

Global Immigration alert

June 2025

Costa Rica

Updates to company registration regulations

Executive summary

The government of Costa Rica will introduce changes to the regulations for registering companies with the Immigration and Foreigners General Directorate (i.e., the Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería (DGME)) in late June 2025.

Background

On 20 December 2024, the government of Costa Rica issued an Executive Decree to modernize and streamline the registration process for companies with the immigration authorities. Registering provides benefits to companies, including access to a dedicated service window for submitting applications, which expedites processing and reduces waiting times. Companies also benefit from a streamlined process when applying for residence authorization on behalf of their foreign employees, including reduced documentation requirements and simplified procedures.

Key developments

To support the country's ongoing efforts to improve administrative efficiency and attract foreign investment, the new decree will introduce the following changes:

- **Registration procedures:** The requirements and procedures for multinational companies relating to registration, renewals, and reporting significant changes (e.g., mergers, changes to legal entity names) will be adjusted to streamline these processes. Companies that are registered with the DGME will be required to report these changes to maintain their benefits. For "Category A" companies (i.e., companies operating or planning to operate under special export promotion regimes managed by the Ministry of Foreign Trade (COMEX) and the Export Promotion Agency (PROCIMER)), the PROCIMER will manage these

notifications. If a "Category B" company (i.e., companies that are engaged in research and development activities or that export goods or services but do not operate under special export promotion regimes) merges with a non-beneficiary company, the DGME will notify the COMEX. The COMEX may then reassess the original approval conditions and request updated documentation if needed.

- **Automatic registration:** Companies operating under special export promotion regimes administered by the COMEX and the PROCIMER, will be automatically registered with the DGME as long as they remain active. Currently, these companies are required to comply with requirements specific to their category and await a resolution from the DGME.
- **Category F requirements:** Companies classified under "Category F" (i.e., multinational companies headquartered abroad that have a subsidiary in Costa Rica and operate in the production and commercialization of goods and services) will be required to submit a notarized document to the DGME from their parent company certifying that they operate in at least three other countries outside of Costa Rica. Currently, these companies must present more extensive documentation (e.g., permits, licenses, equivalent documents) proving that they are authorized to operate in each of those countries. This will simplify the process, as companies will only be required to provide a single notarized document from their parent company instead of multiple documents.
- **Retention of status:** Companies that are currently registered with the DGME will maintain their registration status if they continue to meet the conditions of their specific



Shape the future
with confidence

program or classification category outlined in the Company Registration Regulations (Decree No. 36576-G-COMEX). These companies will automatically receive a two-year extension of their registration validity period, except for those in "Category G" (i.e., those that are operating or plan to operate in Costa Rica pursuant to a contract with a Costa Rican government entity with a duration that exceeds one year). For "category G" companies, the registration validity period will remain as specified in their contract with the government of Costa Rica. This extension allows for a total registration validity period of up to four years.

Impact on employers

The new decree will benefit companies registered with the DGME by offering them expedited processing and reduced waiting times in connection with immigration processes. This streamlined approach will particularly benefit employers applying for residence authorization on behalf of their foreign employees and simplify the task of securing their legal status in the country. Additionally, by extending the registration validity period, companies will no longer need to renew their registration every two years, reducing administrative burdens and ensuring greater continuity in business operations.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

Fernando Vargas Winiker
Partner - Global Immigration
Tel: +506 2208 9775
Email: fernando.vargas.winiker@cr.ey.com

Nadia Chaves Zúñiga
Senior Manager - Global Immigration
Tel: +506 2459 9543
Email: nadia.chaves.zuniga@cr.ey.com

María Cristina Mena Chaves
Staff - Global Immigration
Tel: +506 2459 9355
Email: cristina.mena@cr.ey.com

EY | Building a better working world

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multi-disciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

All in to shape the future with confidence.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

© 2025 Ernst & Young LLP.
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 004730 -25Gbl

2101-3682263
ED None

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as accounting, tax, legal or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

ey.com