COSTA RICA
GLOBAL TOURISM
PLASTICS INITIATIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Waste management is a challenge that affects all sectors of society. Problems arising from improper waste disposal not only harm the environment but also directly impact our health, economy, and quality of life. (Ministry of Health, 2025)

Furthermore, UNEP's Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 report indicates that municipal solid waste generation is projected to increase from 2.1 billion tons in 2023 to 3.8 billion tons in 2050, and that without urgent waste management measures, the global annual waste management cost could nearly double by 2050, reaching $640.3 billion. However, it also indicates that controlling waste by adopting prevention and management measures and implementing a circular economy model could actually reduce the amount and lead to significant gains (UNEP, 2024).

In Costa Rica, the foundations of national waste regulations are based on the Political Constitution of the Republic, as well as the international conventions to which the country is a signatory, in addition to national regulatory instruments. With the creation of Law No. 8839 for Integrated Waste Management, published in La Gaceta on July 13, 2010, and the reforms that have emerged over the years, a paradigm shift in waste management was promoted, based on the need to promote maximum prevention and minimization of waste generation at the source. (Ministry of Health, 2023)

Over time, instruments have been created to support this effort, such as the National Strategy for the Substitution of Single-Use Plastics, the National Circular Economy Strategy, and the SINAC-DE-944-2020 guideline, which prohibits single-use plastics in Protected Wilderness Areas (ASP) of the country's National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), among others

Currently, Law No. 9786 to Combat Plastic Pollution and Protect the Environment exists, as well as the National Policy for Integrated Waste Management 2023-2033 and the Management Plan for Integrated Waste Management 2023-2028.

The policy's objective is to transform waste management in the country by strengthening sociocultural, environmental, institutional, regulatory, financial, logistical, and technological aspects, thus contributing to the improvement of environmental quality, the well-being of the population, the reduction of greenhouse gases, the development of sustainable cities, and responsible production and consumption.

Furthermore, the National Tourism Plan establishes a commitment from the sector to promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, for example, by fostering the circular economy in tourist destinations. The Sustainable Tourism Certification was created and is being promoted for tourism companies. This certification contributes to building a business model based on best practices in sustainable tourism. It includes environmental actions related to the reduction of single-use plastics. It also works with coastal communities through the implementation of the Blue Flag Program, in the beaches category. There’s also a constant effort to generate awareness in tourists about good practices related to their stay in the country including reductions and proper waste management.

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As a result of the country's and sector's commitment, the Costa Rican Tourism Institute joined the UN Tourism Global Initiative on Tourism and Plastics, which brings the sector together around a shared vision of addressing the causes of plastic pollution and thus leading by example toward a circular plastics economy prioritizing partnerships with other institutions and organizations.

References

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COMMITMENT: Promote the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative in the tourism sector

GOAL	TYPE OF ACTION	DATE	TOOL RELATED	RESPONSIBLES	RELATED ACTORS
Update the web page with all the information about the plastic iniciative and the Costa Rican directives about the subject	Comunicate in the ICT web page and other media about One Planet and the iniciative of plastics as well as the Glasgow Declaration.Including legal instruments such as SINAC-DE-994-2020 Guideline (2021), which prohibits the consumption, use, and entry of single-use plastics in Protected Wild Areas of the National System of Conservation Area (SINAC).			-Department of Information and Communication Technologies Marketing Department Department of Sustainable Tourism	
30 signatorie organizations by 2025	1. Promote the iniciatives directly to the certified companies in the tourism sector so they stablish the compromise. 2.Include the iniciatives in the genda of the CST events. 3. Include the iniciatives in the genda of the CTS Forum.	1. Constantly 2. Events dates 3. Sept 2024		Department of Sustainable Tourism	CST companies

COMMITMENT: Raise awareness about the need to eliminate or reduce problematic or unnecessary plastics

GOAL	TYPE OF ACTION	DATE	TOOL RELATED	RESPONSIBLES	RELATED ACTORS
Participate in the Fossils of the Anthropocene exhibition	Campaign Fossils of the Anthropocene: exhibition of plastic sculptures coordinated by the 5 Minute Foundation and the Department of Marketing ICT It has been in Europe since the beggining of this year and it will keep moving through different countries to make awareness	2024-2025		Marketing Department	5 minute Foundation
Launch of the new version of the CST (Certification for Sustainable Tourism) by 2025	CST tool Specific criteria to address plastics pollution as well as the WTTC Hotel Sustainability Basics regarding plastics will be included in the new version of the CST	2025	CST Standard	Department of Sustainable Tourism	WTTC

COMMITMENT: Encourage reuse models to reduce the need for single-use plastic packaging

GOAL	TYPE OF ACTION	DATE	TOOL RELATED	RESPONSIBLES	RELATED ACTORS
Create and promote a training program about Circular Economy	Educación 1. With strategic stakeholders create a training process to generate awareness and keep promoting reuse models to avoid plastic pollution. (program that includes virtual and in-person activities on waste reduction and management internally at the ICT and at CST companies). 2. Offer a permanent educational program in the ICT Capacita platform	2025	ICT Capacita Platform	Department of Sustainable Touris	One Planet Zero Waste Aliarse

COMMITMENT: Promote the use of reusable, recyclable, or compostable plastic packaging/items and sustainable practices in general

GOAL	TYPE OF ACTION	DATE	TOOL RELATED	RESPONSIBLES	RELATED ACTORS
Apply the institutional policy for the incorporation of environmental and social criteria in the acquisition of goods and services of the Institution	**Sustainable purchases (internat)** Internally replace purchases of single-use plastic products with renewable and/or compostable alternatives	2024-2025	Policy for the incorporation of strategic public procurement criteria in the acquisition of goods and services of the Institution.	Supply Department	
Publish at least 2 times a year the essential tips	**Advertising** Update and publish a list of essential tips to become a responsible travel in the website and social media	2024-2025		Department of Sustainable Tourism Marketing Department	
Publish the list and update it every year	**Advertising-information** Update and publish a list of suppliers that focus on eliminating sinlge use plastics as well as organizations that implement specific actions regarding reducing waste	2025		Department of Sustainable Tourism Marketing Department	Sustainable suppliers
Implement 100% of the Institutional Environmental Management System Action Plan	**Education (Internal)** Raise awareness in the Institution about correct practices related to waste through talks, activities and informative material within the framework of the Institutional Environmental Management System	2024-2027	PGAI, PBAE	Institutional environmental management commission	

COMMITMENT: Support and promote initiatives that aim at increasing collection, sorting, reuse, and recycling.

GOAL	TYPE OF ACTION	DATE	TOOL RELATED	RESPONSIBLES	RELATED ACTORS
Promote the program to 100% of the CST companies and keep promoting the program to all of the internal collaborators	Program Support programs such as Ecoins which promotes the correct classification of waste and a responsible disposal of this recyclable waste in authorized centers	2024-2025		Institutional environmental management commission	Ecoins
Promote the program to 100% of the CST companies and keep promoting the program to all of the internal collaborators	Program Support the environmental and social responsibility project called Donatapa (“donate plastic lids”) of the Costa Rican Accessible Tourism Network, as well as the ProParques Association, that collect plastics lids to build walkways so inclusive tourism is promoted	2024-2025		Institutional environmental management commissionl	Donatapa Proparques
Reduce 1% of non reciclable materials internally anually	Waste Managment Support programs that use other plastics that can't be recicled in recycling collection centers. For example Bosque Plástico who uses this plastic materials to build diferent structures, or Resin8 which uses this materials as part of the composition of construction materials	2024-2025		Institutional environmental management commission	Bosque Plástico Pedregal
Reduce 1% of non reciclable materials internally anually	Plastic footprint compensation Collect plastic from beaches by families from communities who are paid for the material, providing traceability. Subsequently, those who integrate the material into construction materials use Resin8.	2024-2025		Department of Sustainable Tourism	Ecohéroes