

MIEUX

Case Study

Costa Rica (2017)

Funded by the
European Union



Implemented by
ICMPD



How to read this case study?

MIEUX Thematic Areas



Migration and
Development



Legal Migration
and Mobility



Irregular Migration
and Trafficking in
Human Beings



International Protection
and Asylum Policy



Horizontal
Interventions

Ten features of good practice in MIEUX Actions

- 1 There should be ownership on the part of the partner country
- 2 Actions should provide an opportunity to be innovative in their context
- 3 Actions should be able to be replicated
- 4 Actions should provide tangible results
- 5 Actions should be endorsed at a high level
- 6 Actions should be integrated into existing priorities
- 7 Actions should be based on the highest levels of experience
- 8 Actions should complement and be in synergy with other initiatives
- 9 Actions should provide EU added value
- 10 Actions should act as a catalyst for the acquisition of knowledge through the exchange of experiences

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECOND NATIONAL INTEGRATION PLAN

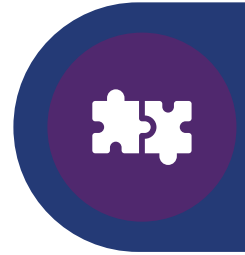
Costa Rica (2017)

Integration of immigrants has gained political salience in many Latin American countries. Costa Rica is a true regional pioneer on integration issues and, with the support of MIEUX, developed its Second National Integration Plan (2018-2022).



Context

Costa Rica's political stability and relatively high standard of living, as well as its strong economy, have made the country an attractive destination for migrants. Migrants constitute 9% of the total population, making it one of the highest percentage shares in LAC. Nicaraguans are the largest immigrant group (77.3% of the total foreign-born population), followed by citizens from Colombia, USA, Panama and El Salvador.¹



Due to a growing recognition of the importance of immigration, the Costa Rican Government has shifted from a policy of enforcement to one of integration.² With the adoption of the General Migration Law in 2010, integration of immigrants became a priority on the Costa Rican migration agenda. The 2013 Comprehensive Migration Policy embedded integration and development as a key area of action and demonstrated its increased political salience.



With the National Migration Council (CNM for its Spanish acronym), the Costa Rican Government has established a multi-stakeholder horizontal coordination structure on migration issues. The institution in charge of implementing the Migration Law and Migration Policy is the DGME. In 2015, a dedicated

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**MIEUX
FEATURES**

¹ DGME (2017): "Diagnóstico del contexto migratorio de Costa Rica 2017".

² G. Sojo-Lara "Business as Usual? Regularizing Foreign Labor in Costa Rica" as featured in Migration Information Source. (26 August 2016). Available on: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/business-usual-regularizing-foreign-labor-costa-rica>. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

Directorate for Integration and Human Development was established under the DGME with the main objective to coordinate between national and local authorities, and to provide assistance to institutions eligible to benefit from the Social Migration Fund (FSM for its Spanish acronym). The FSM uses administrative fees paid by migrants to support migration integration initiatives across government institutions in relation to health, education, security and justice.

With targeted support from MIEUX, the DGME developed the first National Integration Plan (NIP) for the period 2013-2017. The evaluation of the NIP brought two main challenges during the development process, and implementation to the forefront. Firstly, horizontal and vertical policy coherence could not be ensured at all stages of the policy development cycle. The development process and designed integration measures were narrowed down to the few beneficiaries of the FSM. A key stakeholder, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN for its Spanish acronym) was not involved. Secondly, FSM resources only became available in 2015. The strict procedures and limited knowledge in managing such trust funds, delayed the approval of projects. Out of 80 proposed integration measures, only 11 were implemented by 2017.³

Consequently, the first NIP never reached its full potential. Based on the lessons learnt, the Costa Rican Government sought to address these initial shortcomings of the first NIP and enlisted MIEUX's assistance for support in formulating the second NIP.

Action Design

The Action was based on a participatory and evidence-based policy cycle methodology that helped to organise and structure the process of developing the NIP. The policy development process included the following inter-related key steps:

- Based on the experiences gained during its design and implementation, **a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the first NIP** was conducted, with a specific focus on the FSM.
- **Research** on the changing Costa Rican migration context and normative framework.
- **Exchange on lessons learnt and good practices** on specific integration measures with European peers. Besides national experiences, the integration policies and measures of the cities of Barcelona, Madrid and Vienna were studied during the workshops and study visit.
- **Workshops to define the new thematic priorities** of the NIP (migration and health, labour market integration, education and integration, integration of vulnerable migrants, xenophobia and racism) by applying a participatory approach.

3 DGME (2017): "Plan Nacional de Integración para Costa Rica 2018-2022", p. 41-44.

- **Stakeholder consultations** to fine tune the wording, clarify meaning and make adjustments to the draft NIP.
- **Adoption** by the DGME and **presentation** to the CNM and a wider public.
- MIEUX delivered expertise via mixed teams of experts combining national and local expertise. Two public officials from Spain were involved in the implementation of the Action.

Impact

- The **Costa Rican NIP 2018-2022 was officially launched on 08 December 2017** and its implementation included in the Action Plan of the Comprehensive Migration Policy as well as the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022. The DGME organised 2018 quarterly and 2019 bi-annual stocktaking events to monitor the NIP's implementation progress.
- The **analysis of the changing Costa Rican migration context with the support of a local NGO**, as well as the achievements and challenges in immigrant integration, helped to produce new evidence to answer specific questions that arose during the different stages of the policy development cycle.
- In contrast to development of the first NIP, **academia, NGOs and migrant communities were closely involved** in the design and drafting process of the second NIP. The more systematic incorporation of these stakeholders helped to develop more targeted integration measures based on the best available evidence.
- The **peer-to-peer knowledge exchange** proved to be highly relevant. In particular, the exchange with local government experts from Spain was highly appreciated and provided the Costa Rican peers with concrete examples and a better understanding of the positive effects of well-designed integration measures to avoid exclusion of immigrants, and to counter negative developments with regard to public acceptance of immigration and social cohesion.
- The FSM was established by the General Migration Law in 2010. The funds are distributed among the DGME (40%), Ministry of Education (20%), Ministry of Health (25%) and the National Directorate for Community Development (15%). However, important governmental actors, such as the Ministry of Labour and non-governmental stakeholders, are not eligible for the FSM. Whilst this challenge could not be solved within the framework of this Action, **concrete recommendations on how to revise and adapt the FSM** were presented to the NCM.

Practices

- The policy development process was based on a **participatory whole-of-government approach** facilitating the inclusion of different policy fields and levels of governance in the design of the policy, ensuring accountability and transparency. NGOs, academia and international organisations contributed to research on the migration context and the shaping of the NIP during the workshops and consultations, not merely as consultative bodies but as actors with equal footing.
- The NIP has a **specific gender focus** and the gender dimension in migration is taken into consideration in the entire policy development process. Specificities and needs for migrant women, especially those who are victims of violence, were analysed and included as a thematic priority.
- **Buy-in from political level:** The CNM is the inter-institutional government body overseeing the implementation of the NIP and was therefore regularly updated about policy development progress.
- **Triangular cooperation:** The combination of national and local experts from EU MS facilitated vertical policy coherence. Based on the experience from Spain, participants enhanced their knowledge on how to define and follow common policy objectives and measures, as well as how to align systems of funding and quality assurance.
- **Creating regional synergies beyond specific Actions:** The Costa Rican DGME presented the NIP during a series of seminars on integration of migrants organised within the framework of support provided to the Mexican Government.
- **Sharing good practices beyond specific Actions:** For the European Development Days 2018, MIEUX organised the Project Lab *“Gender in migration policy making: between protection and empowerment”*. The 75-minute lab capitalised on MIEUX’s experiences in supporting migration policy making over the last ten years, analysing how policy making links migration and gender, and whether it is effective in addressing the needs and aspirations of migrant women and girls. The Costa Rican Integration Plan was presented as one concrete example.

Lessons Learnt

The involvement of the Ministry of Planning was a key element of success for practitioners working on policy development. In the case of Costa Rica, MIDEPLAN’s⁴ support was particularly useful when systematising input from the workshop and consultation, the design of the roadmap for implementation of the NIP and respective monitoring tools. The close involvement of MIDEPLAN and the dedicated planning departments/units of the various Ministries was also crucial in ensuring horizontal and vertical policy coherence.

⁴ MIDEPLAN is an advisory and technical support body of the Presidency of Costa Rica and is responsible for formulating, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the Government’s strategies and priorities.



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Since launching operations in 2009, the Migration EU eXpertise (MIEUX) Initiative has provided space to request capacity development activities and EU expertise, allowing the sharing of knowledge and practices between peers working in institutions in and outside of Europe.

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration and the creation of the UN Network on Migration coincided with MIEUX's ten-year anniversary. To mark the occasion, MIEUX undertook a comprehensive analysis of its achievements, methodologies and practices.

By delving into MIEUX's portfolio of over 100 interventions, this series of case studies intend to offer a glimpse of the broad range of tools, methodologies and approaches that can inspire or be used by governments and migration and development practitioners to advance a cooperative and sustainable international architecture of migration.