



CENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE POLÍTICA ECONÓMICA
PARA EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE



UNA
UNIVERSIDAD
NACIONAL
COSTA RICA
HEREDIA, COSTA RICA

FRAMEWORK AND ACTIVITIES

The International Centre in Economic Policy for Sustainable Development (CINPE) is a research and teaching institute of the National University of Costa Rica (Universidad Nacional, UNA). It was founded by the UNA Board of Directors on March 2, 1995, based on the experience and progress of the Master's Program in Economic Policy for Central America and the Caribbean, which had opened nine years earlier with the support of government of The Netherlands.

CINPE's Vision, based on excellence, is to become a core generator of critical and purposeful scientific thought which can be useful when facing social, economic, environmental and institutional challenges in developing countries, particularly in Latin America.

CINPE's Mission is to be an institute devoted to research and to training professionals to address needs related to economic policy and sustainable development in a flexible, dynamic and innovating way. It's actions are grounded on the relationships between researchers and the academe of different disciplines with approaches that foster the comprehensiveness of the social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions.

CINPE has two well-defined programs which are tied very closely to one another: the research and graduate programs.

RESEARCH PROGRAM

CINPE research focuses on topics oriented toward sectoral policy design. The analysis of the realities of development in Central America and the Caribbean begins with its geographical framework, and is based on the development of approaches to be used to understand the specificities of these societies. The search for development alternatives leads to the consideration of the analysis of economic policy as a social result, within the framework of the functioning of markets with the imperfections and limitations characterising them. More generally, this search also leads to the consideration of the institutions operating our societies.

The research topics are grouped by Core Topics in which CINPE has been accumulating experience, and they are supported by professionals with a recognised careers.

Core Topic 1: Globalisation and Trade

The purpose of this core topic is to study the behaviour of the international trade relationships of the economies, with emphasis on Central America and the Caribbean, and also their impact on the production, distribution, environment and the different integration processes.

The main issues include:

- WTO environmental topics
- Regional agreements
- Environmental impacts of trade negotiations
- Trade flows
- Preferential regimes

Core Topic 2: Systems of Innovation

The purpose of this core topic is to analyse institutional, organisational and technological conditions and the changes in competitiveness that condition innovation processes in the different economies, especially in developing economies. Particular emphasis is given to environmental problems, energy issues and the development of cleaner technologies.

Energy

- Central American electricity market
- Structure of prices and the performance of the energy sector
- Tax on fossil fuels used to generate electricity
- Conglomerates of renewable energy sources in Costa Rica

Environment

- Property rights of environmental services
- Carbon
- Biodiversity
- Clean technologies in small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Environmental management (including ISOs)
- Innovation at a local level

Trade

- Patterns of trade specialisation in Central America
- Competitiveness and environmental performance of SMEs in Central America

Policies and Institutions

- The forestry sector in Central America
- Innovation policies in agro-industry in Costa Rica
- Alliance for Sustainable Development in Central America (ALIDES)

Core Topic 3: Agro-Food Chains

Global Chains

- Study of agro-food systems from the farm to consumption
- Microeconomic rationality and the environment in the chains
- Financial markets in the production chain
- Environmental management in the chains: Evaluation of the life cycle of the product

Farm Policies

- Contracts, decision-making on the farms
- Application of games for the development of marketing strategies
- Effects of policies on farm producers

Adaptability Strategies for Facing Climatic and Environmental Pressures

Development of Mechanisms to Strengthen Production Organisations

- Simulation and analysis of strategies for establishing ties with dynamic markets
- Training for operating in production chains
- Users' networks

Core Topic 4: Social Policy and Quality of Life

People's quality of life is a commonly found notion, although its explicit referents are not always comparable. It is used indiscriminately to describe styles or ways of life, or to the level or standard of living (the latter usually regarding the consumption of goods and services and access to comforts). Development can be based on ethics centred on the notion of human knowledge (that is, on the development of people's faculties and potentials). Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century it is now possible to assess the quality of people's life in terms of extending conditions and opportunities (both economically and socially) and other fundamental human freedoms, for the development of capacities enabling people to live the type of life which they have reasons to value.

In this sense, it is necessary to analyse the impacts of policies affecting the quality of life in two relevant areas: on the one hand, on the macroeconomic level consideration should be given to recent tendencies in the labour market; and on the other, to people's degrees of satisfaction.

The central purpose of this area of research is to conceptualise the quality of life, addressing two main questions: What is the quality of life? And how is it to be measured?

- Quality of life as a goal of sustainable development, and not only as a right pertaining to certain minorities
- The impact of the structural reforms of the pension systems on the quality of life
- Indicators of the quality of urban life

Core Topic 5: Environment and Natural Resource Management

The objective of this task group is to analyse the interactions among the economic system, the ecological-environmental system and the social system in order to support the rational and sustainable use of natural resources in the long term. It also aims to generate guidelines that can contribute to the creation and implementation of environmental policies nationally. For that purpose, CINPE has been outstanding in interactive research where different social actors participate in the research process.

Water Resources

- Water assessment for human consumption, production and production of hydro-energy
- Planning for watershed management

Forest Resources

- Property rights and other institutions
- Economic-ecological assessment of environmental services
- Lumber production, integration of forest or plantation and industry
- Changes in land-use
- Social actors' role in processes for the efficient use of natural resources

Marine Coastal Resources

- Contamination of natural and environmental coastal resources
- Integrated management of the marine/coastal zone
- Definition of policies for the comprehensive management of marine/coastal resources

Core Topic 6: Structural Change

The objective of this core topic is to conduct research on the changes in the composition of the economy in its sectoral, spatial and macroeconomic aspects, including the qualitative characteristics of structural change such as transfer, technological change and sectoral transformation.

Compositional Structural Change

- Agriculture and agro-industry
- Transfer and technological change
- Macroeconomic aspects
- Spatial aspects

Comprehensive and Qualitative Aspects of Structural Change

GRADUATE PROGRAM

The main goal of CINPE graduate programs (as approved by the UNA Vice-Chancellory of Academic Affairs and nationally by CONARE) is to provide Costa Rican and Central American professionals in the public and private sectors with the highest academic levels and with the most effective, modern management tools to promote their performance in three different areas of the country's economic and commercial activity:

1. Design and execution of the national economic policy for development.
2. Management of firms and institutions related to international trade operations.
3. Management of the public sector and its main institutions.

Master's in Economic Policy for Central America and the Caribbean

The program was founded in 1985 with the support of universities and European economic co-operation with the objective of attending the needs for professionalising public officials and university professors in Central America and the Caribbean.

It has received over 250 students from this region, including 76 Costa Ricans and 72 foreigners who have formed part of 12 different graduating classes, after having completed their respective research projects for their master's theses.

This master's program consists of an introductory trimester and one year of basic studies. In the second year there is an emphasis in International Economics and in Sustainable Development and Ecological Economics, in which the students should develop their graduation project and present their theses.

Master's in International Trade Management

This program was created in 1999 as an answer to the then already advanced process of opening and deregulation of economic activity, and is very strongly oriented to incorporating firms and institutions in international trade. It has received over 200 candidates, of whom 63 students have completed their studies, as of the seventh graduating class.

This program consists of 18 trimester courses, organised by topic in 6 modules of 3 courses each.

Each module covers important areas of the commercial activities of firms and institutions related to international trade, such as finance and international marketing, competitiveness and innovation, international trade negotiations, standards and quality seals.

Master's in Public Finance Management

The main objective of the CINPE Continuing Education Project is to make a significant contribution to the specialised training of officials who are capable of carrying out tasks as part of interdisciplinary teams with the purpose of increasing the feasibility of policies and projects, taking environmental sustainability into consideration.

These courses have been oriented especially to national and international professionals who direct and work with public service entities, regulating bodies, the office of the Ombudsman, cooperatives, municipalities and an enormous number of private enterprises in different fields.

Graduate Courses

The main objective of the CINPE Continuing Education Project is to make a significant contribution to the specialised training of officials who are capable of carrying out tasks as part of interdisciplinary teams with the purpose of increasing the feasibility of policies and projects, taking environmental sustainability into consideration.

These courses have been oriented especially to national and international professionals who direct and work with public service entities, regulating bodies, the office of the Ombudsman, cooperatives, municipalities and an enormous number of private enterprises in different fields.

CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

CINPE is associated with highly prestigious peer institutions interested in supporting initiatives which promote sustainable development nationally and internationally within the framework of the new model of North-South and South-South relations. In this sense, the exchange of experiences and personnel, along with research and training, has strengthened institutional relationships with the aim of unifying their best possible efforts.

In Costa Rica

CINPE-UNA has direct and indirect ties with different national organisations to complement efforts of specialisation in multidisciplinary areas. Some of these institutions include:

- Centres and Chambers:
CCT, INBIO, CEDARENA,
CAPROSOFT
- Public Universities:
University of Costa Rica (UCR)
Technological University (TEC)
Distance State University (UNED)
- Ministries of Environment and Energy,
Agriculture, Livestock and Finance, Science and
Technology
- Decentralised Institutions:
Utility companies (ICE, ARESEP, AyA) JAPDEVA, banks
(Central Bank, among others) government offices
(Contraloría General de la República),
postal services (Correos de Costa Rica S.A), Municipalities

Internationally

CINPE-UNA has established international agreements and collaborates with public and private organisations around the world, including:

Universities

- In Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos (USAC), Universidad de El Valle, and Universidad Rafael Landívar
- In El Salvador: Universidad de El Salvador
- In Nicaragua: Universidad Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) and Universidad de Centroamérica (UCA)
- In Dominican Republic: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC)
- In Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de México (UAM) and Universidad de Quintana Roo (UQROO)

International Organisations

- In The Netherlands: Tilburg University, Wageningen University, Utrecht University, Radboud University, Nijmegen
- In Denmark: Aalborg University and the Technical University of Denmark (DTU)
- In Norway: Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), Bergen
- In the United States of America: University of Maryland, University of Vermont and New Mexico State University
- In Belgium: Ghent University
- French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)
- Ford Foundation
- Mott Foundation
- Foundation for the Development of El Salvador
- FUNDECOOPERACIÓN
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Fulbright Academic Exchange Program
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
- International Society of Ecological Economics (ISEE)
- World Wildlife Foundation (WWF)

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