through active, informed and organized participation, not just in the sphere of public institutionality but with all social actors of development.
- It is important to continue promoting citizen action for cultural awareness toward change so that public policy implementation is accompanied by a process of social transformation. In the National Comprehensive Waste Management Policy, for example, since families play a vital role in recycling, strategies to change habits must come directly from citizens. Elsewhere, ICAFE is a successful example of generating local capacities in small producers through technology transfer.

3. Obstacles and Challenges

Workshop participants identified two main obstacles in applying an integrated approach to development planning:

- Institutional bureaucracy and resistance to change made adopting a different vision difficult. This explains the need for access to relevant information and awareness about generating new technical capacities, as well as technological innovations for more streamlined and flexible planning systems and management.
- Because of the lack of coherence in certain public policies that are contradictory at times, some of their proposals have negative impacts on other sectors and in development in general. One example is the increased vulnerability of coastal populations and ecosystems from risks generated by massive infrastructure development.

Other issues recognized as challenges during the advances made thus far:

- Sometimes day-to-day public service makes it impossible for qualified human resources to dedicate enough time to intersectoral planning. This also applies to other key stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society.
- Centralized decisionmaking makes it difficult to bring national policies—and consequently the interlinkage and coherence of their ends—down to earth at the local level.
- Slow institutional response affects efficiency in implementing actions. For example, the generation of information and consensus-building processes do not necessarily lead immediately to decisions.
- Duplicity of institutional competencies causes conflicts of interest and excessive legislation, as well as generally hampers knowledge and coordination of functions.
- Due to insufficient staff, resources, equipment and training, policy instruments fail to produce real results for national sustainable development.

4. Future Recommendations

Based on their analysis of these experiences and good practices, workshop participants generally agreed that the initiatives described as examples of success should continue serving as reference for future planning processes applying an integrated approach.

However, specific measures need to be established to ensure this approach is applied in subsequent phases of policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation that provide the basis for improving institutional arrangements and accountability. In the case of the coffee sector, while inherently part of the NAMA instrument, close monitoring of social and economic impacts should be strengthened, in addition to environmental aspects.

Recommendations for broader application of the integrated approach in planning included the following:

- Provide existing coordination structures with mechanisms to increase efficiency and adopt a results-based approach with goals and tools for monitoring and evaluation, not just information sharing.
- Efficiently implement policies formulated under an integrated and broadly participatory approach, with concrete results demonstrating the benefits of applying this approach.
- Consider the role of technology and innovation to define sustainable development alternatives more systematically, with clear channels between public, private and academia so that research is applicable.

- Establish two-way dialogue between national and local levels so that local priorities are taken into consideration early on and are congruent with sectoral and intersectoral goals.
- More efficiently incorporate environmental variables in policy formulation and in the interlinkage of intersectoral goals, moving beyond a human-centred and utilitarian vision of natural resources.
- Document successful and failed experiences, and form communities of practice with officials who have participated in them to facilitate transfer of knowledge and collective learning.
- Create an international cooperation agency in Costa Rica that channels country knowledge and experience in this area, for the benefit of other nations and regions.

5. Mechanisms for Interinstitutional and Intersectoral Coordination and Stakeholder Engagement

It was agreed that existing, legally established coordination and participation mechanisms need to be strengthened and structured to make them operational and achieve concrete results.

Workshop participants identified different types of coordination commissions that are currently active and advancing application of the multisectoral approach in development proposals³. These commissions aim to integrate environmental, economic and social considerations through intersectoral coordination.

All have shown that such considerations not only facilitate decisionmaking and the execution of joint activities, but also the coherence of interventions by different public, private and social actors. They offer the possibility of generating more good practices for transfer, accompanied by a knowledge base with concrete proposals for improving coordination.

Added to these is the interinstitutional scheme based on strategic sectors⁴ defined in the National Development Plan 2015-2018 and contemplated in the Rules and Regulations of the Executive Power. These linkage mechanisms are in charge of operationalizing the different programs and projects, and complement the organizational architecture and public resource management tradition of the Costa Rican State.

³ Among others, the Interinstitutional Commission on Green Jobs, the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Climate Change, the Technical Evaluation Commission for Institutional Environmental Management Programs and the Commission on Comprehensive Management of the Basin of Río Grande de Tárcoles. In the business sector, participants mentioned the National Chamber of Community Rural Tourism (CANTURURAL) and the MAS Network headed by the National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO).

⁴ Understood as groupings of public institutions with a similar nature or work objective (NDP, 2014:93)

Strategic Interinstitutional Sectors (NDP 2015-2018):	
1-Labour and Social Security 2-Human Development and Social Inclusion 3-Agricultural and Rural Development 4-Educational 5-Health, Nutrition and Sports 6-Environment, Energy, Seas and Land Management 7-Public Treasury, Monetary and Financial Supervision	8-Culture and Youth 9-Transportation and Infrastructure 10-Citizen Security and Justice 11-Science, Technology and Telecommunications 12-Economy, Industry, Commerce and Tourism 13-International Policy 14-Housing and Human Settlements

Important mechanisms for an integrated approach in development planning which were vital to the success of the cases presented include:

- a) Meetings with the participation of high-level political decisionmakers who steer and approve advances in the planning process.
- b) Meetings with the participation of government and municipal technicians to analyse development issues in a multidimensional form, manage possible conflicts of interest and define possible alternatives.
- c) Consultations and feedback meetings with development actors, academia and civil society to enrich discussions and inputs from the technical meetings.
- d) Meetings between those responsible for coordinating results of the consultation and representatives of international cooperation.

6. Foundations for Monitoring Progress and Indicators

The various work groups agreed on the challenge of designing indicators for public sustainable development policies to demonstrate efforts toward comprehensiveness and measure Costa Rica's advances in this area.

As a prior step, it was considered important to consolidate the national vision of sustainable development, including consensus on basic criteria for evaluating the progress of public policies. This makes it possible to define comprehensive indicators measuring how robust and balanced (in the three dimensions of sustainable development) performance is.

Within an innovative global spectrum of change demanding response to fresh challenges, new types of metrics must be constructed to:

- Monitor results and ensure balanced progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development, not one at the cost of others.

- Valorise natural capital for inclusion in measures of national wellbeing.
- Reflect progress in linking existing planning instruments, particularly at the local level.
- Gear efforts and resources to the most critical aspects.
- Identify needs for adjustment and opportunities for improvement.
- Facilitate opportunities for quick and streamlined decision making.
- Conduct monitoring with civil society participation.
- Support periodic reporting.

Workshop participants identified the need to establish a solid baseline, strengthen internal control mechanisms in the institutions, define quantifiable compliance goals (results-based management) and assign sufficient resources for measurement, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and their environmental, social and economic benefits.

IV. PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE AREAS OF WORK

The Rio+20 outcome document, “*The Future We Want*”, calls upon nations to agree on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)⁵ that are already a fundamental pillar of the Post-2015 Agenda proposal (after the Millennium Development Goals commitment finalizes). This is the first time in history that humanity has embarked on such an ambitious task recognizing that the challenges of poverty and environmental degradation clearly leave us no alternative.

It is evident that compliance with the SDG at country level will require the assignment of well-defined, direct responsibilities to different sectors of national development, committing and engaging them in the implementation through their sectoral mandates and goals.

However, we will also have to abandon our current “silo thinking” (social development, economic development, environmental sustainability and democratic governability) in order to integrate the different goals and create synergies towards sustainable development.

⁵ The document called for SDGs to have certain characteristics:

- **value added:** promote a coherent, transformational and ambitious agenda
- **unite development and environment:** based on Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Action Plan and the Rio Principles
- **global:** applicable to all countries, even taking into account different situations, capacities and responsibilities
- **build on and contribute to prior commitments:** take international agreements into account; expand existing commitments without delaying them
- **simple and easy to communicate**

Arranging for complementarity between the different SDGs will permit harmonious advances and prevent unexpected consequences, e.g. gains in one sector at the expense of others, or deteriorating the natural capital base.

The integrated approach in development planning is based on the concept of interdisciplinarity, and thus involves diverse sectors. Its coordination requires strong political commitment on the part of decisionmakers, civil society and private sector.

It is essential to consider different viewpoints about the multi-causality of development challenges and the interdisciplinarity of solutions in order to obtain, for example, investments in environmental goods and services that support the attainment of social and economic benefits.

This is the context, during the second session of the workshop, in which work groups identified key themes for tangible progress toward sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development in Costa Rica. Proposals were required to analyse how balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions could be ensured, not one at the expense of another, and also aim at synergies between more than one Sustainable Development Goal.

1. *Weaving Development Program: From Fighting Poverty and Inequality to Environmental Sustainability*

This program is led by the Presidency of the Republic, Office of the First Lady, in the frame of the Network of Territorial Development and Citizen Participation. Through interinstitutional linkage and citizen participation, it intends to help drive national and territorial agendas under a model of sustainable and equitable development.

The initial priorities are 11 territories comprised of 33 cantons and their districts, covering around 44% of the country. Criteria for choosing these areas focused on inequality and socioeconomic gaps, and governability conditions. The conceptual, methodological, and operational proposal centres on planning for territorial human development aimed at social strategies, economic reactivation, poverty fighting, participation in decisionmaking and institutional linkage.

Expected results focus on the three pillars of the National Development Plan 2015-2018: (1) promote economic growth and generate quality employment, (2) reduce poverty and inequality and (3) foster more open, transparent and efficient government in a frontal attack against corruption. It is consequently considered that the program can affect all of the Sustainable Development Goals, but that this will require strengthening the environmental dimension in its approach and in proposals for action.

2. Community-based Rural Tourism for Local Sustainable Development

Community-based rural tourism arose as an alternative for local economic development defined as “sustainably planned tourism experiences organized for the benefit of the community”. It has been evolving into a sustainable alternative because it makes use of the natural and cultural heritage of rural communities to build social capital and generate economic, social and environmental benefits.

This activity is carried out by community-based organizations, cooperatives and small and medium businesses. There are approximately 70 such rural tourism initiatives benefitting almost 1500 people a year. The body representing this sector’s interests, the National Chamber of Community-based Rural Tourism (CANTURURAL), aims to generate comprehensive community development capacity through public policy advocacy and public-private alliances.

The activity was declared of priority public interest and is supported by law providing tourism incentives (Law to Promote Community-based Rural Tourism) to improve human development and empower communities, especially women.

Special emphasis has been placed not only on tourism as economic alternative, but on the community’s own development in general, responding to a holistic, long-range vision. But to be a real, nationally inclusive, sustainable development alternative, strides must be made toward the formalization of community-based rural tourism and its integration in political agendas and local and national institutional budgets. This makes it necessary to:

- Link institutional and private sector efforts to define a joint strategy with gender approach that can be integrated in sustainable rural development efforts
- Strengthen product marketing and commercialization strategies, especially for high-quality tourism services, creation of innovative products and commercial negotiation with intermediaries such as tour operators
- Formalize the environmental commitment of community-based rural tourism, regulating the impact of its own operations and displaying good conservation practices
- Strengthen business capacity, especially in the development of small and medium tourism businesses, and organizational management in the local arena

3. Education for Transformation

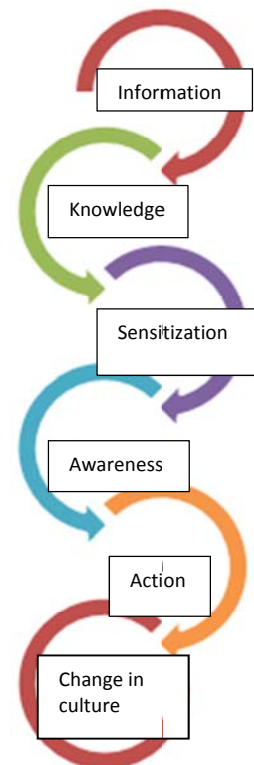
Education was identified as a key area for sustainable development and achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (notwithstanding an emphasis on SDG 4). It would thus be necessary to define and implement national

educational strategy promoting changes in habits and enabling progress in the transformation to sustainability.

A “comprehensive education proposal for sustainable, equitable and inclusive development” was therefore outlined. This proposal must include formal and non-formal education given that publicizing information and awareness-raising for the citizenry in general, and key groups such as the press and private sector in particular, are vital to generate changes in attitude toward more responsible resource management and consumption.

The proposal must also contemplate gaps in access to and quality of education between urban and rural zones, as well as limited capacities in the local sector for a focus on social inclusion.

This must be reinforced with strategic information and contents coming from the different State institutions, and include practical content that fosters a new environmental culture and change actions—in other words, a process of un-learning in order to learn.



Source: work group

4. Sustainable Social Housing

One of the central ideas considered at the workshop that would support several of the Sustainable Development Goals is sustainable social housing. Costa Rica is no stranger to the sustainable development movement in the construction sector. In fact, a sustainable construction code is being prepared to define standards promoting good environmental practices, ranging from materials, to design and water and energy-saving measures. The Costa Rica Council on Green Construction (GBC-CR) has been set up as a platform to unify efforts in this area.

However, formalizing the connection between buildings and sustainable development is not sufficient. Housing is a basic need that should be accessible to all, and for this reason, a new dimension could be added to this strategy linking it with investments in social housing that is inexpensive, adequate and accessible. Hence, themes proposed in the Post-2015 Agenda that could be influenced are:

- ✓ SDG 11: Cities (housing)
- ✓ SDG 7: Energy (universal services, energy efficiency)

- ✓ SDG 1: Poverty (basic services)
- ✓ SDG 10: Inequality (in the countries)
- ✓ SDG 13: Climate Change (mitigation)

An initiative of this type must link institutional and private actors and receive technical assistance from universities and professional associations. Advantageous financing must also be promoted to make green housing accessible for vulnerable sectors and the middle class in general, through suitable credit instruments that prioritize environmentally-friendly alternatives as well as innovative and feasible ideas that set trends in the area of sustainable building.

5. Human Settlements and Land Management

Another possible focal area to promote sustainable development is integrating social, environmental and economic dimensions through sustainable city planning. This is considered a strategic aspect inasmuch as country development is based on a balance between socially inclusive human settlements, comprehensive natural resource management and economic development in the territory. The vision of restoring cities as useful spaces for citizens is reinforced, clearly contributing to country resilience.

From this arose the proposal of restoring cities and urban spaces in general through State policy rather than isolated projects. Urban planning that integrates environmental, social and economic goals also advances improved quality of life and the habitability of cities, while strengthening territorial competitiveness and social inclusion. The foundation for more resilient cities lies in a combination of access to services (mobility, water, energy, education, health, housing, etc.), decent employment, a comprehensive green agenda, (management of waste and residual water, energy efficiency, lower pollution, green spaces, and others) and risk reduction through the relocation of vulnerable populations.

A strategy of this type could impact on the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- ✓ SDG 11: Cities
- ✓ SDG 1: Poverty
- ✓ SDG 5: Gender
- ✓ SDG 3: Health
- ✓ SDG 9: Infrastructure
- ✓ SDG 13: Climate Change
- ✓ SDG 16: Peace and Justice

Source: work group

Costa Rica already has the National Land Management Plan as an instrument for progress in city planning. Similarly, the National Land Management Policy promotes better quality habitat, environmental protection and management, and territorial competitiveness. Action in the Greater Metropolitan Area is clearly one possibility, as its settlement pattern offers much opportunity for efficient, inclusive development with low emissions and greater competitiveness.

6. Sustainable Transportation for the San Jose Greater Metropolitan Area

This sector is a priority strategic area to improve mobility in the Greater Metropolitan Area with its traffic congestion and air pollution problems. There is an action plan in the frame of the National Climate Strategy that must be strengthened. Applying a comprehensive approach to this theme would permit a more efficient, inclusive and sustainable model of mobility through the following:

- Prioritize public transportation planning to access services and institutions with fewer trips and at reasonable time and cost
- Transportation infrastructure and services in line with people's needs. This signifies not only expanding road infrastructure, but also providing a solution to the issue of urban mobility.
- Use transportation means, technologies and fuels that contribute to environmental sustainability by incorporating environmental and social criteria in infrastructure construction and prioritizing mobility alternatives

The benefits for sustainable development relate to:

- ✓ SDG 3: Health (implications concerned with air quality, stress and auditory pollution)
- ✓ SDG 7: Energy (measures for greater energy efficiency and substitution of fuels for cleaner energies)
- ✓ SDG 11: Sustainable cities (especially the transportation goal)
- ✓ SDG 9: Infrastructure (clean technologies)
- ✓ SDG 1: Fighting poverty (basic services at reasonable costs)
- ✓ SDG 4: Education in sustainable development (more peaceful co-existence in the use of public spaces)

7. Comprehensive Management of the Tarcoles River Basin

This proposal is based on a territorial approach to sustainable development inasmuch as comprehensive basin management promotes an integrated planning approach. Environment, and in this case prevention of basin contamination, is considered a uniting theme at local level that can lay the foundations for comprehensive regional development.

A pilot experience is currently underway in the Tarcoles river basin involving 40 municipalities/cantons under this comprehensive planning concept. It is expected that the lessons generated can be

Integrated management of the Tarcoles river basin can impact on the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- ✓ SDG 6: Water and sanitation
- ✓ SDG 12: Sustainable consumption and production
- ✓ SDG 11: Cities
- ✓ SDG 15: Biodiversity and ecosystems
- ✓ SDG 2: Sustainable agriculture

Source: work group

extrapolated to the rest of the country. The justification for making this basin a priority is that it concentrates an important part of the country's population and main productive activities. Concern about the basin's contamination is identified as an opportunity for uniting diverse stakeholders to promote an environmentally sustainable, economic and social model.

This has led the State, and particularly MINAE, to advocate defining an array of comprehensive policies. A process is underway to formulate an environmental strategy and integrated water resource management strategy as a long-range vision that effectively integrates the priorities of the National Development Plan and actions of sector plans at the level of basin management.

Some of the challenges ahead are to:

- Facilitate orderly and representative participation of the different stakeholders involved through planning commissions
- Actively engage municipalities in planning and implementation as well as transferring economic resources to improve waste management
- Ensure compliance with existing legislation and establish incentives and voluntary cleaner production mechanisms in the private sector
- Obtain concrete agreements and integrate the efforts of the different institutions involved. For example, achieve cooperation between MINAE and the Health Ministry so that systems for dumping permits and fees are technically robust and viable for users
- Strengthen the Institutional Environmental Management Plans
- Complement the process with environmental education strategies
- Incorporate basin planning in biological corridor schemes

8. Development of the Port Terminal in Moín and Widening of Route 32

Infrastructure is an area where the country has lagged most, affecting Costa Ricans' quality of life and raising transportation costs for people, goods and services. The Government has therefore made financing and streamlining procedures for the start of different infrastructure works high priority.

An interesting analysis was made at the workshop regarding advances in proposals on construction of the Moín port terminal⁶ and widening of Route 32⁷. There are significant challenges to these projects as both are being questioned

⁶ The port complex in the province of Limon holds a strategic geographic position in world trade routes. As part of State modernization policies and perspectives on the economic growth of Costa Rica, improving port infrastructure stands out in response to expectations about growth in traffic, larger container ships and stricter requirements for supply chain management. In 2011 APM Terminals won a 33-year concession from the Government of Costa Rica to design, build, finance and operate a new container terminal in the city of Moín. This is the largest infrastructure project in the country's history, and is aimed at supporting the national economy, specifically the growing agricultural export industry and the manufacturing sector.

⁷ The project contemplates widening and modernizing Route 32, which connects the provinces of Limon and San Jose, more specifically a 107-km stretch between the district of Guápiles and the port city of Limon.

about financing for the works, actual benefits at the social and economic level and environmental viability.

It was felt that the two works may have important implications in moving toward achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, but will cause important negative impacts because of the way they have been planned.

Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact
SDG 1: Poverty	SDG 2: Hunger, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture	SDG 6: Water and Sanitation
SDG 8: Economic Growth and Employment	SDG 3: Health	SDG 7: Energy
SDG 9: Infrastructure and Industrialization	SDG 4: Education	SDG 13: Climate Change
SDG 11: Cities	SDG 5: Gender and Women	SDG 14: Oceans and Seas
SDG 16: Peace and Justice		SDG 15: Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Source: work group

Emphasizing that a compartmentalized approach produces negative effects for sustainable development, proposals were made to improve communication channels, promote forums of dialogue and activate existing intersectoral mechanisms. This would be done by creating a planning unit with the following characteristics:

- inter-ministerial
- has political and technical weight
- promotes citizen consultation and civil society participation
- proposals are binding
- has oversight capacity to follow up on decisions

9. Energy: Engine for Sustainable Development

Costa Rica aims to change its energy matrix and lower consumption of oil derivatives by adopting alternative sources, especially for the transportation sector. Although national electric power is generated mostly from renewable sources, the energy matrix offers opportunities for greater sustainability.

An energy policy focused on sustainable development must ensure uninterrupted availability of electricity while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing hydrocarbon imports and using the renewable sources existing in the country. In addition, access to energy for all social sectors will enable improved quality of life for families and greater access to basic social services (such as health and education) and productive activities that generate employment.

The policy must also promote efficient energy use along with innovative energy sources, for example, by using waste from products such as pineapple, coffee, sugar cane and banana; livestock manure, and other sources of biofuels.

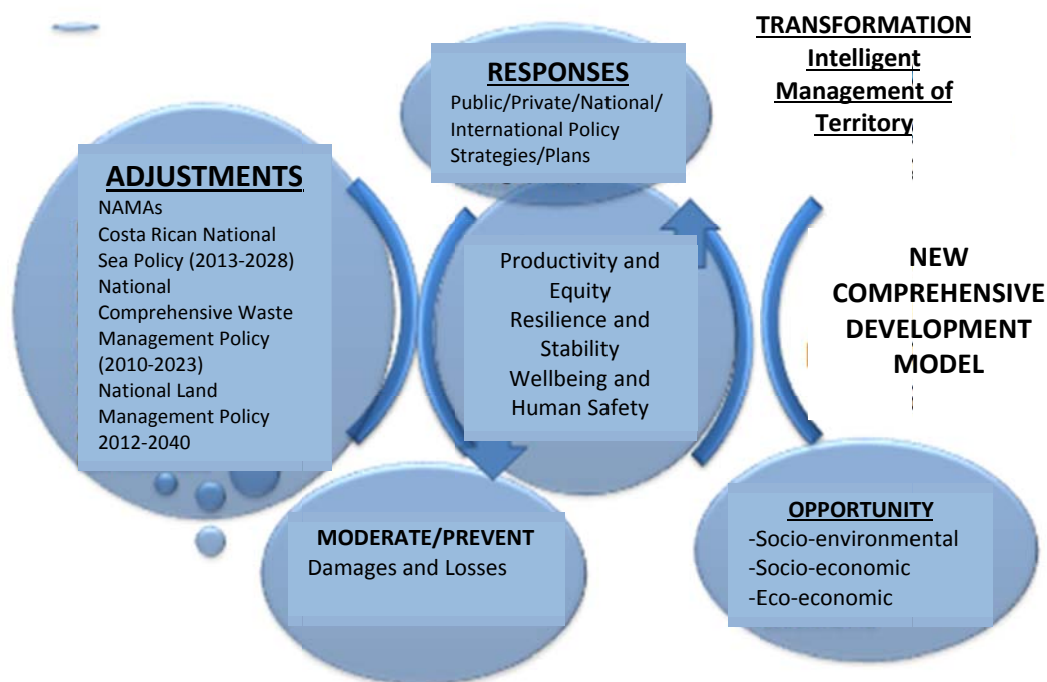
Notwithstanding, the move from an energy matrix anchored in hydrocarbon consumption to one based on sustainable energy from clean sources requires structural transformations in the country's productive apparatus, land management and integrated planning with sectors and users.

Sustainable development benefits apply to:

- ✓ SDG 7: Energy (universal services, energy efficiency and substitution of fuels for cleaner energies)
- ✓ SDG 9: Infrastructure (clean technologies)
- ✓ SDG 13: Climate change (mitigation)
- ✓ SDG 1: Fighting poverty (basic services and income generation)

V. CONCLUSIONS: INTEGRATED APPROACH IN PLANNING TO CONTINUE ADVANCING TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- i. A high degree of political commitment and leadership will be necessary to take on the challenge of implementing the Post-2015 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, at national level.
- ii. Furthermore, all sectors must come together in order to define advances and achieve them in the medium and long term.
- iii. Therefore, it is important to define mechanisms for intersectoral and local-level dialogue whereby public policy priorities are defined, resources are assigned for policy implementation and progress is monitored so that bottlenecks can be identified in time and readjustments made when necessary. This will permit greater coherence between public policies at the macro level, and on the ground at local level.
- iv. Costa Rica is already in a process of adjustment, with a clear commitment to avoiding a partial and fragmented development vision and prioritizing environmental sustainability. This is being fostered with instruments that facilitate intersectoral government action and citizen participation. In this sense, concrete results have already been obtained in policy planning and development strategies.



- v. Institutionalization of the SDGs in governability structures is necessary to ensure political coherence and national appropriation. This can be launched on the foundation left by the MDG process and the implementation of multilateral environmental conventions, but at the same time, the planning scheme based on “strategic sectors” must be consolidated in order to coordinate policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- vi. A first step is to align the Post-2015 Agenda, the SDGs and the goals proposed in the National Development Plan 2014-2018. This requires the adoption of results-based management and the incorporation of international commitments in public policies, programs and national strategies with real impact.
- vii. A second step will consist of identifying common priority objectives. It is necessary to move ahead in defining objectives, goals and indicators that combine social, economic, environmental and governance elements to ensure balanced, irreversible and sustained progress in the different sustainable development dimensions, as well as generating synergies between them.
- viii. This will require a systematic effort of dialogue and agreement, and seeking incentives for joint intersectoral work to change the path of development toward sustainability. Different points of entry were identified at the workshop:
 - a. Adjust existing policies and programs to strengthen the incorporation of all sustainable development dimensions (as in, for example, the “Weaving Development” program, sustainable rural tourism or the Greater Metropolitan Area mobility plan)
 - b. Identification of a multidimensional and multisectoral problem as foundation for the formulation of comprehensive policy (such as the Sea and Waste Management policies)
 - c. Develop a territorial approach enabling policy coherence at local level (such as the land management and integrated basin management plans or sustainable cities strategy)
 - d. Intervention in core country development themes that can, with all sectors and stakeholders in concert, achieve substantial change in the area of sustainable development (as in the cases of the energy sector, sustainable housing or construction of large infrastructure works)
- ix. Later it will be necessary to incorporate agreed national objectives in the annual operating plans to ensure their implementation. The institutions must be prepared to revise work plans, take advantage of emerging opportunities for joint work, monitor progress, and document and replicate good practices. Local governments will play a vital role in this sense, and must be strengthened with technical capacities and financial resources.

- x. This also involves the need to strengthen coherence and coordination among institutions, policies and processes to reduce duplication of efforts, helping close gaps in sustainable development planning and implementation in an orderly way.
- xi. With respect to environmental sustainability, it is necessary to move from the incorporation of environmental criteria to integration—in other words, not just mitigate environmental impacts of socioeconomic development, but use investments in natural and social capital to drive economic growth. Also, synergies between the goals of the different sectors must be defined.
- xii. Implementation measures need to incorporate participatory mechanisms, social dialogue and the use of new Internet technologies. Indeed, participation requires a proactive and constructive attitude recognizing that difference offers opportunity to build a shared agenda through dialogue, tolerance and interest in learning as part of the process.
- xiii. Further, a strategy of communication, education and access to information is required to bring about cultural transformation enabling society in general to adopt more sustainable consumption and production patterns and make more responsible decisions in this area.
- xiv. Lastly, alliance-building and interlinked work of all development actors (universities, civil society, private sector, international cooperation, etc.) is fundamental in the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda. For more effective private sector interlinkage, specifically, the State has a vital role in encouraging and regulating private investment in priority areas that involve sustainable natural resource use while generating employment and income: community tourism, NAMAs, infrastructure works, and investment in basic social services and sustainable agriculture, for example.