

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



The Director-General



Secretary General

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP Costa Rica

CLIP Costa Rica

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

Among Central American countries, Costa Rica is often described as the one with the best human rights track record. This is also true to a large extent also for gender equality, nevertheless many challenges persist. Costa Rica enjoys one of the highest political representation of women in the world – 50% of ministers and 45% of deputies are women, even though at local level only 10% of mayors are women.

Gender parity requirements are currently in place for general elections, while for municipal elections it will enter into force in 2024. In the economic sphere, gaps are very evident. Female unemployment is double the rate as the male one. This also leads to higher poverty rate for women, especially for single mothers and migrant women. 45% of households in poverty are headed by single women. Costa Rica also has one of the lowest participation of women in the job market in Latin American region. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on two sectors important for women – tourism and paid domestic work, especially for women of migrant origin.

Access to sexual and reproductive rights is a controversial topic in the country. Abortion is illegal in most cases, except when mother's life is in danger. In recent years, evangelical community has been the most vocal in protesting abortion under any circumstances. Support for legal access to abortion is low, even among left-leaning politicians and women.

National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men 2018-2030 (La Política Nacional para la Igualdad Efectiva entre Mujeres y Hombres en Costa Rica 2018-2030 – PIEG) is the main national strategy aimed at complying with fifth SDG – gender equality. Government conducts awareness campaigns for citizens, as well as training programs on gender equality for public officials. Main actor is the Ministry of Women's Affairs, who oversees the work of INAMU – *National Institute of Women*. Vice-President Epsy Campbell is also highly active in women's affairs on behalf of the executive branch.

National Policy for the Attention and Prevention of Violence against Women of All Ages 2017-2032 (Sistema Nacional de Prevención y Atención de la Violencia contra las Mujeres – PLANNOVI) aims at preventing femicides and is based on institutional and legislative efforts to early detect and deal with situations on a case-to-case basis. In 2020 Legislative Assembly unanimously approved the Bill against street sexual harassment that introduces for the first times legal penalties for unsolicited groping, touching, harassing and stalking in public.

For the preparation and elaboration of the CLIP for Costa Rica the National Institute of Women (INAMU) as well as civil society have been consulted. Digitalization, innovation and climate change were mentioned as essential topics for the coming years of work on gender issues in Costa Rica. It was also mentioned that the positive gender agenda in Costa Rica and the work of INAMU might be threatened depending on the result of the elections in 2022.

Two Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) have been identified for Costa Rica, one on the green agenda and one on digitalization. Gender is relevant for the work on the green agenda in Costa Rica in three main ways; the effects of climate change on women's livelihoods, women's participation in mitigation initiatives and women's role in the green jobs sector for example sustainable tourism, transport and construction.

In relation to digitalization, closing the digital gap focusing on gender aspects is highly necessary in Costa Rica. Women lack behind men in digital skills, in access to digital tools and stable internet access.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

Costa Rica will not have a fully-fledged MIP but a limited MIP in scope and funds. Two Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) have been identified for Costa Rica, one on the green agenda and one on digitalization. In this context, specific thematic objectives and areas of engagement have been identified.

Specific thematic objectives:

- Promote gender equality and combat discrimination, in law and in practice
- Improve sexual and reproductive rights and health of women and girls
- Increase support and protection to victims of sexual and gender based violence
- Increase the participation of women in the labour market, fight unemployment among women and support female entrepreneurship
- Support the Women's Institute (INAMU) in its work on promoting women's rights and in implementing its strategies
- Increase political participation of women
- Fight against political violence towards women
- Fight against workplace harassment of women
- Increase the visibility of Gender Equality Award and support to NGOs that work in the field of gender equality

Areas of engagement:

1. Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence
 - Support cooperation projects aimed at fighting against gender-based violence towards women and children, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic
2. Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights
 - Support cooperation projects aimed at improving sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls, including comprehensive sexuality education and health-care services through among others the EUROsociAL+ programme
3. Strengthening economic and social rights and empowering girls and women
 - Work with UN Women and other international organizations focused on women's rights, on promoting the participation of women in the labour market and support female entrepreneurship (for example existing program *Ganar-Ganar: Igualdad de Género es un Bueno Negocio*)
 - Include experiences and needs of migrant women into formulation of migration-related projects.
 - Work with INAMU through the EUROsociAL+ programme on women's economic and social rights
4. Advancing equal participation and leadership
 - Promote Gender Equality Award as main political tool of action in the field of gender equality, with inclusion of MS, ambassadors, deputies and ministers
 - Public diplomacy events to increase the visibility of Gender Equality Award, based on successful editions in 2018, 2019 and 2020
 - Civic education and community engagement on gender equality and diversity to counter gender-based discrimination
 - Increase the visibility of the EU Delegation and MS embassies as a champion of gender equality (walk the talk). Majority of EU embassies in Costa Rica are now headed by a woman
5. Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation
 - Outreach to women-led NGOs in the field of digitalisation and green agenda, including support for women in STEM

3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender specific projects will continue to take place under thematic budget lines such as EIDHR and CSO-LA. Furthermore, gender specific interventions will take place under the successor to EUROsociAL + programme focusing on the following thematic areas:

- Supporting the National Institute of Women INAMU in updating the National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity (PIEG) 2018-2030 using relevant statistics
- Supporting the National Institute of Women INAMU with technical support for the implementation of the National Policy for the Attention and Prevention of Violence against Women of All Ages 2017-2032 PLANovi 2017-2032

- Supporting the National Institute of Statistics in incorporating a gender perspective in the National Statistics System of Costa Rica
- Supporting the judicial power of Costa Rica in addressing violence against women by educating men on women's rights in criminal proceedings
- Supporting the National Institute of Women in strengthening public policies and actions in social co-responsibility of care from a gender perspective as well as parental leave issues

Gender considerations will furthermore be mainstreamed under the TEIs (financing envelope still pending).

Latin American Regional Spotlight Program

The main objective of the EU-UN Spotlight Regional Program is to prevent, respond and eliminate violence against women and girls, particularly femicide/feminicide (VAWG+FF). Costa Rica has had a prominent participation within the program. For instance, as part of a regional study Costa Rican normative, regulatory, and public policy instruments, were analysed to provide a potential adjustment of said legislation in accordance to the Palermo Protocols to strengthen cooperation and prosecution of VAWG in the field of organized crime. Additionally Costa Rica became a member of the Community of Practice of Essential Services, which is a knowledge platform, a space for dialogue, collective reflection and exchange of experiences to advance towards a multisectoral response model to VAWG. Finally Costa Rica was one of the selected countries to be analysed as part of the study "Quality of the data on femicide/feminicide and violent deaths of women for gender reasons in Latin America and the Caribbean". This investigation will examine and evaluate the quality of existing data in Latin American countries, providing a series of recommendations for decision makers to improve the records produced, with the aim of contributing to consistent statistics that will allow the development of evidenced based public policies. Phase II of the regional program is presently under consideration, which would potentially allow to further continue its regional implementation with Costa Rica's involvement.

Collaboration among Member States and with other development partners

EU Delegation regularly collaborates with Member States on human rights and gender-related issues are no exception to that. Our annual Gender Equality Award is presented and chosen together with the help of Member States as they participate in the pre-selection and final selection of the candidates. Member States are also included in discussions that EU Delegation has with civil society and the EU Delegation will strive to invite them to any relevant meeting related to gender equality.

Here below is a list of ongoing projects funded by Member States in relation to gender equality:

Netherlands

- IPAS: Local and national lobby and advocacy on decriminalisation of abortion, child pregnancies and sexual violence.
- International Planned Parenthood Federation: advocacy, in the form of contribution to new narratives, in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Spain

- Strengthening the response capacity of women entrepreneurs against COVID-19 pandemic”. Budget: 103.100 € for 2020-2022. Results: Capacity building for women entrepreneurs affected by COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of economic reactivation of female entrepreneurship.

France:

- Strengthening gender equality in the Central American region by funding small projects working on different topics related to gender equality.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

Discussions with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Office of the Vice President and National Institute for Women are a priority in terms of dialogue outreach. Ambassador has regular meetings with the Vice President on women’s rights, however cooperation should be intensified with other stakeholders. Delegation also strives for inclusion of gender equality as one of the permanent issues of the agenda during political dialogue within EU-Central America Association Agreement. It is necessary to include UN Women and other international organizations focused on women’s rights, on promoting the participation of women in the labour market and support female entrepreneurship.

Dialogue with women’s rights organizations was launched in 2019, and women organizations participated to the consultations in 2021 on the limited MIP. There is a potential to further reach out to NGO network, which already exists among Gender Equality Award finalists. As an objective in GAP III, Delegation will schedule next meeting for November 2021 and annual meetings should follow. Moreover, inclusion of traditionally marginalised groups (such as lesbians, transgender, indigenous, African descent and migrant women and girls) is important for the debate on women’s rights in the country.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

The most important objective in this area will be to consolidate the EU Gender Equality Award in Costa Rica at national level. This award for the third consecutive year has started to become an important reference in the country in the field of Human Rights. Award ceremony enjoys political support from the Vice President, Ministry of Women’s Affairs and diplomatic community. To this purpose, EU DEL will develop a strategy of dissemination within the country. Another priority is to work with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to develop a national strategy to strengthen women's political participation in urban and rural areas. This is especially important in light of 2022 general elections. Few female candidates have presented

their candidacies for President so far. Another idea is to launch a radio programme with the collaboration of the National Institute for Women, Ministry of Commerce, human rights NGOs to help women learn about development and financing opportunities that are available to promote their entrepreneurship. Funds should be secured in 2022.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

No specific amount has been earmarked due to the particular nature of Costa Rica's limited MIP. As mentioned above, CR will not have any programmable cooperation resources under 2021-2027 programming beyond the technical cooperation facility.

Date: 28.6.2021

Signature by Head of Delegation: