

Costa Rica



PLG Member Firm

Bufete Echeverría/Interlex

The BUFETE ECHEVERRIA is a General Practice Law Firm with over sixty years of experience located in the City of San José, Costa Rica. We have been providing legal advise and services to Costa Ricans, residents and foreigners alike since our founder, Lic. Mariano Echeverría Morales established the Firm.

Being a family-run and family owned law firm, our work atmosphere is casual and relaxed, combining the years of experience with the energy and motivation of our younger members.

Our goal is to maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and professional ethics. We pride ourselves on giving a reliable, consistent and personalized service to each client, understanding their special needs and requirements.

We provide all of our clients with acces to attorneys on a twenty four hour basis and through all the latest technological means.

We have associate Firms in the United States, Spain, Central America and Panama as well as Specialist Counsel within Costa Rica, allowing us to bring a global concept of services both in the legal and business fields.

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Costa Rica



Country Facts

Legal Facts:

Constitution: dates from 1949 and has suffered several reforms.

Legal system: Based on Spanish civil law system; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court; has accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Geographical Facts:

Area: total: 51,100 sq km, land: 50,660 sq km, water: 440 sq km

note: includes Isla del Coco

Natural Resources: hydropower

Demographic Facts:

Population: 4,075,261 (July 2006 est.)

Languages: Spanish

Government: Republic

Administrative Division: 7 provinces (provincias, singular - provincia); Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limon, Puntarenas, San Jose

Economical Facts:

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$48.77 billion (2006 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate) \$20.77 billion (2006 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 4.7% (2006 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$12,000 (2006 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: agriculture: 8.6%, industry: 31%, services: 60.4% (2006 est.)

Unemployment rate: 6.6% (2006 est.)

Exports: \$7.931 billion (2006 est.)

Exports - partners: US 42.6%, Hong Kong 6.9%, Netherlands 6.4%, Guatemala 4.2% (2005)

Imports: \$10.88 billion (2006 est.)

Imports - partners: US 41.3%, Japan 5.6%, Venezuela 4.8%, Mexico 4.8%, Ireland 4.3%, Brazil 4.2%, China 4.2% (2005)

Taxation:

Municipal Taxes: The local community government charges municipal taxes to clean the streets, for public lighting and to finance the local bureaucracy. The amount charged is based on the number of meters of street frontage of your property, its location, and on your Municipal Government. The amounts vary, but they are never over US\$10 per month per residence. If your house is rated at less than the ₡6,000,000.00 (six million colones) you are exempt from that tax.

Sales Tax: Sales tax is 13% on the amount paid for goods and for some services. The services of Lawyers, Doctors, Dentists and other independent professionals are exempt from sales tax;

Transfer Taxes: You do not pay sales taxes, as such, for your house or car. Because they have to be inscribed in the National Registry, you pay a Transfer tax.

Income Tax: all individuals who work - and any Corporations that are involved in commerce in Costa Rica - have to pay Income Tax. There is a tax scale and an amount due from the amount you earn from your employment, your professional services, and from whatever activity your Corporation performs. There is an exempt amount for the regular worker who earns less than or the exact amount that is established by law. For this year, the amounts are as follows:

Individuals: A) Income up to ₡215,600.00 per month is exempt. B) 10% tax is due on income in excess of ₡215,600.00 up to ₡324,100.00. C) 15% tax is due on incomes in excess of ₡324,100.00.

Corporations: There is no exempt amount for corporations, but they may deduct some expenses from their earnings. The tax percentage is taken from gross earnings, but that percentage is applied to net earnings. They are regulated the following way: Corporations pay 30% tax over the annual earnings for 1 October to 30 September. Small enterprises are Corporations whose gross earnings are under ₡28,860,000.00 (US\$93,090.00) per year: A) 10% tax on amounts up to ₡13,200,000.00 (US\$42,580.00) in gross income. B) 20% tax on amounts above ₡13,200,000.00 up to ₡28,860,000.00 (US\$93,090.00) in gross income.