

National Advances on Green and Sustainable Construction in Costa Rica

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1. Introduction:

Since its endorsement of the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) at COP27, Costa Rica has acted decisively to align national policies with global commitments on climate action, including the Glasgow Declaration on Forest and Land Use. The Government has consistently promoted initiatives that balance conservation, sustainable use, and productive development within a circular and resilient forest-based economy.

Costa Rica is honored to be present at the Woodrise Congress 2025 in Canada and takes this opportunity to congratulate the organizers, particularly the Government of Canada, for their strong and technically sound leadership in promoting the use of wood in increasingly complex structural systems. This effort not only harnesses a natural, renewable, and resilient fiber with a high capacity for carbon storage, but also reduces the material footprint of the construction sector.

In addition, the Government of Costa Rica has maintained permanent communication with the country's private forestry sector, giving rise to a significant alliance that has enabled innovation and progress through the implementation of projects in the areas of traceability, industrial development, and building codes. This partnership has been essential in making possible the introduction of new forest policies and ensuring their effective implementation nationwide.

Despite the short period since COP27, Costa Rica has successfully initiated, advanced, and consolidated multiple initiatives that demonstrate national leadership in sustainable wood construction, responsible forest management, and climate-positive policies. These efforts place Costa Rica at the forefront of innovation in Latin America and support international agendas such as the UNFCCC negotiations and the forthcoming COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

2. National Code for Construction with Wood:

One of Costa Rica's most significant achievements is the launch of a technical process to establish the country's first National Code for Construction with Wood. This pioneering code—unprecedented in the region—provides the regulatory and technological framework necessary to ensure safe, competitive, and climate-positive construction using wood as a structural material.

In parallel, Costa Rica has initiated a Climate Change Code for the Construction Sector, an innovative instrument designed to measure, value, and calibrate both the positive and negative climate impacts of construction activities. This dual framework positions Costa Rica as the first country in the region to integrate climate impact metrics directly into construction regulation.

3. Secured Financing and International Cooperation:

Costa Rica has secured dedicated financing for these initiatives through the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev) plus the Green Climate Fund. This financial support strengthens technical execution, policy implementation, and stakeholder engagement.

Furthermore, Costa Rica is advancing coordination with the FAO's Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World (SW4SW) program, providing both logistical and potential financial backing for initiatives on traceability, transparency, and legality in the forest sector.

4. Strengthening Forest SMEs and the Value Chain:

Recognizing the central role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the forestry sector, Costa Rica has launched a capacity-building program designed to increase competitiveness, resilience, and local value generation. Training workshops will be held outside major urban centers to directly benefit rural communities and ensure equitable participation in the green economy.

These efforts are embedded within the new National Forest Policy, currently under discussion, which provides the guiding framework for forest conservation, production, and utilization in harmony with global climate goals.

5. Forest Traceability and Legal Timber Seal:

To ensure full transparency and legality across the value chain, Costa Rica is developing a National System for Forest Traceability, supported by the recent approval of a new Executive Decree (second semester 2025). This decree establishes a national monitoring mechanism and a "Legal Timber" seal, which will guarantee that all timber placed on the market complies with sustainable forest management standards and national laws.

This development reflects Costa Rica's commitment to align domestic regulation with international expectations for deforestation-free, transparent, and traceable supply chains.

These traceability and legality processes are also being linked to the implementation of Sustainable Agrolandscape Strategies, which include the agricultural production and forest-based materials that are verifiably free from deforestation. This integration ensures consistency between national forestry policies, international trade requirements, and climate-smart rural development goals.

6. Alignment with International Principles:

Costa Rica's actions are guided by the Principles for Responsible Timber Construction, developed under the leadership of Built by Nature and the FCLP:

- a. Extend the life of existing buildings by prioritizing renovation and reuse with low-carbon materials.
- b. Consider the full life cycle of buildings to minimize embodied carbon and environmental impacts.

- c. Ensure sustainable forest management, with materials sourced from responsibly managed forests.
- d. Maximize carbon storage through efficient and circular use of wood in long-lasting products.
- e. Promote a responsible bio-economy, fostering education, innovation, and cultural adoption of wood construction.

Costa Rica not only adheres to these principles but also actively promotes them internationally, encouraging adoption by other producer countries committed to transparency, traceability, and deforestation-free wood products.

7. Political and International Leadership:

Politically, Costa Rica remains an active and constructive partner in global climate governance, leveraging its unique historical achievement of reversing deforestation and achieving net forest recovery. The Government is firmly committed to zero deforestation, while at the same time promoting responsible production and sustainable use of forests in synergy with conservation.

Costa Rica has already incorporated green and sustainable construction into its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and is advancing the SCALE Project (Scaling Climate Action by Lowering Emissions), which integrates sustainable wood use into its climate commitments. These milestones reinforce Costa Rica's position as a trusted leader in the design and implementation of climate solutions.

8. Conclusion:

Costa Rica stands prepared to share these advances at Woodrise 2025 in Vancouver and to reaffirm its commitments at COP30 in Brazil. Through the integration of technical innovation, financial support, private sector engagement, and adherence to internationally agreed principles, Costa Rica is building a future of green, resilient, and sustainable construction with wood.

Our expectation is that these collective actions will inspire broader adoption across nations, particularly among producer countries, and strengthen global collaboration in the fight against climate change.

Costa Rica also calls upon Canada and other international partners to work jointly toward the development of a global market for sustainable, deforestation-free wood products. This includes promoting their use in civil construction while ensuring facilitated access to climate finance for Global South countries that seek to implement sustainable forest management and unlock the full potential of their forests as climate solutions.

Signed,

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