



ICT-P-006

Protocol for

Travel Agencies and Tour Operators.

TOURISM SECTOR

**CREATION DATE:
DECEMBER-2020**

VERSION: 004

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FOREWORD

This document corresponds to the guidelines that must be addressed by the Tourism Sector, specifically Travel Agencies and Tour Operators, in order to implement the Specific Guidelines for the Tourism Sector, duly issued by the Ministry of Health of Costa Rica.

OBJECTIVE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

The objective of this document is to establish the requirements that allow the reactivation of the tourism sector under the alert by COVID-19, specifically the Travel Agencies and Tour Operators and seeks that this sub-sector can gradually provide their services to clients, taking into account the provisions established to avoid chains of contagion.



HYGIENE AND DISINFECTION

OVERVIEW

A general inspection of the property is recommended.

Check the proper operation of electrical equipment and installations.

It should be verified that all the cleaning utensils to be used in the process are in good condition of use, if not, they should be replaced. This is to guarantee the work done and above all the protection of the physical integrity of the personnel responsible for carrying out the cleaning.

Do not touch your face during the cleaning and disinfection process, regardless of whether or not gloves are being used.

Wear gloves for cleaning. Wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves.

Perform cleaning and disinfection of facilities, utensils and work equipment, in accordance with the procedure established by each tourist company.

Waste collection and disposal must be carried out in accordance with the procedure established by the tourism company.

Guarantee supplies for cleaning and disinfection of work areas, as well as user care.

Information measures to employees on the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and the individual and collective protection measures to be taken at the workplace and at home for the prevention of contagion must be informed collectively or individually and shall be available in defined locations for continuous consultation. Electronic means could be used for dissemination.



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROCEDURE

The activities to be carried out for cleaning and disinfection of the workplace are as follows:



A

Procedures for hand washing

- The protocols established by the Ministry of Health and annexed in Annex 1 shall be followed, which shall be placed in a visible place, both for employees and people who are users of the services offered.
- Maintain toilet paper, antibacterial soap, disposable hand drying towels and gel alcohol in employee and public restrooms.



B

Activities for rinsing and drying

- The protocols established by the Ministry of Health and annexed in Annex 1 shall be followed, which shall be placed in a visible place, both for employees and for people who are users of the services offered.
- Maintain, in the places established for disinfection of hands, disposable towels for drying hands.
- Maintain, in places intended for hand drying, gel alcohol for use by collaborators and visitors after hand drying.



C

Activities for disinfection with effective anti-virus products

- Cleaning and hygiene measures should be intensified, mainly on surfaces that are frequently handled such as: handles, reception furniture, counters, display cases, shelves, chairs, tables, computer equipment, dataphones, among others.
- The use of gel alcohol by employees and visitors should be intensified, when interacting with each other

The company must determine the plan and frequency of cleaning and disinfection, in accordance with the movements of personnel and visitors. Said plan must be communicated to the company's collaborators, in order for it to be respected and to collaborate with the people who must apply it.

The administration of the tourist company must establish the persons responsible for cleaning, disinfection, waste management, and the use of personal protective equipment, and must ensure that these collaborators receive the training that must be given to the personnel who carry them out, as well as the rest of the collaborators and who are associated with these tasks, a record of them must be kept.



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PRODUCTS

Chemicals used for COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection must be packaged, labeled and registered with the Ministry of Health and within their validity period.

All equipment and materials used in cleaning and disinfection must be washed and disinfected at the end of the process.

IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL POINTS FOR DISINFECTION

Surfaces that are frequently handled by employees, visitors, and others, which will be priority for the cleaning and disinfection process.

a) In the Offices of Travel Agencies or Tour Operators:

• Light switches, handles, handrails, locks, restrooms, remotes, sinks, faucets, telephones, cups, desk surfaces or reception furniture, drawer handles, horizontal surfaces, coffee makers, light and air conditioning controls, among others.

b) In Transport Units:

Outer Handles	Interior Handles	Instrument Panel, steering wheel, Gear shift, Belts	In-vehicle electronics: Mobile, Tablets, (Microphone)	Radio
		Seats		A/C
		Vehicle roof		

Form and products used for cleaning electronic elements (phones, screens, keyboards, mouse, cell phones, printers, among others).

1. IN THE OFFICES OF THE TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TOUR OPERATORS

In the case of cleaning and disinfection of electronic equipment, it must be carried out in accordance with the recommendations provided by the manufacturer for these tasks, so these requirements or recommendations must be verified in the manuals or on the manufacturer's website.

The following steps that apply to electronic devices are suggested:

- a. Turn off the computer.
- b. Disconnect power supplies, devices, and external cables.
- c. Use only a soft, lint-free cloth.
- d. Keep liquids away from the product, unless otherwise indicated for specific products.
- e. Do not let moisture enter through any opening.
- f. Do not use sprays, bleaches or abrasive substances.
- g. Do not spray any cleaner directly onto the device.
- h. Do not use products containing acetone, as it may damage your equipment.
- i. Finally, wash your hands frequently with soap and water following the corresponding protocols.

2. IN THE TRANSPORT UNIT:

In the case of cleaning and disinfection of electronic equipment, it must be carried out in accordance with the recommendations provided by the manufacturer for these tasks, so these requirements or recommendations must be verified in the manuals or on the manufacturer's website.

The way to disinfect the equipment in the transport unit must be according to the recommendations and requirements established by the manufacturer and thus consigned in the user manuals or website of the same.

Form and products used in the cleaning of objects used in the attention of the public such as: display cabinets or windows, electric bells, microphones, dataphones, pens, among others.

- 1. Intensify the frequency of cleaning and hygiene in these spaces, with greater rigor, on the supporting surfaces.**
- 2. An alcohol-based solution of at least 70% should be used, as well as with commercial products recommended by the Ministry of Health.**
- 3. It is suggested to keep alcohol gel dispensers in public areas.**

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE).

According to Executive Decree No. 42603-S of September 07, 2020, the company must provide the mandatory mask for all users who require access to its services within its facilities, the foregoing being personal protective equipment.

In addition, when the service of transporting people is required in its different modalities, the mask must also be made mandatory.

The use of the face mask or face shield shall be optional and additional to the mandatory use of the mask as personal protective equipment. Necessary personal protective equipment, used to carry out the activities of the service provided:

- a) Staff who, due to their roles, are in close contact with the customer, should use personal protective equipment when they cannot maintain physical distancing.**
- b) Personal protective equipment must be snug and stable, so that it does not require constant handling.**
- c) In the case of using a face mask should:**
 - Masks should be placed so that there is a fit to the nose and mouth, so that it does not allow fluid transmission
 - Staff should wash their hands before and after putting on or removing a mask.
 - Hospital surgical masks (type N95) should not be used, these should be reserved for health personnel.
 - The mask should not be placed on the head or moved to another position.

- a) **Face protectors should be stored or transported in sealed bags to prevent contamination.**
- b) **During meals, breaks or visits to the restroom, the mask must be removed with clean hands and stored in a sealed, clean bag and then repositioned (with the proper handwashing protocol before and after).**

Travel Agencies and Tour Operators agree to provide the protective equipment to their personnel that they require for the operation of their activities.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. IN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:

- a) The company must carry out waste management in accordance with the guidelines established in the National Strategy for Waste Separation, Recovery and Recovery (ENSRVR) 2016-2021, of the Ministry of Health.
- b) The waste bag should be closed when it reaches 80% of its capacity, to avoid overflow.
- c) The outer part of the bags to be discarded should be sprayed with chlorine solution (5000 ppm) or otherwise with an alcohol-based solution of at least 70%.

2. IN TRANSPORT UNITS:

- a) For the handling of waste, masks, gloves, disposable tissues, each unit will have a waste bin with plastic bag, specific for this purpose.
- b) When the service is finished, each bag with the discarded waste will be taken to each company for its proper disposal.
- c) The garbage container within the workplace facilities will be a container, identified for this purpose and with its proper lid.
- d) Garbage is collected twice a week by the personnel provided by the Municipality of the place where the transport company is attached.

Form and frequency of cleaning of garbage bins within the premises of the workplace.

- a) Gloves will be used to remove the waste; the bags must be closed and should not be pressed to make more room.
- b) After discarding the bags, proceed to hand washing.
- c) Cleanup must be recorded either on a form or in a log and will be defined according to the area and the presence of high traffic of users.



LOGISTICS IN THE WORKPLACE

SERVICE OR OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN

If the establishment considers it necessary, it will have a Business Continuity Plan in which, as a minimum basis, it is recommended to include the following sections:

- a) Threat Identification.
- b) Impact Analysis on the establishment.
- c) Crisis Management.
- d) Emergency response.
- e) Communication in the Crisis.
- f) Recovery Process.

Additionally, the establishment must initiate the survey of the direct contacts of its collaborators, which contain at least the full name, telephone number and email, to be sent to the Ministry of Health in case they are suspected of contagion of COVID-19.

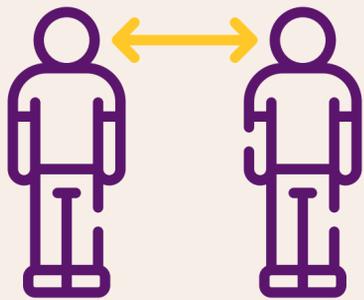
SHIFTS AND SCHEDULES

The establishment must design work schedules according to the need of its operation in such a way that physical distancing is achieved at the time of entry, work shifts and departure of personnel; respecting the time restrictions established by the Ministry of Health.

The establishment will use staggered shifts so that entry, break times and departures are ordered and, if applicable, alerts on the health of the employees can be identified.

The establishment will define the hours in accordance with the provisions of the Ministry of Labor in force.

Work schedules should include the time for the employee to wash their hands at least once every 60 minutes, for a minimum of approximately 40 seconds, or as deemed necessary.



MEASURES TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING BETWEEN CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES

a) Markings should be placed on the floor (colored adhesive tape

can be used) to indicate to customers how they should locate themselves when they stand in line in the reception area, bathrooms, entrance to the premises, waiting area in case they have to wait for attention (internal and external area of the premises).

b) Signs must be placed on the premises to remind customers and employees to maintain the physical distance of 1.8 meters (entrance area to the premises, toilets, collaborators rest area).

c) Contactless payment mechanisms should be used to maintain distance between the customer and the cashier.

d) Staff handling of cash and credit cards should be minimized.

e) If the employee has to handle money (bills):

• He or she must not touch their face after handling money.

• Ask the customer to place the money on the counter or other surface (analyze using plastic trays for money handling), not to receive it directly into the hands. And this will have to be disinfected after use.

• Disinfect the counter or surface used for handling money.

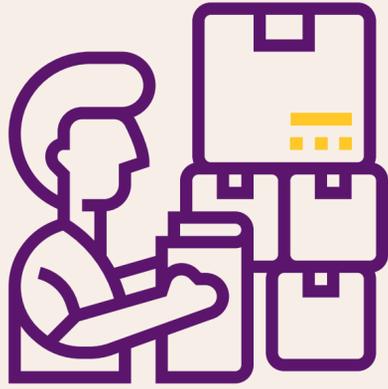
f) It is recommended to install a barrier (transparent plastic) between employees and customers, for example, in the box area.

g) Applications should be used as digital services offered by the company, or failing that, in physical form and made of material that can be disinfected after each use.

People who, due to their type of function, can carry out their work from home should be sent to telework; as long as their function allows it. In this case, the company will apply what is established in Legislative Decree No. 9734, Law to regulate Telework. The Administration of each business unit will determine the administrative personnel that can perform their functions by applying teleworking.

The company must cancel staff meetings until further notice and if they are necessary for the operation of the company, it must be adjusted to the 50% of the capacity of the room where they are to be held, as well as the measures indicated for the physical distancing of employees. They should not exceed the hour.

Regarding personnel travel outside the country or within the country, which are not linked to the normal operation of the company, the guidelines established by the Ministry of Health must be respected.



RECEPTION OF SUPPLIERS AND VISITORS

- a) Providers must wash their hands or disinfect with alcohol gel with a composition of between 60% and 70% when entering the establishment, as set out in the Ministry of Health's guidelines. Including the use of restrooms.
- b) The establishment must coordinate delivery times and indicate by signage the product reception process.
- c) The establishment must have alcohol gel dispensers with a composition of between 60% and 70%, which must be duly labeled for identification.
- d) When entering the property, providers must make sure that their clothes are clean.
- e) Carry a minimum of personal items (pens, calculators, tables, etc.) that can facilitate infection by contact.
- f) Do not place your cell phone or other communication device on surfaces, especially work tables or direct contact with food. Preferable not to use them at the time of delivery service.
- g) A physical distance must be maintained while trying to comply with the minimum distance of 1.8 meters, follow the greeting protocol established by the Ministry of Health.
- h) Stay only as long as needed on the premises.
- i) Deliveries of products must be made in the assigned area.
- j) Suppliers should frequently clean and disinfect all containers used for transport.
- k) Please note that staff should regularly clean and disinfect the reception area. You must use products authorized by the Ministry of Health.
- l) Providers do not have authorization or access to the customer service or food handling areas outside their service, if it exists in the company and if they do not exist, they cannot be at the same time as customers in the reception area or any other assigned area.
- m) Suppliers must not consume food, drink or smoke in the establishment during their service.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

a) Customer service logistics using tourist ground transportation units:

1. Transport units must be clean at the time of commencement of services, under the guidelines established by the tourism ground transport protocols.
 2. Drivers and tour guides must use face masks or face shields, according to the recommendations issued by the Ministry of Health.
 3. Disinfection supplies such as gel alcohol should be provided to customers at the time of entering the transport units, seeking to comply with the disinfection protocols established by the Ministry of Health.
 4. Customer baggage must be disinfected with a sprayer with an alcohol-based solution of at least 70%, disinfectant or any other cleaning product duly endorsed by the Ministry of Health, before entering the transport units.
 5. Customers must be informed about the protocols for hand washing, sneezing and coughing, not touching the face and other forms of greeting, for this information cards may be used, made of materials that allow cleaning and disinfection.
 6. Natural ventilation should be encouraged in terrestrial vehicles. In case of the use of air conditioning, check with the carrier for the proper maintenance of the air conditioner, according to the protocols established by the transport company.
 7. The use of face masks or face shields must be communicated to the customer upon the confirmation of the service during terrestrial tours. In addition to all the information and itinerary of your trip. A reminder of the above will be made before the trip to our country.
- In the event that the client does not have the mask or face mask, the company will provide the one it deems appropriate for the client's protection. In the case of the mask, it must be disposed of properly, once the service is finished.
8. It should be ensured that customers, during land transport, use masks or acrylic face shields (provided by the company if the customer does not have one) which must be properly disposed of after the service is completed.

b) Daily service procedure in the transport unit:

1. Transport units must be clean to do the services, under the guidelines established by road transport protocols for tourism.
2. Drivers and guides should wear face masks or face shields, according to the recommendations issued by the Ministry of Health on this equipment.
3. Disinfection supplies such as gel alcohol should be provided to customers at the time of entering the transport units, seeking to comply with the disinfection protocols established by the Ministry of Health.
4. Customer baggage must be disinfected with a sprayer with an alcohol-based solution of at least 70%, disinfectant or any other cleaning product duly endorsed by the Ministry of Health, before entering the transport units.
5. Customers must be informed about the protocols for hand washing, sneezing and coughing, not touching their faces and other forms of greeting, for this information cards could be used, made of materials that allow cleaning and disinfection.
6. Customers should wash their hands or use gel alcohol every time they go to the transport unit during the service.
7. Customers should be advised to wash their hands at each place visited, in accordance with the protocols established for this purpose by the Ministry of Health.
8. Natural ventilation should be promoted in land vehicles. In the case of the use of air conditioning, verify with the carrier its proper maintenance, according to the protocols established by the transport company.
9. Ensure that customers during land journeys in transport units use masks or acrylic face shields which must be properly disposed of after service is completed.

In the event that the client does not have the mask or face mask, the company will provide the one it deems appropriate for the client's protection. In the case of the mask, it must be disposed of properly, once the service is finished.

c) Procedure for visits to places of interest during the itinerary.

1. Clients must be informed that during the tour, in places of interest, about the importance of maintaining physical distance, they will be informed if it is necessary to continue

using masks or face shields.

2. The provisions for entering each place to be visited, and the hygiene and disinfection rules and physical distancing, as well as the concentration of people in the places, must be informed.

d) Check In Hotels

1. The guide and / or driver must know the check-in procedure of each hotel during the itinerary and inform the clients of it.

The measures used to ensure the minimum distance (meters) between employees during their work are as follows:

- a) At least 1.8 meters of distance between employees in the work areas should be maintained. Where this is not possible, other measures should be defined to protect employees, such as:
 - Position the collaborators in such a way that they do not stand in front of each other.
 - Use of personal protective equipment (e.g. masks).
 - Separate workstations.
 - Organize staff into working groups to reduce interaction between groups.
 - Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of surfaces

The way in which collaborators physically distance themselves when they take breaks together should be as follows:

- a) When possible, employee rest and dining areas should be adjusted to maintain physical distance (for example, separate tables, reduce the number of chairs per table, assign shifts to small groups).
- b) Prevent agglomerations of workers in the locker area (mainly entrance and exit times).
- c) Frequent cleaning and disinfection of employee dining areas, rest areas and other common areas should be maintained, as well as the placement of protocols published by the Ministry of Health in these areas.

For the use of stairs, electric bands and the like, frequent cleaning and disinfection will need to be maintained.

You must identify areas of high attendance of people such as the reception to install transparent acrylic screens.

Inform employees of the symptoms of COVID-19, share information issued by the Ministry of Health, as well as make them aware of the provisions of this protocol.

HYGIENE HABITS OF THE EMPLOYEE IN THE WORKPLACE:

a) The employee must comply with the following recommendations from the moment they go to their workplace:

- Maintain good daily personal hygiene
- Use Clean Clothes
- It is mandatory to change clothes for the work uniform or work clothes in the establishment, always observing the washing and disinfection of hands, as well as washing clothes.
- Keep distance between people at least 1.8 meters away.
- Do not touch your face or other parts of the body during the journey to your workplace.
- In case of presenting symptoms related to COVID-19, refrain from leaving the house, immediately notify the immediate superior and do not go to the workplace.
- Hand washing and disinfection when arriving at the workplace and when returning home.

b) The employee must comply with the following recommendations at their workplace:

- When entering and leaving the workplace, the protocol for greeting and washing or disinfecting hands with alcohol gel with a composition between 60 ° and 70 ° must be followed.
- All workers/employees must follow the protocols for coughing and sneezing, hand washing and other forms of greeting that are included in the annex to this document.

c) The people in charge of cleaning must protect themselves with gloves while carrying out the cleaning and hygiene of the facilities. After cleaning, the residues must be disposed of correctly and the hand washing established in the protocol indicated in the annex must be carried out.

d) Efforts should be made to maintain a minimum distance of 1.8 meters between employees to reduce the risk of infection.

e) You must fully comply with the protocol for hand washing and drying and the protocol for when to wash your hands.

f) For employees whose functions do not warrant the use of a cell phone, this must be kept in their respective locker or bag for personal use. Those who must use the cell phone must disinfect it frequently.

g) Employees must keep their personal items clean for use in the workplace such as: glasses, tablets, pens, agendas among others.

ACTIONS FOR CONFIRMED CASES AMONG EMPLOYEES AND CLIENTS.

In the event of an employee with a confirmed case of COVID-19, the Travel Agency and Tour Operator must notify the corresponding Governing Area of the Ministry of Health, so that it may implement the appropriate control and monitoring actions according to the National Guidelines for the Surveillance of the COVID-19 disease

In addition, the following recommendations should be followed when a suspected COVID-19 case is confirmed:

1. Perform primary assessment of the employee, using the PPE indicated above.

2. Encourage that the person with signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 remain physically isolated.

3. Once the assessment has been made, the establishment will make a phone call to the nearest Ministry of Health office, whose number must be visibly available in administrative areas, and the latter in turn will manage the team that will assess the health condition of the case in a timely manner suspect and give us the steps to follow.

4. If it is recommended to go to the health center, the transfer, as much as possible, must be carried out through a means involving the least contact with people, and then wait for the Ministry of Health to provide further instructions.

5. A mask must be worn for the transfer, if you do not have a mask please notify the health center when you get there, they will provide you with the corresponding implements.

6. Remember that the mask is useful only until it gets dirty or moistened; if that happens, it must be changed and discarded.

7. Without medical indications, the administration of drugs for symptomatic relief is not recommended.

8. If home isolation is indicated, preventive and isolation measures must be continued to avoid the appearance of new cases and apply and continue the indications given by the health team that provided health care for the person's home management.

9. Perform the necessary actions to maintain good health self-care, such as: proper hydration, healthy eating, toothbrushing, restful sleep, low salt and sugar consumption, and physical activity (as much as possible) inside the room.

Travel Agency and Tour Operator staff will follow the instructions of the Ministry of Health in the event of a confirmed case or a suspicious contact. They should provide whatever collaboration is within their reach to facilitate the work and research carried out by the Ministry of Health. Additionally, you must keep a log or record of information for employees who consult for symptoms related to a respiratory disease, or with potential risks of contracting the disease: over 60 years old, hypertensive, with respiratory conditions, diabetes, or who are in treatment for cancer or other disease that compromises your immune system. Also, if you have been around a suspected case.

In the event that an employee is confirmed with COVID-19, the following must be implemented:

- a) Please close the establishment and carry out the cleaning and disinfection procedure throughout the premises in case of detection of confirmed COVID-19 personnel.
- b) You must inform the case collaborators for a COVID-19 analysis in the appropriate EBAIS or Governing Area of the Ministry of Health.
- c) You should let your customers know the situation.
- d) You should open the service to the public when you confirm that no contributor is positive for a COVID-19 analysis.

In the event that a customer, which is transported by the tourist ground transport unit is confirmed with COVID-19 during the transfers of its itineraries, the following shall be implemented:

- a) If you have a symptomatic case of COVID-19, the driver or tour guide must coordinate with the CCSS Communications Center (Contact via telephone 2290-0513, 2290-1893, 2103-1500 or 2220-3510 or through System 9-1-1 or 1-1-2-3). The latter shall inform the appropriate medical center for proper preparation and waiting for the patient.
- b) The driver or tour guide must notify the health authorities of the places and persons with which the suspected COVID-19 customer has contacted during the itinerary.

c) The most common symptoms a client may have from COVID-19 infection are:

- a. Fever
- b. Exhaustion
- c. Dry cough

Some patients may have the following symptoms:

- a. Pain
- b. Nasal congestion
- c. Rhinorrhea (liquid mucus)
- d. Sore throat
- e. Diarrhea
- f. Loss of taste
- g. Loss of smell

d) Once the client has been referred for the attention of the symptoms by COVID-19, the driver and tour guide, must report to the head of the Travel Agency and Tour Operator, the contact he had with a suspected case of COVID -19, and must inform the health authorities, so that the health measures to be implemented can be assessed.

e) After the operation of the transport unit has been completed, the unit shall be disinfected in accordance with the procedures established for the disinfection of passenger transport units.

COMMUNICATION

In order to provide peace of mind and promote a good work environment indicate the actions carried out around the following elements.

a) Form used to share information related to COVID-19 that is truthful and from the Ministry of Health.

The establishment must define a reliable and official verbal or written communication channel to share information related to COVID-19 that is truthful and coming from the Ministry of Health. (information boards, posters, official signage in visible places, digital channels, among others).

1. Staff, suppliers and customers will be provided with the necessary information regarding the prevention and containment measures established for the COVID-19 emergency.

2. The protocols for sneezing and coughing, hand washing, other forms of greeting, not touching the face and risk populations, in the most common languages used for tourists, should be posted in visible spaces. (see annexes).

3. The administration will provide information about the services, as well as provisions on access, use of facilities and schedules, if necessary, as well as protocols related to COVID-19.

b) Person in charge of the communication during the emergency responsible for maintaining and updating the information.

The General Manager shall be the person responsible for maintaining and updating the information in an official manner or, failing that he shall designate the person he deems relevant to the post and shall inform everyone (collaborators and suppliers), who will be responsible for the communication from the Ministry Health.

The means of publication of the protocol, once approved by the Minister of Tourism, will be the official website of the Costa Rican Tourism Board, CANATUR and the Costa Rican Association of Tourism Operators.



APPROVAL, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The institutional leader who will approve this sectoral protocol is Mr. Gustavo Segura Sancho, Minister of Tourism.

