

Municipality of La Cruz (Costa Rica) |
PROFILE 2022

MIGRATION

GOVERNANCE

INDICATORS

LOCAL



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Publisher: International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons
P.O. Box 17
1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel.: +41.22.717 91 11
Fax: +41.22.798 61 50
Email: hq@iom.int
Internet: www.iom.int

With research and analysis by

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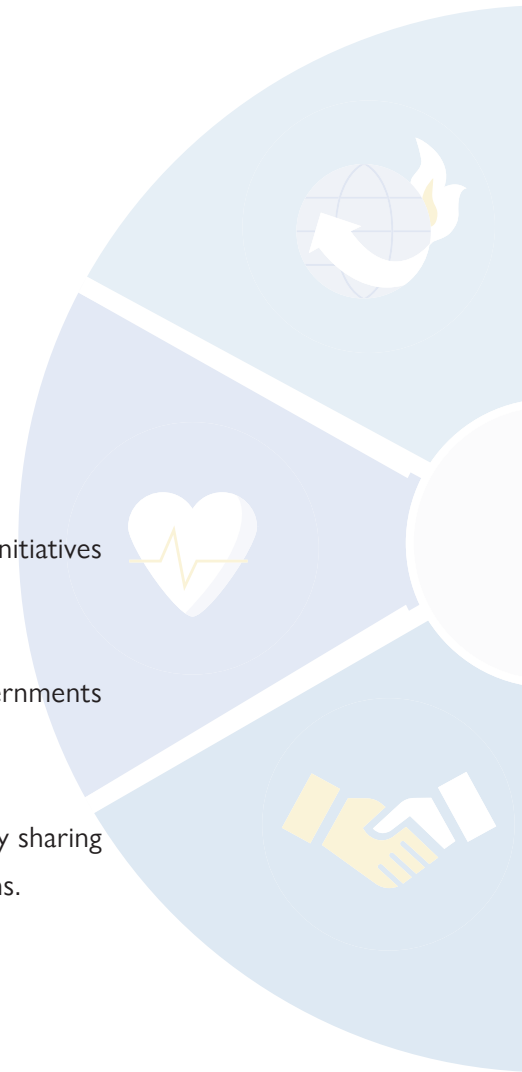
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OBJECTIVES

- 1 Help local authorities take stock of the migration initiatives they have in place.
- 2 Foster dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities.
- 3 Enable local authorities to learn from one another by sharing common challenges and identifying potential solutions.



“Rapid urbanization continues to transform the demographic landscape of many countries around the world. Cities are already home to the majority of international migrants, driven by opportunity as well as necessity, and local authorities are becoming leaders in finding creative solutions for rapid social change, supporting communities through innovation.”¹

¹ António Vitorino, IOM Director General, [Report to the 109th Session of the IOM Council](#) (November 2018).

ACRONYMS

CCSS	Costa Rican Social Security Fund (<i>Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social</i>)
CME	Municipal Emergency Committee (<i>Comité Municipal de Emergencias</i>)
CMM	Municipal Migrant Centre (<i>Centro Municipal para Migrantes</i>)
CNE	National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (<i>Comisión Nacional de Prevención de Riesgos y Atención de Emergencias</i>)
CNM	National Migration Council (<i>Consejo Nacional de Migración</i>)
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019 (novel coronavirus disease, SARS-CoV-2)
DGME	General Directorate of Migration and Aliens (<i>Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería</i>)
EBAIS	Integrated Primary Health Care Teams (<i>Equipos Básicos de Atención Integral de Salud</i>)
INA	National Learning Institute (<i>Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje</i>)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MEIC	Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade (<i>Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio</i>)
MGI	Migration Governance Indicators
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MTSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security (<i>Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social</i>)
NGO	non-governmental organization
PANI	National Child Welfare Institute (<i>Patronato Nacional de la Infancia</i>)

INTRODUCTION

The Migration Governance Indicators

The need to maximize the opportunities and face the challenges that mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The incorporation of target 10.7 into the 2030 Agenda created the need to define “planned and well-managed migration policies”. This is why, in 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). This Framework offers a concise view of an ideal approach that allows a State to determine what it might need to govern migration well and in a way that suits its circumstances. That same year, IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs), a set of almost 100 indicators that help States assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures.

The indicators constitute a starting point to engage governments in a consultative process that allows them to identify areas that are well-developed and others that would benefit from further development, and most importantly, priorities that are in line with the specific challenges and opportunities that a given country is facing.

The MGIs are characterized by three main fundamental attributes:

1. The MGI process is a **voluntary** exercise: The MGIs are conducted in countries that have requested to be part of the process.
2. The MGIs are **sensitive to national** specificities: The MGIs recognize the different challenges and opportunities of each context, and therefore, do not propose a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather aim to spark a discussion on what well-governed migration can mean.
3. The MGIs constitute a **process**: The MGI process is not a static tool to collect data on countries’ migration frameworks. It is rather the first step of a dynamic exercise that can enable governments to identify areas of their migration policy in need of further development, or that could benefit from capacity-building.

Migration Governance Indicators: From national to local

The role of cities and municipalities in migration governance² has grown significantly in recent decades, given the rapid pace of urbanization and the importance of cities as destinations for all forms of migration and displacement. Researchers, policymakers and international development agencies have all highlighted the crucial role of cities and municipalities in both accommodating migrants and formulating sustainable responses to migration-related matters.

The role of local governments, not only in the management of migration at the local level, but also in realizing the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, has been recognized in the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III Conference in Quito (Ecuador), the Global Compact for Migration, and the Call to Local Action, to mention a few.

To support the discussion between levels of governments on migration governance, IOM has adapted the MGIs³ to the local level. The Local MGIs seek to offer a more comprehensive picture of a country’s migration governance landscape by juxtaposing a local dimension to MGI national assessments. The **Local MGIs** are based on a set of about 80 indicators helping local authorities take stock of local migration strategies or initiatives in place and identify good practices as well as areas with potential for further development.

² “Migration governance” refers to the system of institutions, legal frameworks, mechanisms and practices aimed at regulating migration and protecting migrants. It is used almost synonymously with the term “migration management”, although the latter is also sometimes used to refer to the narrow act of regulating cross-border movement at the State level.

³ The **Migration Governance Indicators** were developed in 2015 by IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact.

The aim of the exercise is to foster dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities and enable local authorities to learn from one another by discussing common challenges and identifying potential solutions.

While the Local MGIs retain the attributes of the National MGIs, they are also anchored in the notion that cities and local authorities have different capacities, competencies and added value when it comes to governing migration. Therefore, the methodology has been adapted to reflect the fact that the degree of fiscal and political autonomy of participating cities influences the kind of migration governance they can practically and legally engage in. Furthermore, new indicators of the level of autonomy and capacities have been added to give some context to the results of the assessment.

Given the differences outlined between the MGIs at the national and local levels, the purpose of the Local MGIs is to be a tool for government authorities to use in taking an introspective look at the measures they have in place to manage migration, as well as to share their experiences. Furthermore, the Local MGIs recognize that good practices can take different forms depending on the division of competencies between local and national authorities. Therefore, the Local MGI analysis should not be interpreted as an invitation to change the division of competencies, but rather be understood as a catalyst to open dialogues on what cities can do with regard to migration within the scope of their mandate. A comprehensive picture of migration governance can be captured only by looking at the different levels of government.

Start of work with the municipality of La Cruz

In the framework of the work done, IOM proposes to introduce the MGIs in the municipality to gauge local migration governance. Two local MGI assessments were carried out simultaneously in 2021 for the municipalities of San José⁴ and Heredia⁵ in Costa Rica, which complement the national MGI assessment of 2019.⁶ Three local MGIs were done in the municipalities of La Cruz, Coto Brus and Desamparados in 2022. Cooperation began between IOM and the municipality of La Cruz in 2015, when specific projects were mounted in communities that were hosting migrants, in order to enhance their quality of life and promote harmonious community relations.

This report is the outcome of the local MGI process conducted in the municipality of La Cruz (in the canton of the same name⁷ in Guanacaste Province). This profile summarizes key examples of well-developed migration governance structures as well as those with potential for further development.

⁴ The 2022 Migration Governance Profile for the municipality of San José is available [here](#).

⁵ The 2022 Migration Governance Profile for the municipality of Heredia is available [here](#).

⁶ The 2019 Migration Governance Profile for the Republic of Costa Rica is available [here](#).

⁷ Under Article 3 of the Municipal Code, the territorial jurisdiction of the municipality is the respective canton, the capital of which is the seat of the municipal government.



CONTEXT

Migration trends

National context

Since the twentieth century, Costa Rica has been a country of destination for intraregional migration flows, especially from Central America, Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Over the past decade, it has become a country of transit for migration movements from outside the region, especially from countries in Africa and Asia, and over recent years, for regional migrants from Haiti, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba.

According to official data from the Costa Rican Government, up to December 2020, there were approximately 557,351 regular immigrants registered in the country, coming mainly from Nicaragua (66% of the total, with 367,984 migrants), Colombia (5% with 28,887) and the United States of America (5% with 28,731) (Chaves-González and Mora, 2021). Of the remaining 24 per cent of the migrant population, one half comprises people from other countries of Latin America,⁸ while the other half consists of people from other countries, including European countries.⁹

Similarly, recent years have witnessed an increase in the percentage of migrants in Costa Rica, who are in situations of human mobility across the Americas, originating mainly from Cuba and several African countries. Their numbers rose from 8,961 in 2016 to 19,628 in 2018. The main language of communication among migrants is Spanish (64%); other languages are also in use, albeit to a lesser extent, including Portuguese, French, Haitian Creole (*Kreyòl*) and English (IOM, 2019).

As pertains to migrants under international protection, a total of 59,450 applications for asylum were received in 2021, of which 561 were approved. Some 32,593 refugee applications were received between 1 January 2022 and 31 May 2022, and 526 were approved (233 Nicaraguans, 247 Venezuelans, 20 Salvadorans, 11 Hondurans, 3 Colombians and 12 Cubans).¹⁰ These numbers do not include approvals in the complementary category;¹¹ between 1 February 2021 and 30 April 2022, a total of 3,934 requests of this kind were approved (60% Nicaraguans, 34% Venezuelans and 6% Cubans) (Chaves-González and Mora, 2021).

The Municipal Migrant Centres (CMMs) operate, with IOM's support, in municipalities in the cantons of Desamparados, La Cruz, Mora, Upala and Talamanca. They provide services for returning Costa Ricans and the migrant population in general. CMMs are also spaces for outreach to communities, and they assist with the implementation of various measures to strengthen local migration governance.

Local context

The canton of La Cruz is located in the province of Guanacaste, where the Chorotega Region is situated. The canton has an area of 1.384 sq km, or 2.7 per cent of the national territory (IFAM, 2003). It shares borders with Nicaragua in the north and is the location of the main border post with that country, called Peñas Blancas. This canton comprises four districts (La Cruz, Santa Cecilia, La Garita and Santa Elena),¹² and its projected population for 2022 is 28,071 people, of which 50.4 per cent (14,161) are women and 49.6 per cent (13,910) are men (INEC, 2018). This population makes up 7 per cent of the total population of the province of Guanacaste (404,774 people) and 0.5 per cent of the national population (5,213,362) (*ibid.*).

⁸ Especially from El Salvador (13,631 migrants), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (12,480), Cuba (9,357), Panama (7,541), Honduras (6,519), Mexico (6,509), Peru (5,439) and Guatemala (4,525).

⁹ The category "other countries" does not provide data disaggregated by region.

¹⁰ See the 2021 and 2022 annual reports of the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens.

¹¹ The complementary category was created to assist persons whose asylum claim had been denied. This category was available over a specific period, namely from February 2021 to March 2022.

¹² More information on the canton of La Cruz is available [here](#).

According to the 2011 census (the one most recently conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses),¹³ the foreign immigrant population in the canton of La Cruz was 3,496 (18% of the canton's overall population), of which 54 per cent (1,883) comprised women and 46 per cent (1,613) were men (INEC, 2016a). According to the same census, in 2011 La Cruz was home to 6,823 internal emigrants (36 per cent of the canton's total population), of whom 51.5 per cent (3,638) were women and 48.5 per cent (3,185) were men. The same census showed that this canton was home to 3,064 internal immigrants (16 per cent of the canton's total population), of whom 49 per cent (1,509) were women and 51 per cent (1,555) were men (ibid.).

While the 2011 census offers no data broken down by nationality for migrants in the canton of La Cruz, such figures do exist for the province of Guanacaste (INEC, 2016b), which is home to 7 per cent (26,916) of Costa Rica's migrant population. Of this total, 80 per cent (21,631) come from Nicaragua, 7 per cent (1,870) from North America,¹⁴ 4 per cent (1,107) from South America, 4 per cent (1,054) from Europe and 1 per cent (346) from El Salvador, and the remaining 4 per cent (908) consist of people from Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Caribbean.

According to the 2021 National Household Survey (INEC, 2021), 0.6 per cent (2,085) of the residents of the Chorotega area (canton of La Cruz) come from other countries. Of these, 50.3 per cent are men (1,049), and the remaining 49.7 per cent are women (1,036). The data are not broken down by nationality either at the cantonal or municipal level.

In a 2020 assessment conducted by the Costa Rican Supreme Electoral Tribunal's Institute for Training and Studies in Democracy (*Instituto de Formación y Estudios en Democracia del Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones*) (Castro Ávila, 2020) in municipalities across the country to provide information on local policies and examine asymmetries in development opportunities, equality and well-being, La Cruz obtained a relatively low score in cantonal human development¹⁵ (ranking 66th out of 81) and recorded a high cantonal poverty level (72nd of 81). That same evaluation showed La Cruz to be a canton with middling social development, according to the 2017 Social Development Index (ranking 66th out of 81); and fair municipal management (55 of 100), according to the 2018 Municipal Management Index (ibid.).

¹³ The next census is scheduled for 2022.

¹⁴ There are no data disaggregated by country for South and North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

¹⁵ Although Costa Rica has 84 cantons, the municipal assessment or cantonal file presents just 81. This is because it is based on *Costa Rica's Atlas of Cantonal Human Development for 2016* (Violence Observatory, 2016), when the eighty-second canton (Rio Cuarto) had not yet been created. This canton was created in 2017 by Law No. 9440.

Competencies of the municipality

Level of decentralization of local authorities

Costa Rica has two levels of government, namely national and local. Local governments or municipalities are the political structures of public administration at the cantonal level. These structures enjoy political, administrative, regulatory and financial autonomy in the pursuit of their aims, goals and objectives. They also maintain ties of coordination and cooperation with higher-ranking bodies, such as central government institutions.

Costa Rica is territorially and administratively divided into seven provinces and 84 cantons. The cantons are divided into districts, which are in turn subdivided into neighbourhoods, and represent the smallest planning and operational unit of urban management. After the national Government, the cantons constitute the country's next most important administrative unit, as they have local governments, known as municipalities. There is a direct relationship between canton and municipality, as there is necessarily and automatically a municipality for each canton. Under Article 3 of the Municipal Code (1998), the territorial jurisdiction of the municipality is the respective canton, the capital of which is the seat of the municipal government. Furthermore, Article 170 of the Political Constitution of Costa Rica (1949) states that the municipal corporations are autonomous.

According to Article 4 of Law No. 7794 (Municipal Code) (1998), the municipality's functions include the following: (a) issuing the autonomous organizational and service regulations, as well as any other provision that is authorized under the legislation; (b) approving and executing its budgets; (c) managing and providing municipal public services, and ensuring their oversight and control; (d) approving rates, prices and municipal contributions, and also putting forward proposed municipal tax rates; (e) as the tax administration, collecting and managing taxes and other municipal revenues; (f) entering into covenants, agreements or contracts with national or foreign persons or entities, as required for the discharge of its functions; (g) convening popular consultations in the municipality, for the purposes stipulated in the above-mentioned Law and its regulations; (h) promoting participatory and inclusive local development that takes into account the diversity of the population's needs and interests; and (i) implementing local public policies to advance women's rights and citizenship, as well as gender equality and equity.

The General Law on the Transfer of Powers from the Executive to the Municipalities (Law No. 8801) (2010) created the Cantonal Councils for Institutional Coordination and the District Councils for Institutional Coordination to coordinate the formulation, implementation and oversight of public policy with local implications. For these purposes, the executive power coordinates the municipality or District Municipal Council and public bodies with cantonal or district-level representation, as appropriate. In this case, it is called the La Cruz Municipal Council.

The competencies of municipalities in relation to migration

Under the General Law on Migration and Aliens (Law No. 8764) (2009), migration policy design and formulation fall within the remit of the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens (DGME), in conjunction with other constituent institutions of the National Migration Council (CNM). Article 11 provides for municipalities to participate in a consultative capacity, should the CNM so decide. However, despite the opportunity for local participation in the formulation of such policies, there is no evidence that this is currently taking place.

Costa Rica's Comprehensive Migration Policy (2013) aims to lay out the State's commitments for the purpose of managing and controlling migration flows, adequately integrating migrants, and promoting national development by creating a system that regulates and coordinates inter-agency activities relating to migration. The Policy comprises three main strategic planks: developing and strengthening migration services, fostering the integration and personal development of migrants, and ensuring that their human rights are protected. The aims of the National Integration Plan for Costa Rica 2018–2022 (2017) include integration and social inclusion for the country's migrant and refugee communities. The Migration Policy and the Comprehensive Plan for Managing Mixed Migration Flows 2018–2022 (2017) envisage a possible role for local governments in executing some of their strategic priorities and implementing activities or programmes with local ramifications. The Comprehensive Plan is therefore transversal to the National Integration Plan for Costa Rica, and it is intended to pave the way for dealing effectively with as many scenarios as may arise in the context of mixed migration flows. The Comprehensive Plan expressly provides for municipal participation, thus opening the door to local government involvement in institutional efforts in this field.

The DGME is the competent body with respect to the return, reintegration and inclusion of Costa Rican nationals. Article 13(34) of the Law on Migration and Aliens tasks the DGME with the following: "Repatriate Costa Ricans from abroad, when this is warranted on humanitarian grounds, and also with repatriating the mortal remains of Costa Ricans, provided that the families are unable to meet the costs of transporting the body, owing to extreme necessity. Both cases are subject to a reasoned decision." Furthermore, Article 243 states: "Likewise, the humanitarian repatriation of Costa Ricans shall be the responsibility of the General Directorate and shall be paid for with funds from the Migration Social Fund, which belongs to said Directorate. If the funds are lacking, this obligation shall be covered by the institution's own resources." Repatriation implies the reintegration and inclusion of migrants, these being matters contemplated under the National Integration Plan. Costa Rica stands out for its endeavours to include the migrant population in its various development policies, and to promote their economic contributions to the country, in a framework of respect for human rights.

There are no migration-related public policy areas in which the national Government has formally delegated authority to local authorities. The municipalities and other players support the various central government institutions in national migration matters through cooperation or inter-agency coordination.

Local governments serve the different segments of the population, including migrants, albeit subject to legal constraints (regarding irregular migrants, for example), as well as financial ones, in that they lack the requisite resources. Moreover, the available national legal instruments allow local governments to offer programme-related inputs into these public policies. More specifically, Article 4(h) of the Municipal Code reads: “Promote participatory and inclusive local development that takes into account the diversity of the population’s needs and interests.” The Municipal Code further stipulates in Article 13(a) that the Municipal Council may “[s]et the municipality’s development policy and priorities, in keeping with the government programme registered by the mayor of the municipality for the term of office to which he was elected, and with the participation of citizens”.

Local financing mechanisms and the restrictions on their use

The local governments are funded through two mechanisms – namely, through current transfers from the central Government pursuant to Article 170 of the Political Constitution, and through the collection of territorial taxes or rates for municipal services,¹⁶ as prescribed in Title IV of the Municipal Code. These budget allocations are reflected in the ordinary budgets approved by the Municipal Council (the highest-ranking collegiate body in local governments or municipalities) and by the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic, which is the subsidiary body of the Legislative Assembly responsible for the oversight of public funds.

Although La Cruz does not have an open-data section on its website,¹⁷ the municipality’s public budget is available for viewing on the website of the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic.¹⁸ According to data presented in the municipality’s 2021 Annual Operating Plan, 12 per cent of the annual budget (equivalent to USD 759,721.78¹⁹) has been allocated to the strategic area concerned with local social policy. The aim being pursued is to “[s]tep up endeavours to improve local social development from a perspective of equal rights and opportunities and gender equity”.²⁰ Those endeavours include educational, sporting and artistic activities; poverty alleviation; and integrating vulnerable groups.

¹⁶ La Cruz assesses a departure tax at Peñas Blancas and also utilizes a Single Customs Declaration system for export.

¹⁷ The municipality plans to inaugurate such a section in the course of 2022. More information is available on the [website of La Cruz](#).

¹⁸ For more information, see the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic’s [consultations on the public budget](#).

¹⁹ This is equivalent to 490,210,479 colons (the exchange rate was USD 1 = CRC 645.25 on 19 April 2022).

²⁰ This information is from the municipality of La Cruz’s 2021 Annual Operating Plan (not available online).



KEY FINDINGS

The Local MGIs are composed of approximately 80 indicators grouped under the six different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:²¹



MIGRANTS' RIGHTS
PAGE 20

Indicators in this category look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. They also examine measures to ensure integration and access to work.



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT
APPROACH
PAGE 22

Indicators in this category assess the institutional frameworks of cities, municipalities or states for migration. This area also examines the existence of migration strategies consistent with development objectives, as well as institutional transparency and coherence in migration management.



PARTNERSHIPS
PAGE 24

Indicators in this category focus on cities', municipalities' or states' efforts to cooperate on migration issues with the national government as well as other cities and relevant non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector.



WELL-BEING
OF MIGRANTS
PAGE 26

Indicators in this category assess cities', municipalities' or states' initiatives in terms of international student mobility, access to the labour market and decent working conditions for migrant workers. Aspects related to diaspora engagement and migrant remittances are also included in this domain.



MOBILITY DIMENSION
OF CRISES
PAGE 28

Indicators in this category examine the type and level of readiness of cities, municipalities or states to deal with aspects of mobility crises. The questions focus on the processes in place for citizens and non-citizens in relation to disasters and climate change, especially whether humanitarian assistance is available for migrants and citizens.



SAFE, ORDERLY AND
REGULAR MIGRATION
PAGE 30

Indicators in this category look at the cities', municipalities' or states' approaches to migrant safety as well as return and reintegration policies and the fight against trafficking in persons.

²¹ IOM Council, Migration Governance Framework, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015).



ADHERE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND FULFIL MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

1.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Under Costa Rican legislation, the entire migrant population is entitled to Government-run health services, irrespective of their migration status.²² Decree No. 41187 of the Executive Power (2018) requires the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) to provide all migrants with primary care for illnesses and diseases, and also in urgent and emergency situations, with the cost being borne by the State. In addition, the municipality collaborates with private companies to mount health campaigns targeting different vulnerable population segments, including migrants. In 2021, eyeglasses were donated to elderly persons, with the collaboration of the Department of Social Management. Furthermore, guidelines were established for some Integrated Primary Health Care Teams (EBAIS)²³ located in border areas, regarding the care of undocumented migrants.

The municipality of La Cruz is developing measures to facilitate access for foreign nationals to Government-funded health services. The Cantonal Plan for Local Human Development 2017–2026 (2016) provides for the “creation of an Epidemiological Surveillance Commission to monitor the migration flow in Peñas Blancas”.²⁴ There are also two Childcare and Development Centres in the municipality, one in the central district of La Cruz and another in Barrio Irvin, as well as three Education and Nutrition Centres and Integrated Childcare Centres in the communities of Cuajiniquil, Santa Cecilia and La Garita in the canton of La Cruz. These Centres serve the migrant community with no distinction whatsoever.

The La Cruz Municipal Migrant Centre (CMM)²⁵ provides legal services and counsel for migrants. CMM also furnishes information on migration mechanisms and regularization options for migrants, and offers legal counsel and information to the migrant community on a range of topics, including education and employment. Furthermore, CMM cooperates with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that deliver services to migrants. In March 2022, for example, together with the Women’s Foundation (*Fundación Mujer*),²⁶ it coordinated a seminar providing information on migration procedures and technical training needs.

For its part, the Women’s Affairs Office attached to the municipality’s Department of Social Management provides guidance to users for obtaining appointments relating to asylum or to residence permits, and coordinates with local organizations to provide migrants with assistance and information. In 2021, the Women’s Affairs Office organized a workshop on violence against women in the central district of the canton, jointly with the NGO Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. It also assisted the organization *Ayuda en Acción* throughout the process of setting up emergency committees to deal with socioenvironmental risks in the communities of Cuajiniquil, Puerto Soley, San Rafael, Santa Elena and El Caoba.

²² For more information, consult the General Health Law (Law No. 5395) (1973), the General Law on Migration and Aliens (Law No. 8764) (2009), the section on access to services and the right to health in the Comprehensive Migration Policy for Costa Rica (2013), Guideline No. 046-S on the obligation to provide health care and treatment to the migrant population (2016), and the Organic Regulations of the Executive Branch (Decree No. 41187) (2018).

²³ EBAIS falls under the responsibility of the CCSS and provides support, including in the form of infrastructure, equipment and specialized health-care services.

²⁴ Peñas Blancas is an official border post between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. At the time of writing, the Commission has not been established yet.

²⁵ CMM began serving the public in January 2022 and is supported by IOM in better identifying vulnerable persons and in referring cases to public State institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide services and assistance to them. Between January 2022 and May 2022, 216 persons received assistance, 97 per cent of them Nicaraguan, 2 per cent Venezuelan and 1 per cent Costa Rican. Of these, 51 per cent were men, and 49 per cent were women.

²⁶ The Women’s Foundation is an NGO headquartered in San José, with a branch in Limón and a virtual office in San Ramón de Alajuela.

1.2. Areas with potential for further development

All migrants may access La Cruz's municipal services, irrespective of their migration status. Yet many of them are unaware of these services. The Municipal Strategic Plan 2017–2021 (2016) pinpoints one strategic objective as that of “stepping up endeavours to improve local social development from a perspective of equal rights and opportunities and gender equity”.

There are no information and awareness-raising campaigns to combat xenophobia and exclusion or to counter acts of discrimination against migrants in the provision of social services. While not specifically targeting migrants, the Cantonal Plan for Local Human Development 2017–2026 aims, in respect of citizen participation and local democracy, to “promote access to resources and the full exercise of the human rights of persons in their diversity, differences and multiculturalism in the canton”.

Despite the aforementioned efforts of CMM and the Department of Social Management to provide information on migration mechanisms and asylum applications, as well as referrals of persons in vulnerable situations, the development of programmes to guide or welcome newly arrived migrants is deemed an area with potential for further development.

The municipality implements national guidelines to ensure the protection of migrant children and adolescents, unaccompanied minors, and those left behind. Consequently, the Department of Social Management, as the municipal body in charge of programmes for children and adolescents, has not developed its own procedures or specific measures for this cohort; it does nonetheless act in coordination with the National Child Welfare Institute (PANI) at the municipal level. The Municipal Strategic Plan 2017–2021 mentions the work of the Local Inter-agency Network for Children and Adolescents (*Red Local Interinstitucional para la Niñez y Adolescencia*)²⁷ or the Local Protection Subsystem (*Subsistema de Protección Local*), while the Department of Social Management coordinates with the local or regional PANI offices to ascertain whether a minor is accompanied. Locally, municipalities may collaborate in referrals of specific cases to local or regional PANI offices and also to the Professional Migration Police (*Policía Profesional de Migración*), which reports to the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens; the aim would be to ensure the proper observance of the protocol on the care and protection of unaccompanied or separated foreign minors, outside their country of origin.

As in the rest of the country, the entire population of the canton of La Cruz, including migrants, may take recourse, on an ad hoc basis, to cultural mediation services in order to help settle disputes in the courts of law. These courts settle disputes in civil, labour, alimony, traffic and domestic violence matters, free of charge. They have no local representation in the canton of La Cruz, however; the closest branch is in the canton of Liberia.

²⁷ The network was created in 2016 and is currently coordinated by the municipality of La Cruz. The subsystem was implemented in 2022 by PANI.



2

FORMULATE POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

2.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Since its inauguration in December 2021, the Municipal Migrant Centre (CMM) has been the municipal body tasked with streamlining guidance services for migrants in La Cruz – including access to services. CMM is also responsible for coordinating the implementation and management of migrant services locally. Its aim is to enhance the protection of migrants, gather information about migrant communities and their needs, and provide information on regularization pathways and available help and protection, among other things. Accordingly, CMM coordinated the *Migramóvil* programme run by the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens (DGME) in 2021 and 2022,²⁸ which entailed visiting communities with large numbers of migrants and refugees in the canton of La Cruz, and providing them with information on the regularization of their migration status, other formalities, as well as the submission of complete dossiers to launch procedures.

The municipality of La Cruz provides clear and transparent information as to migrants' rights, duties and access to municipal public services through CMM. The information is in Spanish, which most migrants understand.

Since February 2022, CMM has been part of the Inter-agency Working Group on International Protection and Migration, which is a consultation and coordination forum. The Working Group has been in existence since 2021 and holds monthly meetings. Its participants include bodies such as the Costa Rican Social Security Fund, the DGME, the Public Force (*Fuerza Pública*), the Border Police, the Women's Foundation, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and IOM.

Furthermore, in the years ahead, the canton of La Cruz plans to build the Northern Bicentennial Migrant Station²⁹ in which to better attend to people entering the country as part of mixed migration flows. This is the outcome of endeavours by the central government authorities, the municipality of La Cruz and residents to improve the care provided to migrants entering the national territory, as well as to reinforce public safety and health surveillance.

2.2. Areas with potential for further development

The municipality still lacks a local migration strategy or policy laid out in a programme document or manifesto. The Municipal Strategic Plan 2017–2021 (2016) does not specifically address migration, though the Cantonal Emergency Plan (2021) does envisage action regarding migrants in a crisis situation. At the national level, the authorities are guided by the Comprehensive Migration Policy for Costa Rica (2013) and the National Integration Plan for Costa Rica 2018–2022 (2017). Both documents set out specific guidelines on the public management of migration. The latest Plan includes a component for developing decentralized programmes at the local government level to help integrate migrants; however, no further information is available as to the way they are being implemented.

The La Cruz Coordination and Planning Department is tasked with coordinating and executing activities relating to the municipal planning process as a whole. In parallel, the Department of Social Management plans, directs and executes institutional tasks related to social management. So far, however, there has

²⁸ Data from the municipality show that 190 migrants were supported and assisted in 2022.

²⁹ Specifically, on the plot located opposite the fairgrounds in the Irvin neighbourhood of the La Cruz district in the canton of La Cruz, Guanacaste Province, Chorotega Region.

been no evidence that strategic migration plans have been designed or implemented. At the national level, the National Migration Council is the body responsible for formulating and implementing Costa Rica's migration policy. The Council's working baseline comprises the Comprehensive Migration Policy and the National Integration Plan, but there is no formal process of coordination at the political, technical and operational levels of the municipality. This is especially relevant, as the Comprehensive Plan for Managing Mixed Migration Flows 2018–2022 (2017) expressly provides for municipal participation, thus paving the way for local governments to join in institutional efforts in this regard.

Providing regular training for municipal officers in cultural sensitivity is considered to be an area with potential for development. In November 2021, seven female officers of the municipality took part in training courses on human rights, migration governance and migration concepts, organized by IOM. In 2021, the municipality's Women's Affairs Office participated in the course titled "Prevention of violence against women", run by the National Institute for Women, though it had no specific focus on migration.

Beyond collecting statistics regarding CMM users, there is no public evidence of local collection and publication of migration data disaggregated by sex. Furthermore, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses is the technical agency in charge of national statistics and coordinator of Costa Rica's National Statistical System, the body tasked with documenting a range of national data, including statistics on the migrant population when national censuses are being conducted. Continuous surveys do not cover migration variables, nor do they use any tools specifically geared to the migrant population that include data disaggregated by sex.

The municipality participates in various coordination bodies that can address migration matters when given the authority and resources at the national level. These bodies include the following: the Local Inter-agency Network for Children and Adolescents, under the auspices of the National Child Welfare Institute; the Local Inter-agency Network against Violence, operated by the National Institute for Women; the Cantonal Councils for Institutional Coordination, run by the municipalities and various public bodies with cantonal representation; and the Municipal Emergency Committee, which reports to the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response. Developing a local institutional coordination mechanism on migration issues is deemed an area with potential for further development.

3

ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

3.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The municipality of La Cruz cooperates actively with United Nations agencies on migration issues. In December 2021, and in collaboration with IOM, the municipality set up the Municipal Migrant Centre (CMM), where migrants can receive information and advice on migration formalities, health services, education and labour rights. Similarly, in March 2022, the general report titled “Monitoring irregular migration flows in the northern region of Costa Rica: La Cruz, Upala, Los Chiles” was tabled. Other joint CMM/IOM initiatives include a collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to scale up the production and marketing of beans from the cooperative called CoopeBelice (2020–2022), as well as with the inter-agency project Multi-Partner Trust Fund (2020–2022).³⁰

In each canton or district with a District Municipal Council throughout the country, there is a council based in the same local corporation (municipality). These councils consist of all public bodies (institutions) that engage in activities in the locality (canton) and also public enterprises, which are represented by their chief executive or their delegate. Since 2010, each canton, including La Cruz, has had a Cantonal Council for Institutional Coordination. These councils were set up³¹ to coordinate the design, implementation and oversight of public policy with local implications, to which end they coordinate the municipality or District Municipal Council and public bodies with cantonal or district-level representation, as appropriate.

3.2. Areas with potential for further development

Although the Comprehensive Plan for Managing Mixed Migration Flows 2018–2022 (2017), the Comprehensive Migration Policy (2013) and the National Integration Plan (2017) favour cooperation between public-sector institutions and civil society organizations in formulating and implementing migration policy, so far there has been ad hoc collaboration only. In 2021, for example, the municipality’s Women’s Affairs Office and the non-governmental organization Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society jointly conducted a workshop on violence against women, for women in the central district of the canton of La Cruz. Similarly, in 2021 this Office coordinated a workshop on violence against women in the district of Santa Cecilia, in collaboration with Refugee Education Trust International.

There is no public evidence that local authorities participate in international networks for the sharing of knowledge or best practices on migration. At the national level, Costa Rica participates in the Regional Conference on Migration,³² which has been meeting annually since 1996 in order to “create a forum for the open discussion of regional migration issues and the exchange of information and experiences to achieve greater coordination and cooperation in the region” and “unite Member Countries to protect the human rights of migrants and create a network of coherent and adequate migration laws, in addition to strengthening the links between migration and development”.

³⁰ The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office initiative aims to provide funding for innovative programmes designed to support the migration priorities of States, ensure better protection of migrants, foster cooperation and promote migration governance that benefits all parties.

³¹ The Councils were established under the General Law on the Transfer of Powers from the Executive to the Municipalities (Law No. 8801) and are chaired by the respective mayors of each municipality.

³² The Conference comprises 11 member countries – namely, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States.

There are as yet no bilateral programmes for cooperation on migration among La Cruz and other cities, either in Costa Rica or internationally. At the national level, neither the Comprehensive Migration Policy nor the National Integration Plan makes mention of cooperation programmes among cities in the country. This notwithstanding, the Comprehensive Migration Policy sets the aim of developing “a system of inter-institutional coordination by the Costa Rican State designed to promote the effective management of the realities of migration, in a manner consistent with the country’s overall development needs, with national security imperatives and respect for human rights”. Reinforcing the links between the local and national levels during the current update of these documents is an area of opportunity.



4

ADVANCE THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

4.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The municipality of La Cruz implements specific programmes to promote and facilitate the integration of migrant workers into the workforce. The Municipal Migrant Centre (CMM) shares information about vacancies available in the canton, and it operates a virtual database and receives CVs in person for referral to companies that request them. The duties of the municipality's Labour Intermediation Office include helping to implement the local economic development policies set by the Municipal Council and the strategic plans laid out by the Municipal Administration. Furthermore, this Office is tasked with the local management of the national programmes *Empleáte*³³ and *Mi Primer Empleo*,³⁴ sponsored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS), as well as the employment exchange and the planning of job fairs in the canton. These services are meant for the canton's residents, including migrants with regular status. In February 2022, the Municipal Council of La Cruz also approved the Inter-agency Cooperation Agreement formalizing the Employment Office. The Employment Office is a window that provides the basic services of face-to-face and virtual registration, the booking of appointments, intermediation, and general information services to individuals and companies.³⁵

The municipality implements general measures to promote gender equality in the workforce, and they apply equally to migrants. The Cantonal Plan for Local Human Development 2017–2026 (2016) lays out gender-sensitive actions implemented by the Women's Affairs Office, including steps to “generate sources of employment on the basis of equality between women and men in the agro-industrial, commercial, tourism, fishing and service sectors” and to promote “entrepreneurship that favours initiatives by women in the canton” and “access to credit based on equal rights and opportunities”. In addition, since 2021, the Labour Intermediation Office has been implementing the national programme *Mujer y Negocios* (Women and Business),³⁶ which is open to all women, including migrant women, irrespective of their migration status. The programme is being run by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade (MEIC), in collaboration with the municipality. From May to December 2021, 25 women entrepreneurs from the canton of La Cruz participated in the programme, in order to upgrade their skills for developing market-oriented, sustainable and competitive ventures or enterprises.

In 2021, the Women's Affairs Office collaborated with the National Institute for Women to support women wishing to enter the Women's Fund competition, which targets women entrepreneurs keen to expand and develop their businesses. The support consisted of assisting the women throughout the process, including help with completing the form, among other things. Furthermore, in coordination with the National Learning Institute (INA), and through the Chorotega Business Development Centre programme, an information session was organized for people with business ventures, in order to strengthen their capacities.

In March 2022, CMM, the Women's Foundation and the municipality jointly organized a meeting with migrants in order to ascertain their training needs. Relevant information was also provided on the different migration procedures open to them and about the functions for which each participating organization was responsible.

³³ The programme was created in 2011 and imparts training in areas with employment prospects, offers financial support for studies and skills development, builds socioemotional skills, and promotes job placement.

³⁴ The programme has been operating since 2015 and promotes the recruitment of young people 18 to 35 years of age, women, people with disabilities irrespective of age and people experiencing poverty, to work in the nation's production sector; this entails an economic benefit granted by the State to natural and legal persons that are duly registered as employers.

³⁵ The Employment Office is expected to start providing services around July 2022.

³⁶ The programme is being implemented in coordination with the National Institute for Women, the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade, and the National Learning Institute.

4.2. Areas with potential for further development

There are no local assessments to monitor migrant demand or the local labour supply and the implications of emigration for the local labour market. Similarly, there are no assessments at the national level to monitor the labour market demand for migrants.

Developing local programmes to assist employers in hiring migrants is deemed an area with potential for further development. At the national level, one of the main planks of the Comprehensive Plan for Managing Mixed Migration Flows 2018–2022 (2017) concerns migration and labour, based on four strategic areas: vocational training, coordination, job placement and respect for labour rights. In terms of coordination, it is proposed to draw up a protocol between the government administration (national and local) and the business sector in order to improve job placement, and which would be applied in regions, companies and branches of activity. The institutions responsible are INA, MEIC, MTSS and the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens. Yet there is no public evidence regarding the state of progress in preparing or implementing the protocol to improve job placement for foreign residents.

The municipality still lacks specific strategies to support foreign residents in entrepreneurship. There are programmes with this aim targeting different sectors of the population. The La Cruz Rural Development Programme³⁷ is developing a series of projects to bring about improvement in the canton with respect to the health condition of citizens, basic infrastructure (roads, education, aqueducts) and economic development. However, there is no evidence of access by the migrant population.

³⁷ The municipality has been coordinating this programme jointly with the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock since 2005.



5

EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

5.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The National Law on Emergencies and Risk Prevention (Law No. 8488) (2005) regulates national governance of emergency and crisis management. The Law expressly lays down national policy and establishes the National Risk Management System. Under this structure, municipalities coordinate the Municipal Emergency Committees (CMEs), with this responsibility being incumbent on the Mayor of the municipality. Their functions include prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from emergencies in the canton of La Cruz.

There are local communication systems in the municipality for receiving information on the evolution of crises. For example, La Cruz uses an email address to receive information about the situation and a WhatsApp account to coordinate CME members. People are also informed about crises through the local media (television, radio) and the municipality's social networks. Lastly, people can access assistance services and communicate their needs via the 911 telephone line or the means of communication established by the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE) and the Community Emergency Committees (telephone or WhatsApp). It is worth noting that all means of communication are available in Spanish.

CNE manages the early warning system both nationally and locally. The National Communications Network is a system of radio communication via the CMEs, linking up various institutions as observation and surveillance posts throughout the country, and designed to expedite information-sharing for decision-making purposes during emergencies or states of alert. The National Risk Management Plan 2021–2025 (2021) lays out a programme to enhance local organization for emergencies by establishing one CME per canton, complete with warning systems that emphasize community and civil participation; it also embodies other operational elements such as measuring and monitoring instruments, in addition to communication, activation, response and training. In 2016, for example, as a measure of protection in response to the emergency caused by Hurricane Otto, the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens (DGME) acted in coordination with the municipality of La Cruz to transfer migrants to shelters set up in schools in the municipality.

The municipality has a Cantonal Emergency Plan (2021) the aim of which is to “establish the mechanisms for activating the La Cruz Municipal Emergency Committee through the preparedness and response subsystem, in the event of emergency situations in the canton, be it a sudden event or a state of alert declared by the National Emergency Commission”. This Plan encompasses several response procedures in regard to warnings, sudden events, information management, operations and incident response, evacuation and rescue, activation of the Community Emergency Committees, logistics, administration and finance, and mobilization of the Operations Coordination Centre.

The Emergency Activation Protocol laid down in the Cantonal Emergency Plan is followed in situations of emergency. This activation gives rise to a series of procedures that are coordinated by the relevant first-response institutions in the canton, such as the Fire Brigade, the Red Cross, the Public Force, the Traffic Police, the Professional Migration Police, the Border Police, the Tourist Police, the Municipality Coordinator and Technical Unit, the Costa Rican Social Security Fund, and the Liaison Officer.

5.2. Areas with potential for further development

The Cantonal Emergency Plan does not lay down specific guidelines on migration-related issues stemming from environmental degradation and the adverse impacts of climate change. However, attention in crisis situations means looking after everyone in the canton, irrespective of migration status. At the national level, the National Risk Management Plan 2021–2025 underlines that State sectors and institutions will include risk management in sectoral, institutional, regional and municipal plans. The Plan stipulates that migrants should be considered and included in all phases of the process, from the planning to the formulation, implementation and coordination of plans.

The Cantonal Emergency Plan addresses emergency response strategies without pinpointing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of migrant women. However, the Plan and the Activation Protocol cover all persons in the canton, including migrants, irrespective of their migration status. At the national level, the National Risk Management Policy 2016–2030 (2015) expressly mentions a focus on gender equity, stating that its application is guided by the criterion whereby the gender perspective must be instrumental in recognizing people's capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, depending on their gender.

The National Child Welfare Institute and the DGME are the institutions with nationwide responsibility for implementing specific procedures or measures to ensure the protection of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and those left behind in times of crisis. These bodies have the Protocol for the care and protection of unaccompanied or separated foreign minors, outside their country of origin (2012) and the Protocol for the detection, care and comprehensive protection of minors in need of international protection, whether they are applicants for refugee status, refugees or stateless persons (2014). The municipality therefore does not implement specific measures to ensure the protection of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents.



6

ENSURE THAT MIGRATION TAKES PLACE IN A SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MANNER

6.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Although the municipality of La Cruz still has no programmes for training public officials locally on migration regulations and migrants' rights, it does participate in training programmes when invited to do so. One such example consisted of the initiatives deployed by the Municipal Migrant Centre (CMM) in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society regarding refugee applications.

The municipality coordinates actions to tackle and prevent human trafficking with the Local Inter-agency Network against Violence, which is run by the National Institute for Women. Furthermore, the Cantonal Plan for Local Human Development 2017–2026 (2016) underscores the importance of educational programmes that address prevention and awareness-raising among citizens and enumerates steps to tackle human trafficking and smuggling. Accordingly, in 2017 the municipality coordinated efforts with the Rahab Foundation³⁸ to inaugurate its headquarters in the canton of La Cruz, where it looks after victims of trafficking in rural border communities and surrounding areas. Similarly, the Department of Social Management coordinates measures to reduce the instances of human trafficking for sexual exploitation by raising awareness and offering training in different segments of the population in La Cruz. In 2021, it also collaborated with the Arias Foundation to organize a film screening and discussion and to create murals on human trafficking.³⁹

There are mechanisms to ensure that migrants are able to access justice as needed, through CMM and the Courts or Houses of Justice (*Tribunales o Casas de Justicia*). The Houses of Justice resolve disputes concerning civil, labour, alimony, transit and domestic violence matters free of charge. The Women's Affairs Office therefore draws up a cantonal appraisal of women's support services and resources, and it monitors the inter-agency and community network that fosters coordination and all-round attention to the needs of women in the canton. It also operates a permanent information and dissemination service on women's rights that targets the canton's female population and government officers tasked with implementing local programmes. However, these actions are not specifically aimed at the migrant community.

Since December 2021, CMM has been compiling monthly and annual data on migrants consulting information or accessing its services. Based on these data (described at the start of this report), CMM draws up reports that are shared with the municipality of La Cruz. Owing to their internal nature, however, they are not available to the public.

6.2. Areas with potential for further development

There is no evidence of any specific and regular training in migration-related matters designed for representatives of the Public Force (or National Police) who work in the territory. There are national-level training guidelines both on human trafficking and smuggling and on international protection for refugees and asylum-seekers. Similarly, given the nature of their functions, both the Professional Migration Police and the officers of the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens receive specific and regular technical advice and training in this field, in accordance with the relevant legal framework. Alongside the foregoing, the Public Force, which reports to the Ministry of Public Security, maintains a presence in the canton of La Cruz

³⁸ The Rahab Foundation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, founded in Costa Rica in 1997 with the mission to restore the dignified lives of persons and families who are victims of human trafficking and the sex trade.

³⁹ The film screening and discussion took place in October 2021 in Santa Elena, a district with a large number of migrants.

and discharges the following responsibilities, among others: “[i]mplementing public national security policies and measures for the enforcement and respect of the Political Constitution, of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and the maintenance of public order”.

Putting in place a local agency and a strategy to prevent human trafficking is deemed an area with potential for further development. At the national level, the National Coalition against the Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons has the responsibility for the following tasks: the prevention, investigation, prosecution and detection of the crime of trafficking in persons; the comprehensive care, protection and social reintegration of certified victims of human trafficking; the comprehensive fight against the crime of smuggling of migrants; and the preparation of the Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons. However, the reports published so far are not available online, and the data are not disaggregated geographically.



PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

This annex summarizes key local COVID-19 policy responses in the municipality of La Cruz from a migration governance perspective. It is based on 11 questions that were added to the standard [Migration Governance Indicators \(MGIs\)](#) assessment in the municipality, to effectively assess local migration governance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Broadly speaking, the COVID-19 pandemic response has been managed by the central Government of Costa Rica. The municipality of La Cruz, for example, is not directly responsible for health services, nor does it grant financial or other assistance to residents of the municipality.



Local governments rely on the Law Supporting Local Taxpayers and Strengthening Financial Management by Municipalities in Light of the National Emergency Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.¹ It was promulgated in May 2020 to be in force from 2020 to 2022 and institutes an extraordinary oversight programme. This Law permits increased public spending to ensure the continuity of municipal water, security, waste management and cemetery services, and also higher current expenditure for general administration. The Law further provides for moratoriums on municipal patents or licences; moratoriums on tariffs, public rates and municipal services; and reductions in municipal leasing rates.² However, there is no evidence that they are available to migrants living in the area.



The Municipal Emergency Committee is responsible for local COVID-19 prevention and response, pursuant to Articles 2, 5, 8 and 11 of Executive Decree No. 42227-MP-S issued by the Government of the Republic³ and to the General Emergency Plan elaborated by the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE).⁴ These instruments provide for inter-institutional cooperation in the response, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases of the health emergency, as well as the loan of officials, equipment or assets to CNE, the Ministry of Health and the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS).

¹ Legislative Assembly of the Republic of Costa Rica, Law No. 9848, *Ley para apoyar al contribuyente local, y reforzar la gestión financiera de las municipalidades, ante la emergencia nacional por la pandemia del COVID-19* (2020).

² *Ibid.*

³ Office of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, *Decree No. 42227-MP-S* (2020).

⁴ National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response, *Plan General de Emergencia – Decree Nos. 42227-MP-S and 42296-MP-S, Estado de Emergencia ante la situación provocada por la enfermedad del COVID-19* (2020) (General Emergency Plan – State of Emergency due to the situation created by the COVID-19 disease).



PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Local authorities implement measures to facilitate migrants' access to COVID-19-related health services under the same conditions as nationals. In 2020, the municipality of La Cruz joined efforts with the CCSS and the Ministry of Health to conduct COVID-19 and influenza vaccination campaigns. These campaigns took place across all districts in the canton. Similarly, the municipality provided vehicles and physical facilities for attending to all vulnerable people, without distinction.



The activities deployed jointly by the municipality and IOM included the tabling, in October 2021, of the report titled *Línea base para el seguimiento a la movilidad en localidades fronterizas con población migrante bajo el contexto de la COVID-19 en la Cruz, Los Chiles, Upala y Pavas* (Baseline for monitoring mobility in border localities with migrant communities in the context of COVID-19 in La Cruz, Los Chiles, Upala and Pavas). Furthermore, in a joint endeavour with the Association for Comprehensive Development, the infrastructure of the El Jobo Community Centre was upgraded in order to foster social integration and prepare spaces for dealing with emergency or risk situations.



Managed by the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens, the Temporary Attention Centres for Migrants were used to provide COVID-19-related services from March 2020 to the end of 2021, “where physical spaces were arranged in which to receive, triage and attend to persons who had recently entered the territory and had no address in Costa Rica”. They also served to deliver humanitarian aid to this cohort in the form of food, shelter and health services.⁵ In its annual report up to November 2021, the municipality’s Women’s Affairs Office reported that food packages were delivered to the families most affected by COVID-19 in different communities of the canton of La Cruz.⁶ However, the report does not specify whether humanitarian aid was given to migrants or asylum-seekers as well.



The municipality of La Cruz disseminates COVID-19 information in Spanish, and it ensures that migrants are able to communicate their needs, among other ways, by participating in migrant associations or groups. Its website sets out the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.⁷ Links to COVID-19 alerts are also provided on the website of the Presidential Palace,⁸ while access to COVID-19 documentation is offered on the website of the Ministry of Health.⁹

⁵ Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework, *Towards the Implementation of the MIRPS in Central America and Mexico: Concept Notes on Selected Sectors* (2020).

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ANNEXES

MiGOF: Migration Governance Framework⁴⁰

In an attempt to define the concept of “well-managed migration policies”, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) devised a Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which was welcomed by the IOM Council in November 2015. For the purposes of the Migration Governance Framework, IOM defines governance as “the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country is exercised, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas”.

The Framework sets out the essential elements of “good migration governance” – three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, safe and orderly, and that it provides benefits for migrants and societies.⁴¹ IOM’s view is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:

- (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants’ rights;
- (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a “whole-of-government” approach;
- (iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues.

As it seeks to:

- (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
- (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
- (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

The MiGOF does NOT create new standards or norms. In drafting the Framework, IOM relied on its expertise and analytical work, as well as on existing commitments, non-binding declarations and statements. It does NOT address global migration governance that is the international architecture for dealing with issues related to migration and human mobility. Instead, the focus is on the governance and management of migration from the point of view of the State as the primary actor. It does NOT propose one model for all States. The Framework presents a “high road” or ideal version of migration governance, to which States can aspire.

The MiGOF is based on the understanding that, as the primary actor in migration, mobility and nationality affairs, a State retains the sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in its territory and under what conditions, within the framework of international law. Other actors – citizens, migrants, international organizations, the private sector, unions, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations and academia – contribute to migration governance through their interaction with States and each other.

⁴⁰ IOM Council, *Migration Governance Framework*, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015).

⁴¹ *Migration Governance Framework infosheet*, 2016.

The MGI process



1 Launch of the Local MGI process

The first step of the process is to explain to key national and local government officials what the Local MGIs entail, in order to ensure full understanding of the project and complete buy-in at both levels.



2 Data collection

The second step of the process is to start the collection and analysis of data based on adapted indicators from the MGIs. A draft local migration governance profile based on analysis of the findings is then shared with the government counterparts.



3 Multi-stakeholder discussions on the results of the MGIs

The third step of the process is to convene a consultation where local and national government officials and other stakeholders discuss the good practices and main gaps identified in the draft local migration governance profile. It is also an opportunity for them to comment on and provide suggestions to the draft profile.



4 Final report

The last step is to finalize the local migration governance profile, obtain final validation from the local authorities, and publish a printed version of the report as well as an online version on the [Migration Data Portal](#) and upload it on the [IOM Publications Platform](#).



www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi

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