



ANNUAL WORK REPORT SITCA 2020

Ocho países *Una sola Región*



SITCA
SECRETARÍA DE INTEGRACIÓN
TURÍSTICA CENTROAMERICANA

30 años
 **SICA**
Sistema de la Integración
Centroamericana

© Annual work report 2020
prepared by the Central American Tourism
Integration Secretariat (SITCA)

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Annual Work Report | 2020

Central American Tourism Council (CCT)

Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration of Tourism (SITCA)



Mrs. Nicole Marrder

Secretary of State at the Tourist Office
of the Honduran Institute of Tourism (IHT).
President Pro Tempore of the CCT
January - June 2020



Mrs. Anasha Campbell

Co-General and Administrative Director of the
Nicaraguan Institute of Tourism (INTUR).
President Pro Tempore of the CCT
July - December 2020

PRO TEMPORE PRESIDENCIES 2020



On behalf of the Pro Tempore Presidencies of the Central American Tourism Council, corresponding in 2020 to Honduras **(January - June)** and Nicaragua **(July - December)** who were in charge of the Excellencies, Secretary of State in the Honduras Tourism Office Nicole Marrder Aguilar and the Minister of Tourism of Nicaragua Shantanny Anasha Campbell Lewis, we present below the institutional work report of the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA).

The achievements presented in the 2020 report subscribe to the actions developed by the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), as the executing arm of the Regional Tourism Council under the coordination of the Pro Tempore Presidencies of the Central American Integration System (SICA); in continuity of the regional tourism agenda and total adherence to the strategic actions agreed upon in correspondence to the presidential mandates and agreements signed by the eight-member countries: Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.

The Central American Tourism Council (CCT) appreciates the support provided by the technicians of the different National Tourism Authorities (ANT), Chambers and other partner entities for the development of the sector, housed inside and outside the regional organization of the Central American Integration System (SICA), as well as other international organizations and cooperants, who over the years have contributed, benefited and strengthened the SITCA and this important sector.

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I. GENERALITIES

ANNUAL WORK REPORT

Central American Tourism Council



The Central American Tourism Council (CCT) was created as an organ of the Organization of Central American States (“ODECA” acronym for its Spanish equivalent) following the VI resolution of the First Extraordinary Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Central America, held in San Salvador. At the aforementioned conference, the Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) was created to be governed by regulations to be prepared by the CCT.

The regulations were approved by the Executive Council of ODECA at the First Ordinary Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Central America held in Guatemala from October 25th 1965 - October 30th 1965, and SITCA regulations were approved at the third extraordinary session of the CCT on December 6th 1965 - December 7th 1965 in Managua, Nicaragua. The document was revised and approved before the Council with its modification during its LXXI ordinary session on January 11th, 2008.

Objetivos del CCT

- To facilitate and stimulate the development of tourism throughout the Central American region.
- To seek to remove all obstacles and impediments to the free movement of people in the region.
- To integrate the promotion of tourism as a state priority action in relation to other functions of the different government departments and agencies, both at the national and regional level, so the efforts concerning the development of tourism in Central America are effectively carried out.

SITCA

SECRETARÍA DE INTEGRACIÓN
TURÍSTICA CENTROAMERICANA



The Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA)

The Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) is the permanent regional office of the CCT and serves as the Council's operational body on issues of integration and tourism competitiveness. Its main function is to follow up on presidential mandates on tourism and the Council's agreements, with the aim to contribute to the Council's objectives.

SITCA was officially created, like the CCT, through Resolution VI in 1965 with its headquarters in the city of Managua, Nicaragua.

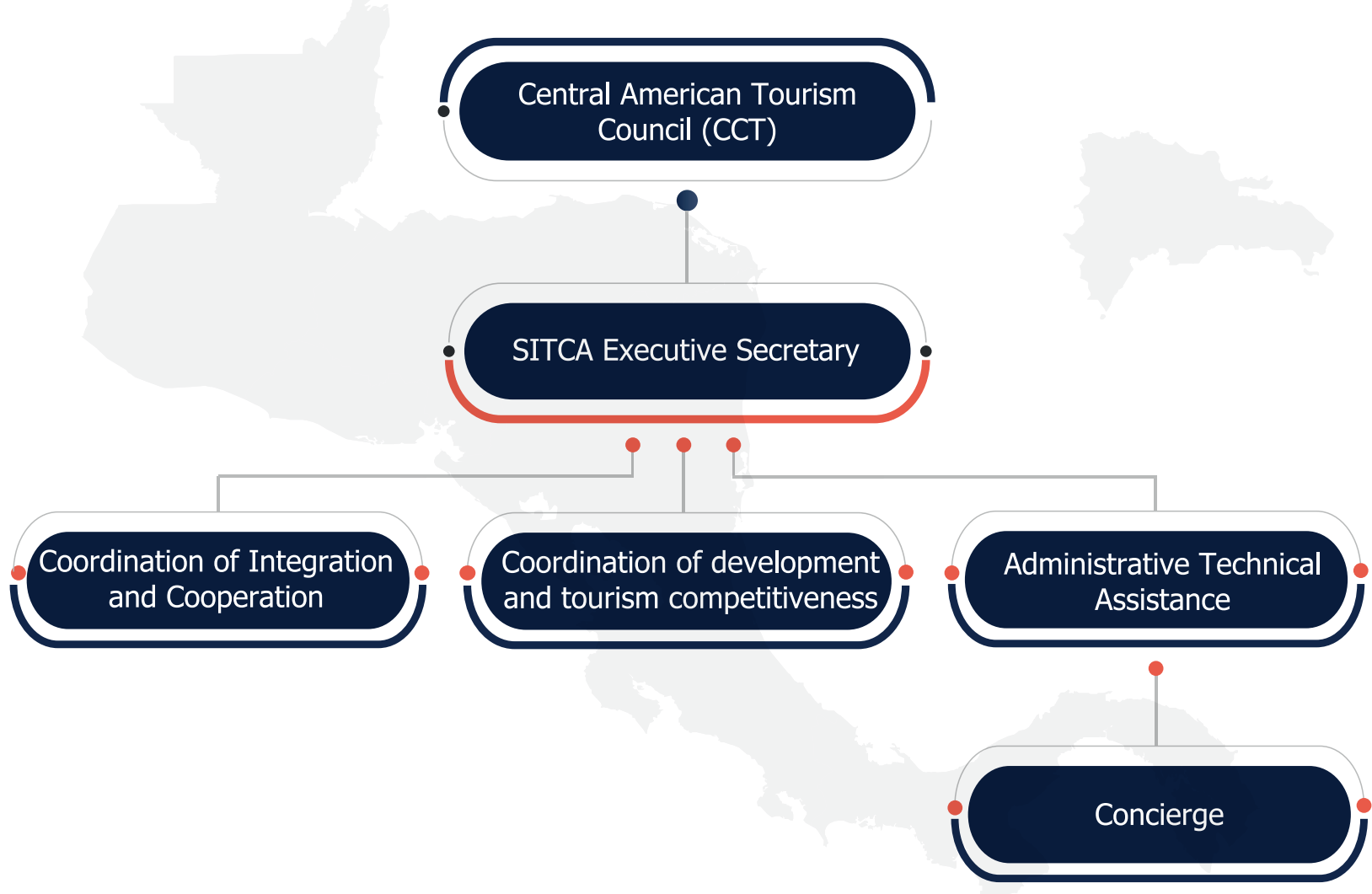
Background

In February 1965, an informal meeting of Central American Ministers of Foreign Affairs established the "Convention for the Unification of Central American Standards for the Promotion of Tourism", in which the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration was established for the first time as the official regional tourism body to promote and encourage the development of tourism in the area, and with broad powers to manage the support of governments and banking and financial institutions to achieve this objective. In the referred agreement its purpose, functions, assets and general dispositions were established.

In 1965, during the 1st Extraordinary Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Central America, held in San Salvador from March 29 to April 2, it was established by the VI resolution that the CCT would have a permanent office to be called the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA). Also, that it would have its permanent headquarters in the city of Managua, in the Republic of Nicaragua.

After 26 years in Nicaragua, following the orientation of the 1st Extraordinary Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, SITCA moved its headquarters to the building of the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System, where for many years served as the Directorate of Tourism of the General Secretariat of SICA (DITUR/SG-SICA) and the Technical Secretariat of the CCT (ST-CCT). It is in the period 2013-2014 when its original headquarters were reinstalled in the city of Managua-Nicaragua, where it is currently located.

SITCA staff and organizational structure





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II. SITCA's WORK AREAS

The strategies approved for the next five-year period are as follows:



The Promotion and Marketing area will be in charge of the Central American Tourism Promotion Agency (**CATA for its acronym in English**)

III. POLICY AND INTEGRATION

Cooperation and Participation

3.1 The Project "Strengthening Central American Tourism Integration and Promotion (Phase III)"

Delivery ceremony First disbursement

On January 15th, 2020, the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), on behalf of its Executive Secretary, attended the ceremony for the delivery of the first disbursement for the execution of the project "Strengthening the Central American Tourism Integration and Promotion (Phase III)," which was approved for a total of US\$ 1.5 million dollars during the XVII Meeting of the Joint Commission for Cooperation among the countries of the Central American Isthmus, amount to be delivered to SITCA in 4 disbursements of US\$ 375,000.00, programmed and approved by the Central American Tourism Council (CCT).



The ceremony was attended by His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Guatemala, Mr. Li-Cheng, Cheng; the Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC, Mrs. Claudia Herrera Melgar; the Vice Minister of Tourism of Honduras and Representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT); Mrs. María José Moncada; the Executive Secretary of SITCA, Mrs. Ilka Aguilar Valle; the General Secretary of SICA and President of Guatemala 1986-1991, Mr. Vinicio Cerezo; Government authorities, Ambassadors and representatives of the countries of the Region.

Project reorientation

The execution of the resources of the first disbursement was initially scheduled for the period from January to June 2020 and subsequently rescheduled, with an extension of 6 additional months given the global situation due to the COVID-19 outbreak and its rapid spread in the outbound tourism markets, especially in CATA's target markets, as well as the governmental regulations of the Central American countries and the international travel alerts issued for travel to the region.

In this regard, both the technicians and the National Tourism Authorities (ANTs) of the beneficiary countries considered it pertinent to request an extension of the execution time of the first disbursement to execute part of the actions programmed during the second semester of 2020, a request that was approved given the context of the pandemic.

In June 2020, based on the technical analysis conducted by the Taiwan Funds liaisons of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Ministers of Tourism of the four beneficiary countries of the project held a meeting to restructure the project activities and redirect the cooperation funds to carry out activities focused on supporting the recovery process of the tourism sector as a response and mitigation to the health crisis of COVID 19.

Activities Executed by SITCA during 2020

- Workshop on Smart Tourism Destinations, towards a reinvention and strengthening of Tourism Destinations.
- Statistics Workshop for the Updating of Operational Plans
- 3rd Workshop for the Strengthening of Tourism Satellite Accounts
- Construction of the Compendium of Tourism Statistics for the SICA Region 2019
- SITCA's website updated
- Preparation and bidding of TDR for seven project activities

3.2 First Annual Technical Meeting of the Sectoral Technical Committee of PRIEG-SICA's Axis 1: Women's Economic Autonomy

On January 23rd and 24th, the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration participated in the First Annual Technical Meeting of the Sectoral Technical Committee of Axis 1 of PRIEG-SICA: Women's Economic Autonomy, organized by the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and the Technical Secretariat of Council of Ministers of Women's Affairs of Central America and the Dominican Republic (ST-COMMCA), and made up of the bodies belonging to the SICA Economic Subsystem.

At the First Meeting, SITCA was involved in the review of the Results Framework of the Inter-Sectoral Equality Plan of Axis 1 of PRIEG-SICA, identifying actions that will achieve the goals established at the inter-sectoral level. During the meeting, the monitoring tool prepared by SIECA to support the follow-up of the activities defined among the participating agencies was presented.

This meeting strengthened the dynamics of inter-institutional and intersectoral work among the different agencies involved.



3.3 Meeting between the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT) and the General Secretary of UNWTO

The Pro Tempore President of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT) and Minister of Tourism of Honduras, Nicole Marrder, visited in February 2020 the facilities of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), located in Madrid, Spain, to seek mechanisms to strengthen the tourism industry in Central America.



3.4 SITCA's participation in Understanding Risk Central America



From February 12nd-14th, 2020, SITCA participated in Understanding Risk Central America 2020; the activity that took place at the Convention Center in San Jose (Costa Rica) sought to build strategic alliances between experts, organizations, academic institutions, and other key

actors to move from understanding risk to action in disaster resilience. Through regional collaboration and integration processes, UR Central America presented best practices and innovations for understanding disaster and climate risk and explored a wide range of topics, from disruptive technologies to community participation, with the objective that these can be used to improve disaster risk management (DRM) in the region.

The three-day program included four thematic axes with plenaries, workshops, and technical sessions, which were crowdsourced and shared innovative GRD/DRM approaches, climate change adaptation (CCA), and resilience building.

The coordination of the sessions counted with the collaboration of various countries, partners, and the UR community, to provide attendees with a combination of engaging debates, learning experiences, panels, round tables, interactive training, decision-making simulators, and workshops.

The Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration, represented by MSc. Katherine Vado was a panelist in two elements; fire and water promoted by ACH and CEPREDENAC, respectively.



FIRE: Social inclusion and cultural heritage

"Public-private partnerships in disaster risk management: An example applied to the Central American tourism sector."

The Panel's objective was to highlight the importance of public-private partnerships in risk management for the tourism sector and to discuss the challenges faced in promoting resilient and quality tourism in the region.

Katherine Vado, Tourism Development and Competitiveness Coordinator of the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), shared the sector's efforts to promote quality and resilient tourism in the region, including the SICCS seal (Central American Integrated System for Tourism Quality and Sustainability) and the incorporation of risk management criteria in the latter.





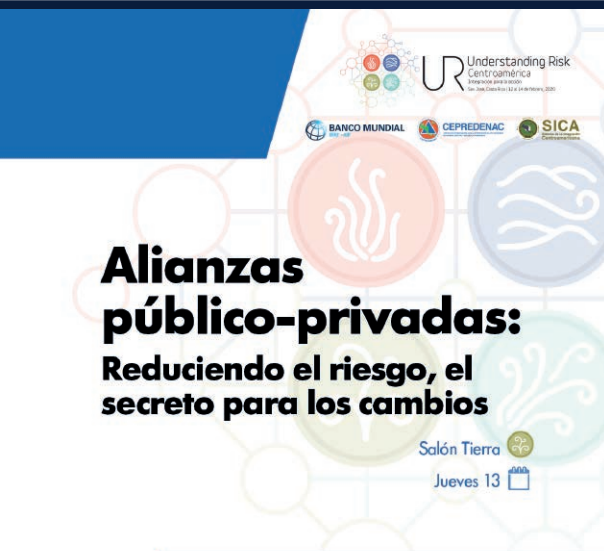
LAND: Fiscal and urban resilience

"Public-Private Partnerships: Reducing Risk, the Secret to Change."

This session shared innovative approaches in disaster risk reduction management to build resilient systems capable of predicting, analyzing, and evaluating disaster risk scenarios to protect and generate resilient businesses.

The panel emphasized the importance of the public-private partnership to mobilize disaster risk management and the business sector's commitment to work on this issue.

SITCA addressed the importance of identifying the private sector's needs, local coordination when there is an overload of tourists, generating prior actions based on planning and recognizing what must be done and how to transfer knowledge to entrepreneurs.



3.5 CXIII Regular CCT Meeting in Honduras, and El Salvador-Hondura PPT Handover Ceremony

Tourism authorities from the SICA region held the CXIII Regular Meeting of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT) on February 20th in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, led by the President Pro Tempore and Minister of Tourism of Honduras, Nicole Marrder, and in the presence of the Authorities and representatives of the National Tourism Administrations.

During the meeting, they welcomed SITCA's Executive Secretary, Ilka Aguilar, congratulating her swift incorporation to the Secretariat and wishing her many successes in her management.



El Salvador-Honduras PPT Handover Ceremony

At the end of the CXIII Regular Meeting of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), the official delegate to the CCT, Carolina Cerna, received recognition on behalf of the Minister of Tourism of El Salvador, Morena Valdez, for the work and objectives achieved for the benefit of regional tourism during the period July-December 2019, in El Salvador.

3.6 Participation in classroom course "Management for results with equity in the sustainable development of SICA regional policies and their paths."

On February 21st, 2020, SITCA attended the 1st training module, "Management by Results in the Sustainable Development of Integration Policies in the Region of the SICA Member Countries and its Challenges," organized by the Central American Integration System (SICA), an activity in which 18 institutions of the System participated.

SICA developed the "Results-Based Management Training Program with Equity in Central America" to implement a process with a Results-Based Management approach in development for SICA's institutions to strengthen compliance with the regional agenda.

The program was divided into four blended courses, which sought to identify the window of opportunity in SICA's institutional framework to promote management processes to formulate and implement regional policies, strategies, programs, and projects based on a results-based management model with a focus on equity.

This effort was made possible by the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Technical Secretariat for Women of the Council of Women's Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic (STM-COMMCA), and the Central American Institute of Public Administration (ICAP), with technical and financial support from the European Union (EU).





Conéctate en

SICA AL AIRE

Por una región de oportunidades

Centroamérica: La industria y el multidespino turístico después de la crisis

Presenta:
Olinda Salguero, Jefa de Gabinete de la Secretaría General del SICA

Invitadas:

Carolina Briones
Secretaría General de la Agencia de Promoción Turística de Costa Rica (GATC)

Ilka Aguilar Valle
Secretaría Ejecutiva de la Secretaría de Integración Turística Centroamericana (SITCA)

A través de **Webinar**
Miércoles 29 de abril
3:00 p.m.

Más información en:
www.sica.int/sicaaire
Inscríbete en: <https://bit.ly/2KyD3BF>

3.7 SICA live participation on the air with the theme: "The Industry and the Tourism Multidestination after the crisis."

SITCA's Executive Secretary, Ilka Aguilar, participated on April 29th in the interview "SICA radio live," conducted by the Chief of Staff of the General Secretariat of SICA, Olinda Salguero, where she reported that the region receives more than 24 million visitors and tourists, mostly from North America, because of COVID-19, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), predicted a reduction of visitors of up to 20% and 30%.

Secretary Aguilar highlighted that one of the programs available in the region, a tool that will contribute to the recovery sector after COVID-19, is the Central American Integrated System for Tourism Quality and Sustainability (SICCS). This seal will help the sector be more competitive in the market and have a certified tourism offer.

"What we are looking for is to use this existing platform, the Central American Integrated System for Quality and Sustainability, and enrich it with the biosecurity part; the seal that establishes Central America as a safe region, with an endorsement or COVID-Free, that all the conditions and security measures are in place so that our tourists feel safe," said SITCA Executive Secretary, Ilka Aguilar.

On the other hand, she also explained the need to work on a biosafety protocol that should be available in the region (developed by the tourism companies) and the importance of working in a coordinated and articulated manner as a region, where SITCA plays a vital role as a point of reference for the tourism authorities of the isthmus.



3.8 CXIV Regular CCT Meeting with the participation of the Regional Vice-President for the Americas of (IATA)

The Ministers of Tourism of the SICA Region held their CXIV Regular Meeting on June 4th, during which they defined priority projects to be managed to support the recovery of tourism in Central America.

The meeting was attended by the Regional Vice-President for the Americas of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Peter Cerdá, who presented to the CCT authorities the "Analysis of the Impact on Aviation and Post Covid-19 Industry Restart Plan".

The Central American Tourism Council (CCT) agreed to redouble its efforts in the coming months to work together with the competent authorities to improve air and land connectivity, critical factors in the recovery of regional tourism Post Covid-19.



3.9 Participation in the OAS Panel on the topic: Travel and Visa Facilitation in Times of COVID

To contribute and enrich the intersectoral work, the OAS organized virtual forums, in the form of round tables and webinars, with international experts' participation on all the topics that the current scenario proposes for brainstorming and inclusive debates, given the situation generated by COVID 19.

The Work Plan of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR) states that one of the main challenges to achieving regional tourism integration is to have travel policies that address visa facilitation, regional agreements, and improved services at points of entry. Since the travel restrictions imposed worldwide due to the emergence of COVID-19 and the health problems resuming travel, it has become even more important to find mechanisms to facilitate travel.

Within the Work Plan of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR) framework, a seminar was held on Travel and Visa Facilitation, a highly topical issue in the current situation. The National Tourism Authority of Panama and the OAS agreed on promoting a regional dialogue, considering it essential that both the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) and the Central American Tourism Promotion Agency join this initiative.

On June 9th, 2020, SITCA's Executive Secretary, Ilka Aguilar, presented the Integration System's progress in searching for strategies that will allow us to support both the public and private sectors, leading actions for the recovery of tourism.

The graphic is a blue and white invitation for a webinar. At the top, it features logos for OEA (with the slogan 'Más derechos para más gente'), Panamá, and SITCA (Secretaría Ejecutiva del Sistema de Integración Turística Centroamericana). Below the logos, a woman with red glasses and a black blazer is shown in a circular frame, with the word 'INVITADA' in a yellow box above her. To the left of the woman, the text reads '9 de junio 2020' in large white font, followed by '11:00 am (Washington, DC)'. Below the woman's photo, a white circle contains her name 'Ilka Aguilar Valle' and title 'Secretaría Ejecutiva. SITCA'. At the bottom left, the main title 'Facilitación de Viajes y Visas en tiempos del Covid-19' is written in large white font. At the bottom right, the word 'WEBINAR' is written in white capital letters on a dark blue background.

3.10 Participation in Webinar on Economic Reactivation of Tourism Facing the Challenges of COVID-19 (PARLACEN)

In June 2020, Ilka Aguilar Valle, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration, participated in the discussion: "Economic reactivation of regional tourism in the face of the new challenges of COVID 19", aimed at the main actors of the development ecosystem of tourism MSMEs in the SICA region, promoted by the Tourism Committee of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN).

The purpose of the discussion was to present the challenges and opportunities for tourism MSMEs in the economic reactivation of the SICA region, facing the new challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic, to which Secretary Aguilar Valle said: "There are many challenges and difficulties facing the region," among which we can highlight:

- A) Greater articulation and prioritization for the eight SICA Member States integration.
- B) Development of intersectoral intervention plans
- C) Strengthening of public-private alliances
- D) Quality and sanitation as priorities for recovery
- E) Promoting actions towards a Resilient and Sustainable Tourism
- F) Use of technology as a transversal axis
- G) Digital campaigns that motivate tourists to regain confidence.
- H) Webinars as a means of dialogue, strategic communication, knowledge transfer, and training to different sector areas.



3.11 Ordinary meeting of the CCT CXV



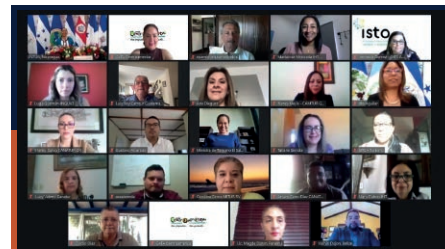
Central American Ministers of Tourism held a Ministerial Meeting on July 24th and the CXV Regular Meeting of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), under the direction of the Pro Tempore Presidency of Nicaragua in charge of Dr. Anasha Campbell Lewis.

The expanded CCT meeting was attended by the main actors of the public and private sector of regional tourism, accompanied by the Secretary of SITCA, Ms. Ilka Aguilar Valle, and Ms. Carolina Briones of the Central American Tourism Promotion Agency (CATA).

Honduras-Nicaragua PPT Handover Ceremony



Within the framework of the meeting, the handover of the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT) took place, with Vice Minister María José Moncada representing the Honduran Ministry of Tourism and Dr. Anasha Campbell Lewis, Minister of Tourism of Nicaragua, representing the Nicaraguan Institute of Tourism (INTUR).



3.12 SITCA-SIECA 60 years of Economic Integration Campaign



As part of the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Central American Economic Integration, SITCA, as part of the economic subsystem, actively participated in the Joint Campaign among the subsystem's entities, highlighting historical milestones and achievements in the past 60 years in the Central American tourism integration process.

3.13 Participation Panel “New Vision for the Reactivation of tourism in Panama and the region.” UDELAS



SITCA Executive Secretary, Ms. Ilka Aguilar, participated virtually on August 14th, 2020, as a speaker in a panel led by UDELAS under the theme: "New Vision for the reactivation of tourism in Panama and the Region."

3.14 Participation in Virtual Workshop and Launching of the Regional Report for Central America and the Dominican Republic "Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism."

On August 28th, the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) presented the report "Disaster Risk Management Diagnosis for Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism for Central America and the Dominican Republic.

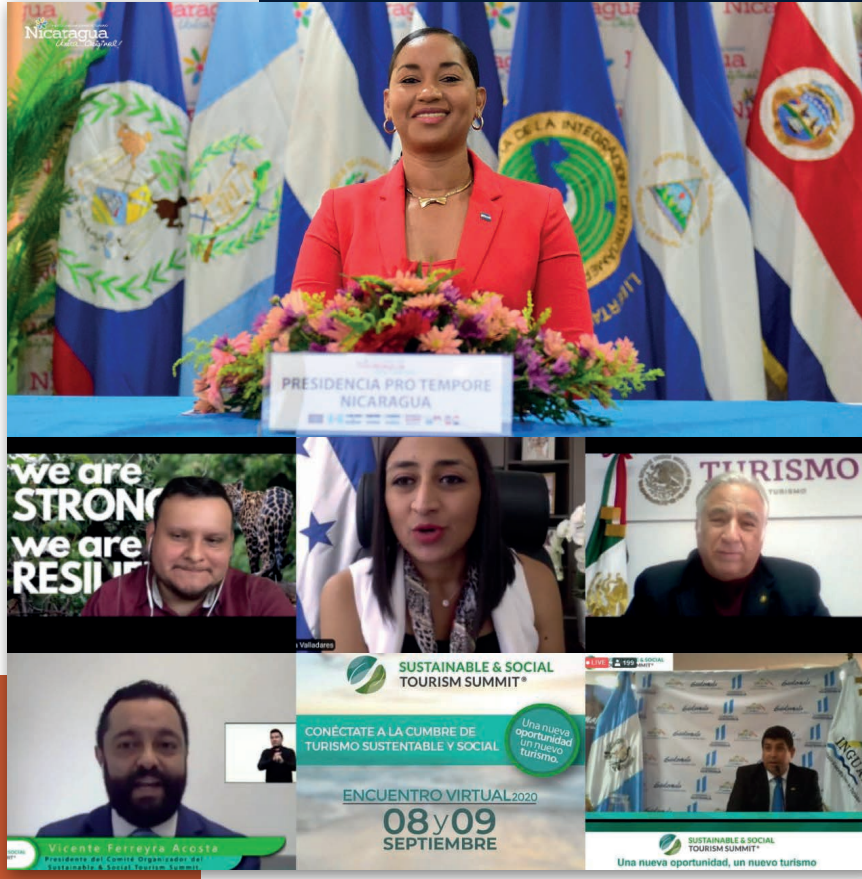
"This initiative has been developed in close collaboration with Carlos Staff, executive secretary, and Raquel Núñez Elizondo, coordinator of Risk and Environmental Management and assistant of the Technical Directorate of the Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination (CECC) of the Central American Integration System (SICA); Claudia Herrera, executive secretary of the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America the Dominican Republic (CEPRENAC), and Ilka Aguilar Valle, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA).

Through a multisectoral approach, the technical assistance focuses on helping to establish a space for interaction and cooperation and a pathway to manage disaster risks that threaten cultural heritage and tourism, including considerations regarding the unforeseen effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Central America and the Dominican Republic (SICA region). Concrete initiatives are designed to lay the knowledge base to promote new opportunities and further develop activities in the region to further strengthen DRM for cultural heritage.

Opportunities exist to promote heritage resilience and sustainable tourism around:

- A)** Strengthen the understanding of the risk to which cultural heritage and tourism are exposed and its relationship to social and economic resilience.
- B)** strengthen the coordination and articulation of existing processes between integral risk management, education and culture, and tourism at the regional and national levels.
- C)** Support processes for the reform and adoption of enabling national regulations that reinforce the framework of responsibilities of the cultural heritage and tourism sectors in relation to integrated risk management.
- D)** Identify and promote specific investments and projects aimed at the most vulnerable areas, activities, and communities.





3.15 Participation of high-level Tourism Officials in Sustainable and Social Tourism Summit

The Pro Tempore President of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), Dr. Anasha Campbell, inaugurated the Panel "Sustainable Tourism and Blue Economy in the Mesoamerican Reef," part of the Sustainable & Social Tourism Summit, held in the virtual format on September 8th and 9th, 2020.

The event was attended by high-level tourism officials who highlighted the SICA region's sustainability and social tourism efforts to advance regional tourism.

This effort was developed with the support of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) and SUSTENTUR of Mexico.

3.16 Participation in the Ibero-American Forum on Gastronomy, Food, and Sustainable Tourism



The Government of Panama, through the Tourism Authority, with the support of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), aware of all the challenges posed by the COVID-19 situation and convinced that solutions must be multilateral and cooperative, convened on September 9th and 10th, 2020 the Ibero-American Forum: "Gastronomy, Food, and Sustainable Tourism: partnerships for resilience during and after COVID-19", to facilitate the country as a "gastronomy hub" that allows the exchange of ideas, strategies and funding channels towards transformative solutions.

The forum's objectives were to contribute through cooperation to the recovery and sustainability of gastronomy, food, and tourism in the face of the impact of COVID-19; and support the formulation and implementation of the Ibero-American Gastronomy Plan and the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy towards the Ibero-American Summit.

Master Ilka Aguilar Valle, Executive Secretary of SITCA, presented at the high-level panel "Gastronomy and Sustainable Creative Destinations" Where will tourists go (to eat)? Together with international personalities from the Tourism Sector: Iñaki Gaztelumendi, SEGIB Advisor for the Ibero-American Strategy for Sustainable Tourism; Luis Guillermo Cortés, Vice Minister of Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, Peru; Fernando Valdés Verelst, Secretary of State for Tourism of Spain; and Alejandro Varela, Deputy Director of the Regional Program for the Americas, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

During her participation, the Secretary highlighted the importance of gastronomy as a tourist attraction, explaining the benefits of the regional tourism sector in terms of gastronomic tourism and the cultural potential as a cross-cutting attraction for the region's destinations.

3.17 Recognition plaque to Mr. Augusto Liao

SITCA, represented by its International Cooperation Coordinator, Gladis Argumedo de Gómez, presented on September 14th, 2020, in the city of San Salvador, special recognition to Mr. Hung Ta (Augusto) Liao, SICA-Republic of China (Taiwan) Project Advisor, for the technical support, cooperation and friendship shown to the regional tourism sector during his years of functions in Central America.

The Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration welcomed the new Taiwan Advisor to the Central American Integration System (SICA), Mr. Antonio Chen, and wished him every success in his new position.



3.18 The signing of the memorandum of understanding between SITCA- CEPREDENAC



The Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC), represented by its Executive Secretary, Claudia Herrera; and the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), represented by its Executive Secretary, Master Ilka Aguilar Valle, signed on September 17, 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding between both entities, establishing the general bases for technical collaboration to promote collaborative work in the area of integrated disaster risk management, thereby supporting the development of actions that contribute to the sustainability of the regional tourism sector, within the framework of the policies and strategies of both entities endorsed by the member countries of the SICA region.

The General Secretary of the Central American Integration System (SICA), President Vinicio Cerezo, acted as Honorary Witness of the Virtual Act of Signing of the Memorandum, highlighting his support and cataloging it as a successful example for the purposes and convictions of the SICA Region, given the Post Covid-19 situation, being an appropriate and correct response to contribute to face this stage and to advance in the recovery of the region.

“The signing of this Memorandum is an example of the steps we must take. To take advantage of our installed capacity, to use the experience accumulated during these years of working for resilience and intersectoral work; to consolidate the awareness and certainty that only together we will move forward and that consequently unifying efforts, knowledge, human and material resources in terms of our objectives, is the right path to follow to overcome the problems that the region is facing. I am completely sure that our Development Partners will appreciate this attitude that demonstrates the seriousness of our purposes and the commitment we have as a region with our peoples and governments,” said President Cerezo.

Among the Memorandum of Understanding, the objectives are to generate resilient hotels and tourist destinations, all within the framework of the policies and strategies of SITCA and CEPREDENAC, endorsed by the member countries of the region. Increase the resilience of tourism destinations vulnerable to disasters in Central America through public-private partnerships in disaster risk reduction management.

3.19 SITCA/TAIWAN Project Socialization Campaign

The Government of Taiwan, through the Ambassador of the Republic of China in El Salvador, Andrea S. Y. Lee, in November 2011 its support for the Central American Tourism Integration and Promotion project, which has been of benefit to the Medium and Small Tourism Companies, as well as for the communities of the Central American region.

This project is executed by the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), made up of the heads of this sector in the isthmus, through the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), to promote Central America as a single integrated tourism multidestination; facilitating mechanisms, channels, and contacts that allow the Central American tourism MSME sector access to target markets; supporting the positioning of the Central American tourism brand and products through efficient and effective communication actions; and strengthening Central American tourism integration institutions, among others.



The Republic of China Taiwan is currently financing for two years the project "Strengthening Central American Tourism Integration and Promotion (Phase III)," executed by the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), with the support of the Central American Tourism Promotion Agency (CATA), and in coordination with the National Tourism Authorities (ANT's) of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Federation of Tourism Chambers of Central America (FEDECATUR).

The main objective of the US\$1.5 million projects approved is to strengthen regional tourism integration and promotion by optimizing multidestination promotion and marketing campaigns, strengthening quality, competitiveness, and the institutional framework of the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA).

The infographic campaign for social networks aimed to inform readers about the most importance aspects of the project implemented in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, thanks to the support of the China Taiwan Cooperation, resulting in 2.4K people reached on SITCA's networks (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter).

3.20 Conversation Tourism and Rural Development "A look from the heart of Central America."



As part of the commemoration of World Tourism Day, the Central American Tourism Council, led by the Minister of Tourism of Nicaragua and President Pro Tempore of the CCT, Dr. Anasha Campbell, developed on September 29th, 2020, the virtual conversation called: "Tourism and Rural Development. A look from the heart of C.A."

The activity was attended by international guests from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), represented by its Director for the Americas, Alejandro Varela; from the International Social Tourism Organization (ISTO), represented by its Director for the Americas, Verónica Gómez; as well as the participation of Ministers and representatives of the National Tourism Administrations of Central America.

3.21 CXVI Regular CCT Meeting

The Central American Tourism Council (CCT), under the coordination of the Pro Tempore Presidency in charge of Nicaragua, held its CXVI Regular Meeting on October 14th. During the meeting, the participants learned about the progress of actions made in the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) to support the post-COVID-19 economic reactivation process.

Before this meeting, the Executive Committee of the Central American Tourism Council (CE-CCT) met on September 30th to analyze and make technical recommendations on new and current regional projects in execution, focusing efforts on the Central American tourism sector's re-activation.

On October 3rd, COMECATUR made progress in the analysis and recommendations of the "CATA Strategy and Action Plan for the Mitigation and Recovery of the region 2021-2023 in the face of COVID 19".



3.22 Central American Integration Day

On October 14th, 2020, SITCA's Executive Secretary, MSc. Ilka Aguilar Valle sent greetings on the occasion of Central American Integration Day:

"On the occasion of the month and reason of Integration from the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), we wish to reaffirm our commitment to the Central American Integration System, which allows us to share objectives and work together towards common goals. Thanks to our cooperating partners and strategic allies, both public and private, we have been promoting the brand "Central America, so small, so big" for more than two decades, among other projects to strengthen the quality, sustainability, culture, rural development and access for tourism MYPIMES, initiatives that promote development and income generation for SICA member countries and their communities." said Secretary Aguilar.

She also stated that: "Today more than ever, having the backing and support of an integrated system allows us to look to the future with hope, and as a Regional Tourism Sector we are sure to work in the right direction since only together we will move forward. To all Central American men and women, a cordial greeting, happy Integration Day."



3.23 Intersectoral Meeting of Women's Rights in Tourism COMMCA-SITCA



On October 26th, authorities of the Central American Tourism Council and the Council of Women Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic held the First Intersectoral Meeting "Human Rights of Women in Tourism," thus deepening the intersectoral coordination efforts between SITCA and COMMCA.

In the historic meeting, both councils established actions that will comply with the mandate of the Summit of Presidents of SICA, in the framework of the Regional Policy on Gender Equality and Equity (PRIEG/SICA) approved at the First Regular Meeting of SICA, held on December 14th, 2013, which reads: "Approve the Regional Policy on Gender Equality and Equity (PRIEG) and instruct the SICA institutions and the Council of Women Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic, in coordination with the General Secretariat of SICA, to establish the mechanisms necessary for its operability."

According to the World Tourism Organization, women represent 54% of the tourism workforce worldwide, and given that most of them work in informal jobs, they will be among the groups of women who will suffer the most intense economic blow that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in tourism. The CCT has taken into account the important role women play in the sector and has strengthened cross-sectoral collaborative measures to provide comprehensive, sustainable, and inclusive responses to enable women's development and empowerment in rural areas through tourism.

3.24 Construction Process of the Regional Strategy for Blue Growth

SITCA's Executive Secretary, Ilka Aguilar, and delegates from the regional public and private tourism sector participated on October 29th in the Tourism Working Group to identify and prioritize activities and goals for the fisheries and tourism sector within the framework of the Regional Strategy for Blue Growth in the SICA countries (ERCA/SICA).

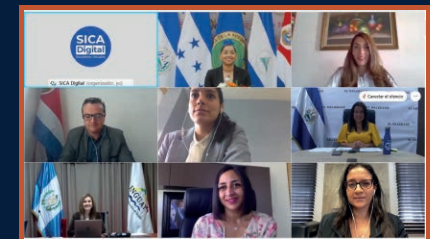
The meeting was attended by the national liaisons for the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the tourism liaisons, and the regional SICA bodies such as Cenpromype, COCATRAM, the Secretariat for Central American Social Integration, SE-COMISCA, STM-COMMCA, and SITCA.

The working group was constituted and will participate continuously in the follow-up and implementation of the ERCA / SICA.

3.25 CXVII Regular CCT Meeting

In compliance with the Plan of the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), in charge of Nicaragua, the Ministerial Meeting and CXVII Regular CCT Meeting was held on December 3rd, with the participation of the heads and representatives of the National Tourism Administrations (ANT's) and the private sector of the eight countries of the SICA Region.

Dr. Anasha Campbell, Minister of Tourism of Nicaragua and President Pro Tempore of the CCT, expressed her gratitude for the support and coordinated work carried out at the regional level during the second half of the current year, through which progress was made in carrying out actions and making the right decisions to reposition the regional tourism sector in the coming months.



3.26 Intersectoral Meeting of Ministers of Economy and Tourism

The central American Council of Ministers for Economic Integration (COMIECO) and the Central American Tourism Council (CCT) met on December 4th, 2020, to deepen and strengthen the coordination of intersectoral actions between the two Councils. Among the commitments established are the following:

- "Instruct SITCA and SIECA, with the support of SE-COMISCA, to prepare a proposal for biosecurity guidelines against COVID-19, for tourists traveling through the countries of the Central American region".
- "Instruct SITCA and SIECA to prepare and present a work plan for the approval of biosecurity guidelines in the tourism sector. For the development of this activity, the SE-COMISCA will be requested to assist".
- "To instruct SIECA and SITCA to prepare a proposal for a short, medium, and long term work plan for the corresponding intersectoral actions."
- "To hold at least a biannual intersectoral meeting between the CCT and COMIECO, to review the intersectoral work and advance in the definition of concrete proposals for strengthening the tourism sector."
- "Jointly manage the identification of funds for technical and financial cooperation to develop regional projects to strengthen the tourism sector."
- "Incorporate the tourism sector in work being developed within the framework of the Central American Strategy for Trade Facilitation and Competitiveness with Emphasis on Coordinated Border Management."

- "Instruct SIECA and SITCA to prepare a work plan proposal with common objectives and proposals for strengthening the tourism sector as an important pillar of the region's economies to be presented to the CCT-COMIECO intersectoral meeting."

This meeting was held following the instructions of the Summit of Presidents of SICA to work in an intersectoral manner among all the entities of the System.



CONDECORACIÓN A LA ORDEN DEL JAGUAR 2020



Gran Oficial

Este 18 de diciembre, SIECA en el marco de la celebración del 60 aniversario de integración económica, otorgó la condecoración Orden del Jaguar en el Grado de "Gran Oficial" a la Sra. **Olga del Pino Escobar** por ser un importante pilar en el avance del proceso de integración turística regional.








Olga del Pino Escobar
Asesora Principal del Fondo España SICA



CONDECORACIÓN A LA ORDEN DEL JAGUAR 2020

Orden del Jaguar en el Grado de "Gran Oficial" Galardonada: Olga del Pino Escobar. Por ser un importante pilar en el avance del proceso de integración turística regional.

"El Consejo Centroamericano de Turismo considero que Olga del Pino Escobar, es la persona idónea para recibir la Condecoración Orden del Jaguar, como un tributo a sus 14 años de continua dedicación, compromiso y entrega al proceso de integración Centroamericana y particularmente del Turismo en la región"








Dra. Anasha Campbell
Presidenta Pro Tempore del CCT y Ministra de Turismo de Nicaragua.

3.27 Order of the Jaguar Decoration

In the framework of the 60th anniversary of the General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration and as part of the inter-institutional coordination, SIECA and the Economic Integration Subsystem institutions developed on December 18th, 2020, the Order of the Jaguar 2020 Decoration.

Through an application from the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), Olga del Pino Escobar was awarded the Order of the Jaguar 2020 in the rank of Grand Official for her valuable contribution to the advancement of the regional tourism integration process and her support to the most important milestones of the Central American tourism sector.

The Pro Tempore President of the CCT and Minister of Tourism of Nicaragua, Dr. Anasha Campbell, on behalf of the Central American Tourism Council, indicated that Ms. del Pino was the ideal person to receive the award as a tribute to her 14 years of continuous dedication, commitment and contribution to the Central American integration process and particularly to tourism in the region.

IV. QUALITY AND COMPETITIVENESS



4.1 Courtesy visit to the Morito restaurant (Honduras)

On Monday, February 17th, 2020, SITCA Executive Secretary, MSc. Ilka Aguilar Valle paid a courtesy visit to the El Morito restaurant. An establishment that obtained SICCS certification under the green level, with a rating of 100%.

The SITCA Secretary was accompanied by the owner Lic. Andrés Erhler, the SICCS Honduras delegation and directors of the Honduran Tourism Institute (IHT), to whom thanks were sent for the deference shown.

4.2 Operational Considerations Campaign for the management of COVID-19 SITCA-WHO

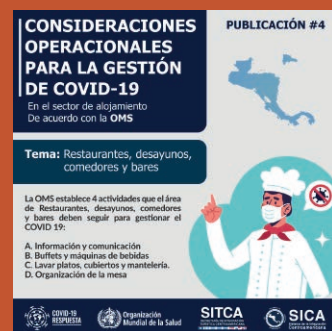
On March 31st, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) published the “Operational considerations for the management of COVID-19 in the accommodation sector,” being this an English version available in the global context. The document was addressed at collective tourist accommodation establishments, such as hotels and similar establishments, vacation and other short-stay accommodation, and camping areas.

The WHO presented, through a general guide, operational guidelines that would help any authority involved in the health area to respond to a public health event in hotels and tourist accommodation establishments, including the National Focal Point (NFP) of the International Health Regulations (IHR), local health authorities; the local, provincial and national health surveillance and response system.

Por su parte, la Secretaría de Integración Turística Centroamericana (SITCA), tradujo la información al público Centroamericano; adaptando infografías por temáticas especializadas y compartiéndolas en las redes sociales con el objetivo de que los empresarios turísticos y puntos focales nacionales a distintos niveles de intervención, pudieran seguir como medidas generales las recomendaciones emanadas y sugeridas por la OMS para la prevención y gestión del COVID-19.

A total of four major topics were published:

- **Topic 1:** Management Team
- **Topic 2:** Reception and Counseling
- **Topic 3:** Technical and maintenance services.
- **Theme 4:** Restaurants, breakfasts, canteens, and bars.



4.3 MIPYME Strengthening Program with Emphasis on the Regional Value Chain of the Tourism Sector



The Program to Strengthen MSMEs with emphasis on Regional Value Chains in the SICA region, executed jointly by the Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration (SIECA), the Foundation to Promote the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America

(CENPROMYPE), the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SCAC) and the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), have the general objective of contributing to the sustainable and inclusive development of the SICA Region, improving the competitive conditions of MSMEs for the generation of employment and income, through the complementarity of policies that allow productive regional articulation and the implementation of the Central American Customs Union.

The program is financed with the support of the Spain-SICA Fund, which is the instrument created jointly by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the General Secretariat of SICA to articulate Spanish support for the Central American regional integration process.

In 2020, the Regional Value Chain (RVC's) was formed, with the following general results:

IV. QUALITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

- Regional Market Study
- National and regional diagnostics
- Analysis of restrictions for the development of the RVC
- Analysis of Best Practices
- Proposed Action Plan with 11 programs
- Forty-seven strategies and 305 lines of action to be validated in 2021.

Selected segments:

Sun and Beach, Colonial.

Selected destinations:

Nicaragua

- Granada City
- San Juan del Sur.

Costa Rica

- La Cruz Tourist Corridor.
- Puerto Viejo Manzanillo.

Panamá

- Old Town.
- Pacific Riviera.

Dominican Republic

- Santo Domingo Colonial.
- Puerto Plata.



The mapping of the links in the region during 2020 allowed us to identify a total of 3,137 tourism companies distributed as follows:

Accommodation	Distribution	Transportation	Excursions
736	1,080	1,084	339
3,137 tourism companies in total			

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Regional estimate	35.0%	39.6%	15.1%	10.3%
	89.7%			10.3%

• Market Research Development

Travel and tourism surveys were developed, which made it possible to capture quantitative information promoted on websites and social networks of the National Tourism Authorities (ANT's) and regional authorities, to analyze the main link in the chain, the tourist, updating their consumption patterns and learning about their post-pandemic behavior.

Similarly, a Delphi method interview was used to gather qualitative information with actors belonging to the marketing link in the chain, which collects complementary information to analyze tourist behavior and preferences.

Each Delphi session was conducted with a minimum of 7 stakeholders in two asynchronous rounds, 65 participants completed the interviews, and the completion rate was above 90%.

- 414 effective surveys
- 646 surveys completed
- 95% confidence interval of the sample.
- 40 days for data collection
- 65 Delphi interviews in 2 sessions for each country

• Mapping and diagnosis of the Regional Value Chain

From July to August 2020, the main actors were selected to create the regional value chain in the four countries in coordination with each ANT, identifying 601 actors at the regional level.

On the other hand, COMIECO and CD-CENPROMYPE focal points were included in the process, with a multi-sectoral approach at the regional level that will complement the MSME actors in constructing of the chain.

On August 31st, the actor's interviews were completed, and on September 9th, the report was delivered to ANT's for validation.

Throughout the process, 164 actors from the main links of the regional value chain in the eight destinations were interviewed, obtaining 420 hours of interviews in the following thematic areas:

- 1) Mapping and characterization of the chain.
- 2) Elaboration of economic and multilevel analysis.
- 3) Systematization of bottlenecks.
- 4) Restrictions to the development of the Regional Value Chain.

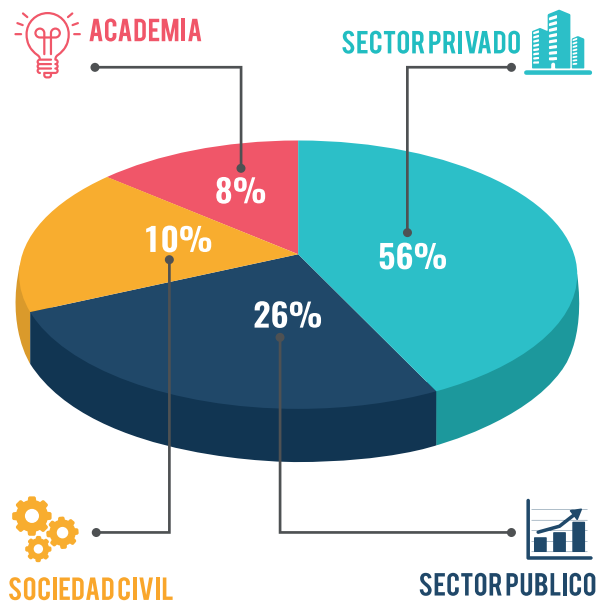
Results:

164 effective interviews obtained
Identified 266 potential stakeholders
50 questions were asked per Company

It is important to highlight that the RVC seeks to build a governance model based on the triple helix of development, with the following characteristics:

- Public-private-academy articulation
- Regional scale-up of implementation
- Coordination with cooperation agencies





• National and Regional Dialogue Spaces

Sector representativeness

The program's methodological guide developed jointly by ECLAC, SIECA, and CENPROMYPE stresses the importance of validating the main diagnostic findings in "national and regional dialogue spaces" among the chain's main actors to validate the results and develop the program's governance and sustainability in the long term.

The following is a graphic representation of the sectors in the first dialogue spaces:

Results:

- 266 Participants in 4 national spaces.
- 68 Participants in regional space
- 20 Restrictions validated.
- Minimum methodological attendance exceeded

• Documents completed during 2020

- Executive Report CRV Diagnosis in each country and region
- Summary infographic for each country
- Smart paper for validation of restrictions in each country
- Complete CRV Diagnostic Report for each country
- CRV Regional Report and Market Study



4.4 First Nicaraguan company to be SICCS certified (Mi Viejo Ranchito)

The Restaurant, "Mi Viejo Ranchito," located at kilometer 39.5 of the Masaya to Catarina highway, received on June 19th, 2020, the certificate of the Central American Integrated System of Quality and Sustainability (SICCS) under the green category as the highest distinction of the seal, promoted by the Central American Tourism Council (CCT) and designed to suit the tourism MSMEs in the region. The Restaurant was the first Nicaraguan company to receive the Central American seal, thus becoming a historic milestone for the country.

The certificate's delivery to "Mi Viejo Ranchito" was carried out by members representing the Technical Certification Committee, made up of various Nicaraguan public institutions and private sector authorities.

María Auxiliadora Umaña, head of Tourism Quality Registration and Management of the Nicaraguan Tourism Institute (INTUR), pointed out that "the objective of this platform is to strengthen the quality of service of MSMEs and make them more competitive in the tourism market."



4.5 Meeting of the First Regional Dialogue Space of the Regional Tourist Value Chain

On October 28th, 2020, the First Regional Dialogue Space of the Regional Tourist Value Chain of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic was held virtually; meeting that had the virtual participation of more than fifty participants from the public and private sectors, civil society, regional bodies and the academic sector of the countries of the SICA region.



The First Regional Dialogue Space for the Tourism Value Chain is an effort developed within the framework of the Program to Strengthen MSMEs with an Emphasis on Regional Value Chains, which is co-executed by the Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration (SIECA), Foundation to Promote the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America (CENPROMYPE), the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SCAC) and the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration, with the support of the Spain SICA Fund.

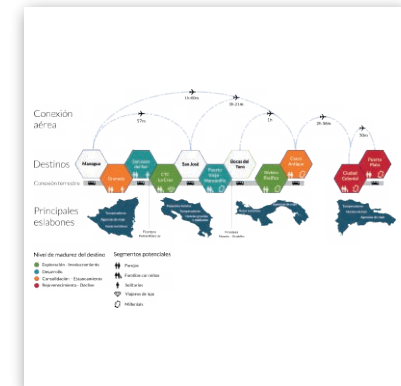
The activity was inaugurated by the Minister of Tourism of Nicaragua and President Pro Tempore of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), Dr. Anasha Campbell; the Minister of Development, Industry, and Commerce of Nicaragua and President Pro Tempore of The central American Council of Ministers for Economic Integration (COMIECO), Mr. Orlando Solórzano; the principal Advisor of the Spain-SICA Fund, Ms. Olga del Pino; and the Executive Director of the Foundation to Promote the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America (CENPROMYPE), Mr. David Cabrera.



In 2020, four national dialogue spaces were held (one for each country in the pilot plan), allowing the sharing and validation of information related to the chain's diagnosis and the strategies to be developed, creating the necessary consensus and solving the bottlenecks found in a participatory.

4.6 RVC Disclosure Campaign

To inform the general population about the Program to Strengthen MSMEs with emphasis on the Regional Value Chain executed with the FES Fund, a campaign to publicize the program was carried out in 2020.



4.7 Workshop on Smart Tourist Destinations

The global tourism environment is in constant transformation, mainly based on socio-economic and environmental changes with a strong technological component. The Smart Tourist Destination model is precisely designed to address the necessary changes that cities should face in the coming years from an integrative perspective.

According to SEGITTUR, an smart tourist destination is "An innovative tourist space, consolidated on a cutting-edge technological infrastructure, that guarantees the sustainable development of the tourist territory, accessible to all, that facilitates the interaction and integration of the visitor with the environment and increases the quality of their experience in the destination and improves the quality of life of the residents."

Betting on a development model based on the Smart Tourist Destinations methodology will bring many benefits for all the actors that make up the destinations' tourism system. These benefits include:

- Leadership in the transformation of the destination with a powerful demonstration effect.
- Creation of synergies and efficient use of resources.
- Improvement of the collaborative culture and local tourism policy to improve destination governance.
- Improved positioning of the municipality thanks to the development of a pioneering project worldwide
- Generation of an innovative culture both in the administration and in the local business fabric.
- Increased tourism competitiveness.
- mprovement of the tourist experience as a whole.

INVITACIÓN
TALLER DE FORMACIÓN
 Semana de Destinos Turísticos Inteligentes
 Del 5 al 9 de octubre

Destino Turístico Inteligente

- Una semana de formación Online
 - Con la participación de especialistas internacionales
 - Bajo la Metodología de SEGITTUR España

NICARAGUA PRESIDENCIA PRO TEMPORALE 2020 GRINN SEGITTUR SITCA SICA

During the week of October 05th-09th, 2020, the Smart Tourist Destinations Workshop was held virtually, with the participation of 27 international exhibitors under the coordination of SEGITTUR Spain.

The event was attended by more than 70 actors from the public-private sector of the region's tourism sector.

During the week-long workshop, the different application axes were addressed; governance, technology, innovation, sustainability, and accessibility. Also, the latest trends and best technological practices for the development of a smart tourist destination.

Workshop results:

- Acquired innovation tools to promote the improvement and performance of professionals and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector and update their knowledge according to the latest tourism trends for individual, social, cultural, and economic development and management of tourist destinations.

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- Knowledge of the latest tourism trends to promote a culture of tourism identity and digital transformation.
- Established measures of good sustainable practices, social and cultural inclusion, and local development as a source that generates economic value.
- Acquired knowledge on the guidelines for the development of innovation of the tourism product in all its areas and maintaining the vision of sustainability.

During the first week of November 2020, certificates were awarded to workshop participants.



4.8 Strengthening the SICCS seal

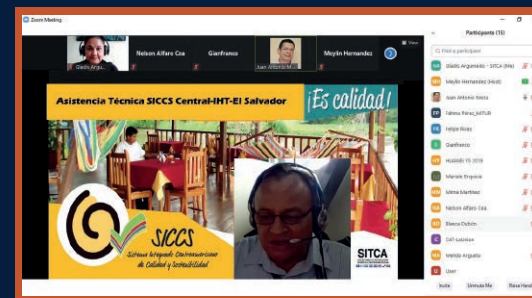
SITCA, in coordination with the Honduran Tourism Institute (IHT), a counterpart of SICCS Central under an agreement signed in 2019, developed the training and advisory actions rescheduled with the countries in a virtual format.

The COVID-19 pandemic contingency kept programmed actions on hold during the semester due to travel restrictions and epidemiological surveillance established by the SICA countries, aiming to preserve the safety and human life.

At the end of the second semester of 2020, the following virtual training was provided by IHT technical specialists:

- **Sessions with Belize (3 days):**
August 19th, 20th and 21st, 2020
Achievements: 21 employees of the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation of Belize were trained.
- **Sessions with Nicaragua (4 days):**
August 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, 2020
Achievements: 5 employees of the Nicaraguan Institute of Tourism were trained.
- **Sessions with Panama (4 days):**
October 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd, 2020
Achievements: 10 employees of the Panama Tourism Authority and specialized consultants were trained.

- **Sessions with Guatemala (4 days)**
November 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th, 2020
Achievements: 19 employees of the Guatemalan Tourism Institute and the SICCS Guatemala Delegation (private sector and academic) were trained.
- **Sessions with El Salvador (4 days)**
November 3rd, 4th, 26th and 27th, 2020
Achievements: 17 collaborators of the Ministry of Tourism of El Salvador and external consultants were trained.



4.9 CCASTUR Meetings

CCASTUR Annual Workshop:

On August 12th, the Committee of Central American Tourism Quality and Sustainability (CCASTUR) held its regular meeting, making joint progress towards improving the SICCS Regional Tourism Quality Seal given the new Post COVID-19 context.

Among the agreements reached, the following stand out:

1) To request the formation of a petit committee to develop a new module based on the Biosafety Protocols for the Economic Reactivation of the Tourism Sector Post COVID-19, designed and implemented by the SICA countries, which will be proposed for integration into the SICCS.

2) Request that SITCA/SICCS Central be instructed to issue a term extension communication (maximum of one year) for the validity of certifications of authorized auditors, which will allow ANT's to comply with the requirements set forth Recertification Procedure during this period.

3.) To request approval of the SICCS Central work plan, period 2020-2021.



4.10 E-commerce for the improvement of competitiveness and MSMEs tourism recovery



Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), accompanied from October 27 to November 13, 2020, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the coordination and execution of national focus groups that are part of the Digital Maturity Diagnosis of the Central American tourist MIPYMES, of the Project: "E-Commerce for the improvement of the competitiveness and recovery of the tourist MSMEs of the Central American region".

The eight Co-Creation Workshops held in a virtual format with public and private sector actors from Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic led to the preparation of a diagnosis of the challenges faced by tourism MSMEs in the SICA region to take advantage of e-commerce in their productive activities, thereby allowing the design of a roadmap for achieving the intelligent use of e-commerce in tourism MSMEs in the Central American region.



V. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

5.1 Workshops on Strengthening Tourism Satellite Accounts

The workshop project's main objective related to the implementation of the Tourism Satellite Account in the countries of the region is institutional strengthening focused on public and private entities, their working groups, and inter-institutional committees that work in the measurement knowledge of tourism activity in each territory.

The workshop approach is to provide countries with theoretical and practical knowledge in each of the areas measured by the System of tourism statistics (STS). The theoretical knowledge is based on the follow-up of existing reference manuals for tourism measurement and statistics in general, while the practical knowledge is mainly based on the examples of good practices successfully developed in the rest of the countries of the region. This workshop project is being resumed when the tourism activity is suffering its most important crisis due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19. This scenario provokes the sector's agents to ask for information to answer new questions.

On August 12th, 2020, SITCA hired UNWTO statistics specialist Kepa Aramburú to give continuity to a series of regional workshops initiated in March 2016 to strengthen statistics and market research teams of national tourism administrations and the implementation of tourism satellite accounts (TSAs).

The contract contemplated the facilitation of a cycle of 5 workshops for the period 2020-2021; the main result allows the creation of an operational plan so that each country can know the current situation of the Tourism Statistics Systems concerning the requirements information of the TSAs. This

operational plan allows SITCA to follow up and control the progress made in each country to comply with the presidential mandate for the elaboration of a Tourism Satellite Account.

● Workshops held during 2020

► Workshop to update operational plans

During the week of September 22nd-25th, 2020, the Workshop to update the operational plans was successfully held, with approximately 30 of the heads of Statistics of the ANT's, Central Banks, and Central American Migration and Immigration Directors participated.

Workshop objectives:

- Update of the operational plans made after the first workshops in 2017.
- Update of the Demand Statistics' improvement processes and progress in the compilation of tables 1, 2, and 3 of the TSAs.
- Introduce sessions on economic impact measurement exercises based on the TSA, new sources of information, and the tourism observatory.
- Identify topics to be discussed in more depth in the following workshops to be held during 2020-2021.

Topics addressed:

- Methodologies in the countries
- Destination surveys
- Other sources of information to characterize or estimate spending.
- Changes in the collection protocol in the border survey due to the COVID-19 issue and reactivation of the survey.

Workshop Technical Results:

- Updated operational plans made after the first workshops in 2017.
- Improved Demand Statistics and progress in the compilation of TSA tables 1,2, and 3.
- The new sources of information for expenditure surveys are known.
- Identified the topics to be studied in depth in the following workshops.
- Defined the sources of information to characterize and estimate expenditure.
- Established the changes in the collection protocol for the border survey due to the COVID-19 issue for the reactivation of the survey.

► 3rd Workshop for the strengthening of TSAs

From November 23rd to 27th, the 3rd Statistics Workshop was held to strengthen the Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA).

Workshop objectives:

- Presentation, follow-up, and discussion of the roadmaps by country, in the areas updated at the September 2020 workshop.
- Theoretical training on fundamental aspects for preparing Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the TSA.
- Response to doubts and comments from country technicians on theoretical aspects and their practical application
- Individual presentations from each country on:
 - El The current status of the elaboration of Tables 4 and 5.
 - Practical experiences used to cover certain key aspects.
- Identification of topics to be addressed in the next workshop to be held in March 2021.

Topics addressed:

- Further information sources and imputation methods for tourism services to be included in table 4 (accommodation services in second homes, individual social transfers in kind for tourism, other imputed services).
- Measurement of tourism supply normally carried out by Central Banks or National Statistical Institutes as part of the overall National Accounts project.

- Practical exercises based on real experiences in those countries with Table 5 published.

Workshop results:

- Summarized the current situation in 2020 for each country in relation to the statistical operations that investigate tourism demand.
- Trained participants on the flow of tasks to be performed in elaborating tables 1, 2, and 3.
- The basic source of information for Table 5 has been addressed: the supply and use tables.
- Identified COUs and other aspects to be taken into account in Table 5.
- Identified the tasks to be committed for the elaboration and updating of table 5.
- Strengthened participants on the use of TSAs (Key indicators in Table 5).
- The key conceptual aspects to be taken into account for the elaboration of table 4 have been identified.



5.2 Approval of the Internal Control manual, Organization of Functions, and Third-Party Agreements Manual

► Manual of Internal Control

The Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), as the main body responsible for guaranteeing an adequate Internal Control System, in 2020 proposed the Internal Control Standards Manual, which contains the minimum internal control standards that officials must adopt in the development of activities related to the work of the SICA General Secretariat, Sectoral Secretariats such as SITCA and its Cooperation Projects.

The Manual was approved on June 4th, 2020, during the CXIV Regular Meeting of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), through agreement N°8.

This Manual serves as a clear and systematic guide to guarantee the optimization of the processes developed in SITCA to maximize the resources available under the transparency required in each of them, promoting the good administrative and technical development required.





► SITCA Organization and Functions Manual

SITCA prepared the Organization and Functions Manual with the purpose of establishing a technical, regulatory, and administrative instrument of institutional management that allows describing and establishing the specific functions, authority, dependency, and coordination relationships of the organizational structure; as well as the requirements of the positions or jobs that make up the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) to standardize and make its operations more efficient. The Central American Tourism Council (CCT) approved the Manual on June 4th, 2020, during the CXIV Regular Meeting, through agreement N°8.

5.3 Approval of SITCA's Code of Ethics and Conduct

The Central American Tourism Council (CCT), at its CXVI Ordinary Meeting, held on October 14th, 2020, approved the SITCA Code of Ethics and Conduct through agreement N°9.

This code defines a set of ethical principles and conduct that seeks to guarantee an adequate professional practice of the collaborators of the Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration SITCA, under the ethical values of the SG-SICA.

The aim is to establish conduct protocols as a regional office in the tourism field, joining efforts for greater professional development of its collaborators with commitment, ethics, and transparency in the work processes.



Construction of the PEDTS 2021-2025 (For its acronym in Spanish)

Phase III of the "Strengthening Central American Tourism Integration and Promotion" Project, under the cooperation of the Republic of China-Taiwan, is aimed at supporting the actions contained in the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in Central America (PEDTS) 2014-2018, which is part of a vision and values agreed upon and shared by the Central American Tourism Council (CCT), following the public, private and social sectors of the region. This plan seeks to contribute to increasing tourism activity and the generation of income and jobs, to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of its inhabitants, through a competitive and differentiating offer, which combines diverse multi-products, multi-destinations, and experiences, as well as the valuation and preservation of its natural and cultural heritage. The Plan focuses on results in quantitative and qualitative terms to achieve significant increases in tourism flows, which impact the generation of income and employment, optimizing overall tourist satisfaction for the multi-destination.

The CCT, with the support of its Secretariat for Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA), has been following up on the Strategic Plan, recognizing that the sector is facing new realities and challenges that require updating and incorporating the priorities currently being faced in the coming years. For this reason, the CCT, working in coordination with SITCA, determined the need to carry out the Consultancy for the "Facilitation, Construction and Finalization of the Strategic Plan (PEDTS) 2021-2025". To this end, in November 2020, specialized technical assistance was contracted for the facilitation, construction, and finalization of the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development 2021-2025, and following the contract, on November 9, a ministerial meeting was held for the approval of the basic guidelines for the construction of the plan.



5.5 2020 Publications



VI. GLOSSARY

- ANT**
National Tourism Authorities
- AECID**
Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
- CATA**
Central America Tourism Agency
- CCT**
Central American Tourism Council
- CCAD**
Central American Commission for Environment and Development.
- CCASTUR**
Committee of Central American Tourism Quality and Sustainability
- CEPAL**
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- CENPROMYPE**
Foundation to Promote the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America
- CEPREDENAC**
Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America
- COMECATUR**
The Central American Tourist Committee
- COMIECO**
The central American Council of Ministers for Economic Integration
- COMMCA**
Council of Ministers of Women's Affairs of Central America and the Dominican Republic

VI. GLOSSARY

FEDECATUR

Federation of Tourism Chambers of Central America

SSF

Spain SICA Fund.

IATA

International Air Transport Association.

UNWTO

World Tourism Organization

WHO

World Health Organization.

ISTO

International Social Tourism Organization.

PEDTS

(For its acronym in Spanish) Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in Central America

PPT-CCT

Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Tourism Council.

SECAC

Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council.

SIECA

Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration



ANNUAL WORK REPORT SITCA 2020



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