



# ICAT'S WORK IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is recognized as a world leader in environmental policy and climate action. In 2015, the country pledged to become carbon neutral by 2021, an ambitious goal that raised a number of institutional challenges.

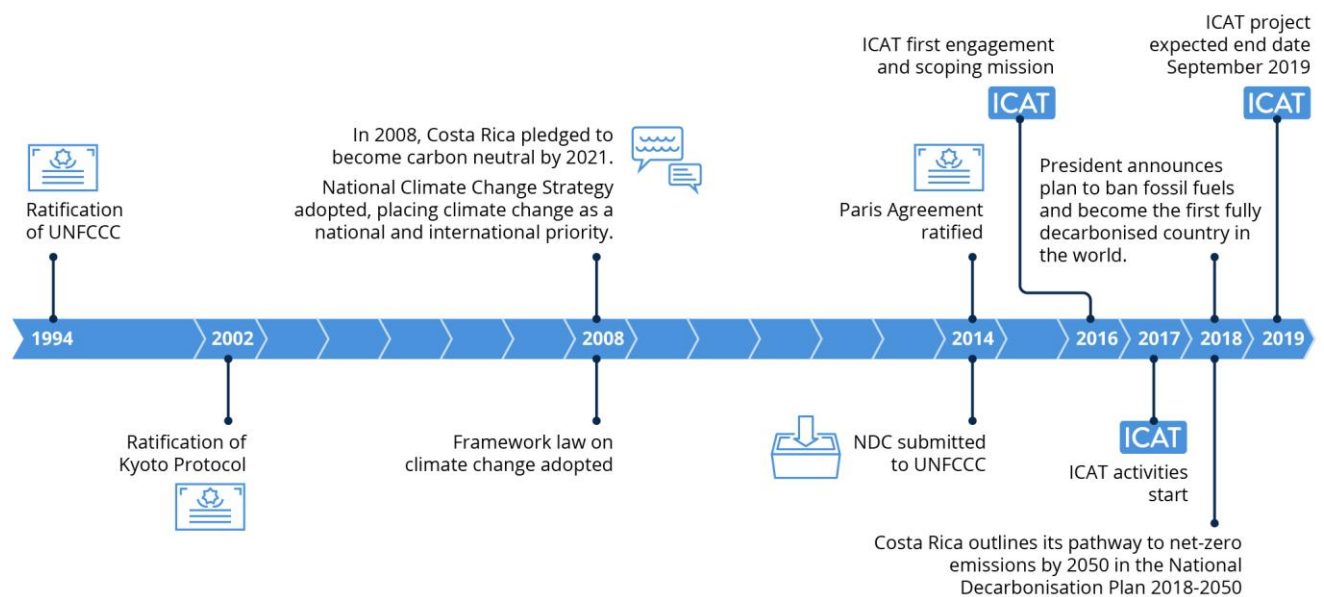
Costa Rica ratified the UNFCCC in August 1994 and the Paris Agreement in 2016. It submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC in 2016. The country's current National Decarbonisation Plan (2018-2050) sets out a new pathway to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. An updated NDC is due for submission in 2020.



## Headline NDC Commitments (2016):<sup>1</sup>

**Mitigation commitments:** Reduction of 44% of emissions compared to a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario and a reduction of 25% of emission compared to 2012 emissions by 2030. This will require a reduction of 170,500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year until 2030.

**Adaptation commitments:** Costa Rica will continue its Green and Inclusive Development policy through local actions in adaptation, such as strengthening conservation programs and expanding environmental services payments to include ecosystem-based adaptation. Costa Rica will also continue to promote renewable energies, integral environment management through agro-forestry systems and watershed management, as well as municipal land use planning as tools to reduce long-term vulnerabilities, enhance food security and increase infrastructure resilience.



<sup>1</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2016) *Costa Rica's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution*, [link](#).

In Costa Rica, ICAT is building capacity of the National Climate Change Metrics System to strengthen national level Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV), with a particular focus on the transport sector.

The initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) supports improved transparency and capacity building under the Paris Agreement. ICAT integrates guidance, capacity building and knowledge sharing to engage countries in the use of a common framework to assess the impacts of their policies and actions and report progress, fostering greater transparency, effectiveness and ambition. The initiative will improve the availability and quality of climate related data and enable countries to promote efficient, cost-effective policies. ICAT's approach is country led.

*“The support by the International ICAT representatives was clear, helpful, understanding and respectful of the national context”*

Member of the Costa Rica government team overseeing implementation of the ICAT project

ICAT began working with Costa Rica in 2016. The initiative is partnering with the Directorate of Climate Change (DCC) to strengthen Costa Rica's existing National Climate Change Metrics System (SINAMECC). The project responds to a nationally identified need to develop formal institutional arrangements for improved climate-related data collection and management. This includes establishing clear roles and responsibilities across the data collection and reporting system. ICAT has also focused on the transport sector, supporting an assessment of climate-related policies and actions within the sector.

ICAT's support to Costa Rica began with a review of the existing legal and institutional system for GHG emissions data collection and management, including in the transport sector.

This led to recommendations for a more efficient and effective institutional framework, including stronger data collection and information sharing.

These recommendations formed the basis for developing a legal framework for MRV, with draft institutional protocols submitted to national authorities to be legally institutionalised. These protocols have been signed and embraced by the Ministry of Environment, which manages more than 20 departments and institutions, including forestry and water management. However, wider uptake from other ministries remains in the early stages.



<sup>2</sup>

ICAT's support to Costa Rica has included a strong focus on capacity building. ICAT's international representatives have provided strong technical support throughout the project, most notably on application of the ICAT methodologies. Workshops facilitated by ICAT have also helped to ensure a broad range of stakeholders were able to engage in discussions on the legal and institutional structures for MRV. This included representatives from around 30 different institutions, as well as from the private sector. These workshops have helped to improve stakeholder's understanding and awareness of the climate action transparency system and related technical processes. Bringing these stakeholders together has also supported improved institutional relationships between different ministries and departments.

Overall, ICAT's support has made a significant contribution to improving the national legal framework for MRV in Costa Rica.

Recommendations for strengthening data collection, management and sharing have been embedded into legal instruments and are expected to enhance climate action transparency moving forward. Strengthening the

<sup>2</sup> Image by Freepik, [link](#).

link between climate actions and sustainable development impacts in the transport sector and in the National Decarbonisation Plan has also provided insights for Costa Rica on how to strengthen its NDC process. Costa Rica's updated NDC is expected to draw on these insights to improve the link between NDC targets and the SDGs.

*“While key people have gained skills to improve climate change monitoring, there are still more people that also require the experience and skills to support sustainable climate change monitoring”*

Member of the Costa Rica government team overseeing implementation of the ICAT project

Next steps for Costa Rica will be to fully institutionalise the legal framework for MRV across key ministries and departments. ICAT is currently in discussions with Costa Rica about a potential second phase of support. This would

likely include support to strengthen the assessment of sustainable development impacts and transformational change in SINAMECC and pilot this approach in the transport and agricultural sectors. ICAT's work in Costa Rica has also provided a basis for further climate action transparency support to the country provided by the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT). For ICAT and CBIT to be so well aligned in Costa Rica is a really positive signal for improved climate action transparency in the country.



### **Peer-to-peer exchange with Dominican Republic:**

ICAT has supported similar projects in both Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, focused on establishing a robust legal framework for national level MRV. Recognizing some of the regional similarities between the two countries, ICAT supported a learning exchange between the two countries. ICAT arranged for a small team of stakeholders from the Dominican Republic to travel to Costa Rica to learn more about the work being done there.

The exchange provided a timely opportunity for both countries, with the Costa Rica team sharing their insights and learning from the ICAT project and also getting feedback from their Dominican Republic counterparts. Government representatives in Costa Rica report useful shared learning around the importance of strong participatory processes and stakeholder engagement in the development of a robust legal framework for MRV.

More recently, Costa Rica has also agreed to share its National Climate Change Metrics System (SINAMECC) with other countries. While it is not yet clear what the process will be for sharing this system, other country stakeholders have already expressed a strong desire for more peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange on MRV.