

STATE POLICY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Reducing territorial divisions in Costa Rica

With EUROsocial's support, Costa Rica increases its regionalisation process and takes decisive steps to reduce territorial imbalances with the approval of a Law for Regional Development.



The development model in Costa Rica over the last 30 years has achieved, on the one hand, significant social and economic progress for its people, and on the other, has increased regional asymmetries and imbalances. The deconcentration and decentralization process initiated in the seventies towards town councils did not have the expected impact in reducing the regional divisions.

With the aim of moving towards territorial cohesion to achieve a comprehensive development in the country and a more equitable society, MIDEPLAN, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy), with the support of EUROsocial, has promoted and led a regional development process with important

advances, which aims to end with the launch of a National Regional Development Policy.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS, A REMARKABLE MILESTONE IN THE PROCESS

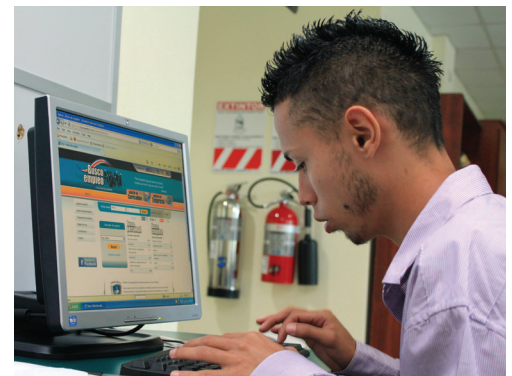
The essentially sectoral approach that commands public policies means that there are many real planning areas. In addition to adopting different tools, approaches, strategies indicators, they also differ in their geographical and territorial references, both in design and implementation. Even though the Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN) —as

DECENTRALIZATION



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COSTA RICA



governing body, is responsible for drafting, coordinating, monitoring and assessing Governmental strategies and priorities— it proposes six functional planning regions for the country's development (Central, Brunca, Chorotega, Huetar Caribe, Huetar Norte and Pacifico Central). These are often not taken into account by public institutions, which use their own schemes for their purposes.

In recent years, MIDEPLAN has activated a regionalisation process as a strategy to reduce regional imbalances. One of the milestones achieved in this process has been the preparation of Regional Development Plans, with a territorial approach and long-term vision (with a horizon to 2030), for each one of the planning regions in Costa Rica. These plans have been incorporated and articulated in the new National Development Plan 2015-2018, with special emphasis on sectoral targets for Agricultural Development, Human Development (reduction of poverty) and Employment. EUROsocial has supported the drafting process of those plans with a participatory approach, which has allowed the interaction of the different governmental, political, social and economic (business) stakeholders, from that area, achieving a consensus on the vision and development proposals to be started up, and by providing great legitimacy to the process.

TOWARDS A STATE POLICY FOR REGIONAL SUPPORT

The drafting of Regional Development Plans has served not only to activate a strong regionalisation process, but also has contributed significantly to the launch of a State Policy for Regional Development. With its own budget and through specific actions, it seeks to address territorial divisions and challenge equity.

With that goal, EUROsocial has supported the drafting process of the Law for Regional Development which provides for the creation of a fund, allocated with a percentage of the national GDP. This law, in addition to explaining how this fund is going to operate, defines the multilevel governance system to implement the policy. A strategic alliance between the Executive power and the Legislature has been key both for the preparation and to approve the draft law.

It is worth mentioning that the European Regional Policy, as well as the national policies for regional development of some of their Member States (like Spain) have been a reference for Costa Rica, inspired by both their conception as well as their management.

EUROSOCIAL'S SUPPORT ITINERARY

2013.

- ▶ Concept and methodological foundation of the regional planning process.
- ▶ Positioning of regionalisation at the national level.
- ▶ Strengthening the skill building of MIDEPLAN's Regional Planning managers.

2014.

- ▶ Development of the regional plans arranged with territorial and ministerial stakeholders.
- ▶ Forums for strategic positioning of the regionalisation process, in the six regions and at the national level. Presentation of the Regional Plans.

2015.

- ▶ Drafting of the Law for Regional Development.
- ▶ Design of the Regional Development Fund.
- ▶ Definition of a multilevel governance system.
- ▶ Parliamentary proceedings for the Regional Development Law.

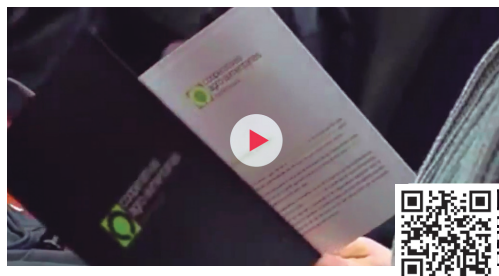
FIRST-HAND

▶ Olga Marta Sánchez Oviedo
Minister of Planning



“The regional approach not only implies compensating less developed regions for their disadvantages, but also improving their growth and competitiveness, establishing national policies to help diminish inequalities for the comprehensive development of the country, with a principle of equity, focused in favour of increasing welfare levels and improving living conditions of people living in each territory”.

VIDEOS



Costa Rica is inspired by the regionalisation model of Extremadura. Report produced and broadcast by the TV programme La Besana, from Canal Extremadura



Miguel Bernal, Regional Deputy of the Assembly of Extremadura (2011-2015), in the Regionalisation Forum of Costa Rica

PUBLICATIONS



- ▶ Regional Development Plans: Central, Brunca, Chorotega, Huetar Caribe, Huetar Norte and Pacífico Central
- ▶ Regional Development and Policy in Europe: contributions for the debate
- ▶ National strategies and policies for territorial cohesion. Case studies in Latin America

ENABLING STAKEHOLDERS' AGREEMENTS

Finding a consensus to establish long-term policies is not easy. Therefore, the Presidency of the Republic has formed a Territorial Development and Citizen Participation Coordination Network, led by the Office of the First Lady, with the participation of the Ministry of National Planning, the Institute for Municipal Development and Counselling (IFAM), the National Department for Community Development (DINADECO) and the Rural Development Institute (INDER). It has three objectives: a) to establish policies that respond to priorities of the territories; b) joint sectoral organisation of the State; c) citizen participation in development processes.

Within the Network's framework, the “Tejiendo Desarrollo” (Weaving Development) programme was created, as a strategy that promotes citizen participation in the creation of public policies, programmes and projects, so they respond to the needs and priorities defined by the social and political stakeholders in the regions, territories, cantons and communities.

MIDEPLAN leads the ongoing actions in the regions and, with the support of EUROsocial, has led the drafting process of the Law for Regional Development, making the regional level an articulating area for what is global, national and local, facilitating integration and coherence of approaches and strategies.

Coordinating Partner



Operating Partners

