Costa Rica NDC & Carbon Neutrality

Overview

Field	Value
country	Costa Rica
ndc_version	Third NDC (2025-2035), submitted November 2025
ndc_target_2030	Max 11,380 Gg CO2e net emissions (incl. LULUCF)
ndc_budget	132,700 Gg CO2e cumulative 2025-2035 (~53% reduction)
carbon_neutrality	2050
last_updated	2026-05-26

National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050

Costa Rica published its Plan Nacional de Descarbonización in February 2019, becoming one of the first countries worldwide to present a long-term decarbonization strategy aligned with the Paris Agreement. The plan targets net-zero emissions by 2050, organized in three stages: initial (2018-2022), inflection (2023-2030), and massive deployment (2031-2050). It operates through 10 decarbonization axes and 8 cross-cutting strategies covering all major economic sectors.

NDC Sectoral Targets

Costa Rica's third NDC (2025-2035), submitted at COP30 in November 2025, establishes an economy-wide emissions budget with sector-specific mitigation contributions:

- **Energy:** Maintain and expand near-100% renewable electricity (historically ~95% from hydro, geothermal, wind, solar). Diversify away from hydro dependence given climate-induced drought risk. Biofuel mandate of 10% ethanol in gasoline.
- **Transport:** Electrify public transit as the top priority. EVs reached 12% of vehicle sales in 2023. Targets include zero-emission public bus fleet and expanded electric rail.

- **Agriculture & Livestock:** Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) for coffee, livestock, and rice. Sustainable agriculture practices, low-carbon livestock management, climate-smart crops.
- **FOLU (Forests & Other Land Use):** The LULUCF sector is a net carbon sink equivalent to over 20% of economy-wide emissions. The 2050 target requires more than doubling current sink capacity. Costa Rica pioneered Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) globally through FONAFIFO.
- **Waste:** Circular economy expansion, waste-to-energy, improved landfill management, methane capture.
- **Industry:** Clean manufacturing processes, energy efficiency in industrial operations, decarbonization of industrial heat.
- **Blue Carbon:** Emerging area in the third NDC — mangrove restoration, coastal wetlands, ocean-based climate solutions.

PES Pioneer

Costa Rica's Payments for Ecosystem Services program (Pagos por Servicios Ambientales), administered by FONAFIFO since 1997, is globally recognized as a model for conservation finance. It has channeled over USD 500 million to landowners for forest conservation, reforestation, agroforestry, and watershed protection. This program directly underpins several Cleantech Taxonomy nodes in the EX sector (PES platforms, community reforestation, agroforestry).

Climate Action Context

Costa Rica generates nearly all its electricity from renewable sources and has maintained forest cover above 50% through aggressive conservation policy. The Climate Action Tracker rates Costa Rica's overall climate targets as needing to be approximately 7% more ambitious to align with 1.5°C pathways. The country's unique challenge is transport — the sector accounts for the largest share of fossil fuel use and is the primary decarbonization frontier.

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