

## Place Brand of the Year



### Our Brand Essence

#### *essential Costa Rica*

Costa Rica is renowned for the clear vision that led the country from an underdeveloped nation to a world-wide example of social progress based on education, health, and a no-army national policy since 1948. However, strong visions need constant reinterpretation based on the core values that represent the real country's social consensus. That's why, on the verge of Costa Rica's bicentennial as an independent nation, the country needs to focus on making the decisions required to lead a new social pact that drives the next century and guarantees constant and fair development. The 2018 presidential elections represented a political breakthrough for the country. The sharp political-ideological divisions made clear that now, more than ever, a clear values-frame is needed to lead the path of the nation. So, in the shift of a new government, the country's brand team - Essential Costa Rica - were presented with the opportunity to endorse a strong, consented, and proven vision to lead the path of the new administration. However, how could the Costa Rica country brand be seen as more than a marketing campaign and become the core of the national consensus for the new century?

The strategy consisted of working with the new government to make them understand the brand as a strategic values framework, and also as a tool to streamline the planning of the entire administration. That ambitious strategy is only possible through the strong foundation and trajectory of the brand. Since its release in 2013, the country team has had three government shifts without being asked to adopt any fundamental changes in its vision and objectives. However, more important than that, the brand's institutional committee formed by five key institutions (ICT - Tourism Board, CINDE - Investment Promotion, PROCOMER - Exports Promotion, MCJ - Ministry of Culture, COMEX - Commerce Promotion, and External Affairs Ministry -

Diplomacy) makes its decisions based on the brand's core values.

That vision placed Essential Costa Rica as a real decision-making tool, leading the successful management of the institutions under its influence. The Trade Promotion Agency has been recognized as the world's best four years running. In 2017, the country's exports grew by 8 percent, the highest growth of the last five years. The Investment Promotion Agency's work contributed significantly to placing Costa Rica as the number one technology exporter in Latin America, being recognized as the best investment promotion agency of the world for two years in a row. Since 2014, the country's annual visitation rate has steadily grown due to the direct action of the tourism board. Hence, it has been acknowledged as the Central Americas and Mexico's best tourism board two years in a row. That background was the key to promoting the idea of creating a country plan based on the brand's values.

In 2018, with the election just finished, the brand's team began an inter-institutional tactical approach to demonstrate the importance of putting the brand's values-frame at the core of all the administration's plans. This led the team to the office of First Lady, Claudia Dobles Camargo, whose role is crucial for the current administration. Recognized by Fortune as one of 2019's World's Greatest Leaders, Claudia Dobles, leads the technological conversion of Costa Rica's entire transportation system and oversees the whole administration sustainability strategy. So, for her, a total believer of Essential Costa Rica's values, it was natural to align her flagship project to the country brand. That's how the most crucial nationwide project for the next 30 years became part of Essential Costa Rica's vision: the country's total decarbonization by 2050.

Therefore, the administration's vision for the project is that



total decarbonization can only be possible through the constant application of the team's five core values: Sustainability as a goal. Excellence as a guide. Innovation as a tool. Social Progress as an effect. Costa Rican Origin as the role model.

The implementation of the project included a series of coordinated actions between multiple institutions to align, structure, and present the final version of the 2050 total de-carbonization plan.

It included inter-institutional meetings and work sessions, as well as side by side work with the First Lady's and the President's offices - crucial to elaborate on the aligned de-carbonization plan. There have been a series of national activations to promote citizen participation and contribution to the initiative. Central to everything is the team's ongoing brief to communicate the plan to the international community and to promote the initiative as a crucial world challenge, presenting Costa Rica as a role model for the endeavour. A fundamental part of the brand is the Essential Costa Rica license which when granted, guarantees that business, events, and institutions follow the values-frame expressed as a series of guidelines and actions.

The most important result came at the February 24th, 2019 presentation of the "National de-carbonization plan, 2018-2050". An entirely Essential Costa Rica aligned plan, stating a nationwide commitment to be free of all carbon-emitting activities in the next 30 years. That's without a doubt, the country's most important national goal since the 1948 army abolishment. The team at essential Costa Rica have therefore demonstrated how a country brand becomes much more than a marketing strategy. Their contribution has proven to be crucial to the nation's destiny and its global impact. ●

