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## **SAFE TOURISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORKER PROTECTION IN COLOMBIA AND COSTA RICA**

**TURISMO SEGURO: UN ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO DE LA  
PROTECCIÓN DE LOS TRABAJADORES EN COLOMBIA Y  
COSTA RICA**

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## Safe Tourism: A Comparative Analysis of Worker Protection in Colombia and Costa Rica

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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a detailed review of relevant publications concerning labor protection and well-being in the travel industry of Colombia and Costa Rica. Both countries are recognized for their rich natural and cultural diversity, making them highly attractive international tourist destinations. The travel industry serves as a vital source of financial resources and employment, playing a crucial role in fostering economic prosperity and social progress in these regions. This research aims to investigate aspects related to worker protection in this sector, including the regulations, laws, and agreements that govern labor protection and employee well-being. The study examines initiatives implemented to ensure safe and healthy working conditions, the challenges faced by workers, as well as incidents and other pertinent factors. The primary objective of this research is to establish the standards set in Colombia and Costa Rica regarding the protection and well-being of employees within the tourism sector. It aims to analyze the strategies employed to safeguard employee welfare and promote healthy work environments, creating secure conditions that favor sustainable tourism in both nations. The methodological approach is based on a review of existing literature, encompassing documents and research published in the last five years. Reliable documentary sources will be examined, employing keywords in multiple languages to broaden the informational perspective on protection and well-being in the tourism industry's labor context. This review will include legislation, reports from international organizations, and relevant academic studies. The findings reveal that both Colombia and Costa Rica have a current regulatory framework addressing elements related to labor protection and well-being within the tourism sector. Both nations promote the establishment of safe and health-promoting work environments, outlining obligations for both employers and employees in implementing these standards. Additionally, initiatives and programs aimed at enhancing employee health and satisfaction, alongside sustainability in the tourism sector, contribute to developing safe and effective workplaces in the tourism industry of both countries.

**Keywords:** safety, health, work, tourism, tourism sect



# Turismo Seguro: Un Análisis Comparativo de la Protección de los Trabajadores en Colombia y Costa Rica

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Este trabajo se centra en realizar una revisión detallada de las publicaciones relevantes centrada en la protección y el bienestar laboral en la industria de los viajes de la nación colombiana y Costa Rica. Ambos países son reconocidos por su rica diversidad natural y cultural, lo que los hace destinos turísticos de gran atractivo a nivel internacional. La industria de los viajes representa no solo una fuente esencial de recursos financieros y empleo, sino que además es crucial para fomentar la prosperidad económica y el progreso social en estas regiones. En este sentido, se busca investigar aspectos vinculados a la protección de los trabajadores en este sector, así como las normativas, leyes y acuerdos que regulan la protección en la actividad laboral y el bienestar de los empleados. Se examinarán las iniciativas implementadas para asegurar condiciones seguras y saludables en el entorno laboral, los retos que enfrentan en su entorno laboral, así como las incidencias y otros factores pertinentes. **Objetivo:** El propósito principal de esta investigación es establecer los estándares establecidos en Colombia y Costa Rica en lo que respecta a la protección y bienestar de los empleados dentro del ámbito turístico. Se pretende analizar las tácticas implementadas para salvaguardar el bienestar de los empleados y fomentar ambientes laborales saludables, creando condiciones seguras que favorezcan la promoción del turismo sostenible en las dos naciones. **Metodología:** La aproximación metodológica implementada en esta investigación tiene su origen en un análisis de la bibliografía existente que abarca documentos e investigaciones divulgadas en los últimos cinco años. Se revisarán fuentes documentales confiables, utilizando palabras clave en varios idiomas para ampliar la visión informativa sobre la protección y bienestar en el trabajo dentro de la industria del turismo. Esta revisión incluirá legislación, informes de organismos internacionales y estudios académicos pertinentes. **Resultados:** Se ha identificado que tanto Colombia como Costa Rica disponen de un marco normativo vigente que aborda elementos vinculados a la protección y el bienestar en el entorno laboral dentro del sector turístico. Ambas naciones promueven el establecimiento de ambientes de trabajo que sean seguros y propicios para la salud, estableciendo obligaciones tanto para empleadores como para empleados en la aplicación de estas normas. Además, se señalan iniciativas y programas que buscan impulsar la salud y satisfacción de los empleados junto con la sostenibilidad en el sector turístico, aportando de esta manera al desarrollo de espacios de trabajo seguros y eficaces en la industria turística de ambos países.

**Palabras clave:** seguridad, salud, trabajo, turismo, sector turístico

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this document review study is to examine and compare the elements related to the protection and welfare of people working in the tourism sector in Colombia and Costa Rica. Both nations stand out for their natural and cultural wealth, which positions them as outstanding tourist destinations in Latin America. However, the well-being of employees in this sector is crucial, as tourism may involve specific risks linked to work activities. Through this analysis, we will investigate the norms, laws, decrees and regulations on protection and welfare in the professional environment, with the aim of understanding how these aspects are implemented in the work environments of both nations and how the welfare of personnel working in the tourism sector is safeguarded.

. In Costa Rica, tourism is one of the essential foundations of its economy, constituting about 10% of total GDP and generating numerous employment opportunities, both direct and indirect. The country is recognized for its biodiversity and its focus on ecotourism, which attracts visitors from around the world. However, the tourism sector also faces challenges in terms of the protection and well-being of employees, who may be subjected to various hazards in their work environment. In contrast, Colombia's tourism sector has experienced significant growth in the recent period, which has positioned it as an important source of employment and economic development. The country offers a wide variety of tourist attractions, ranging from beaches to mountains, which has generated greater demand for tourism services. Despite this progress, the protection and welfare of employees in the Colombian tourism industry remains a challenge that needs attention, especially in a context where labor informality is prevalent.

### **Background**

The ILO, a global organization dedicated to labor issues, has emphasized in multiple nations the need to ensure a work environment that is conducive to workers, with a particular focus on the tourism sector. Through conventions and recommendations, the ILO provides guidelines on protection and well-being in the work environment, which are fundamental to safeguarding employees. Among the most significant conventions are Convention No. 155, which deals with the protection and welfare of employees, and Convention No. 187, which creates a scheme for the promotion of labor protection and welfare.



In Costa Rica, the Labor Code and Law No. 2 of 1943 lay the foundations for safeguarding safe and healthy conditions for workers. Law No. 7 of 1993, known as the Occupational Health Law, establishes concrete regulations on what measures organizations must implement to protect the well-being of their employees. This legislation requires the formation of committees regarding occupational protection and welfare, as well as the performance of risk assessments in workplaces, thus ensuring a more protected work environment.

In Colombia, the single regulatory regulation of the labor sector issued in 2015 regulates the Organizational Framework for the Management of Occupational Risks, which is an obligation that all business organizations must comply with. This regulation establishes guidelines for the identification of risks, The dissemination of wellness and the anticipation of occupational diseases. In addition, Law 1562 of 2012 reinforces the importance of ensuring work environments that guarantee safety and wellbeing in all regions of the country..

Both countries not only adopt these regulations not only to comply with global standards, but also seek to foster a culture of prevention and wellness at work. The successful implementation of these laws and agreements contributes to the reduction of occupational incidents and work-related illnesses, thus promoting sustainable development in the labor sector. Collaboration between employers, workers and governmental organizations is essential to establish an adequate work environment that not only protects the physical integrity of workers, but also supports their psychological and emotional health.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This analysis was carried out through a detailed analysis of the literature related to workplace protection and wellbeing in the tourism sector in Colombia and Costa Rica. An analysis of multiple documentary sources was carried out, including official governmental pages, reports of the World Labor Organization (WTO), academic articles and previous relevant studies. Key words such as “safety”, “health”, “employment”, “tourism”, “labor welfare”, “Colombia” and “Costa Rica” were used to search for information. The research was conducted mainly in Spanish, but sources in English were also explored in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

In addition, aspects such as the legislation in force in each country, professional training initiatives and the implementation of risk mitigation tactics were considered. Special attention was paid to the



challenges and possibilities that arise in the tourism industry in connection with the welfare and protection of its employees, as well as to the best practices adopted in the region. This approach made it possible to identify trends, comparative analyses and recommendations that can contribute to the strengthening of welfare and labor protection in this industry. In the end, it is anticipated that the findings of this study will provide a foundation for future research and for the formulation of more effective policies in the framework of occupational safety and welfare in the tourism sector in Colombia and Costa Rica.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

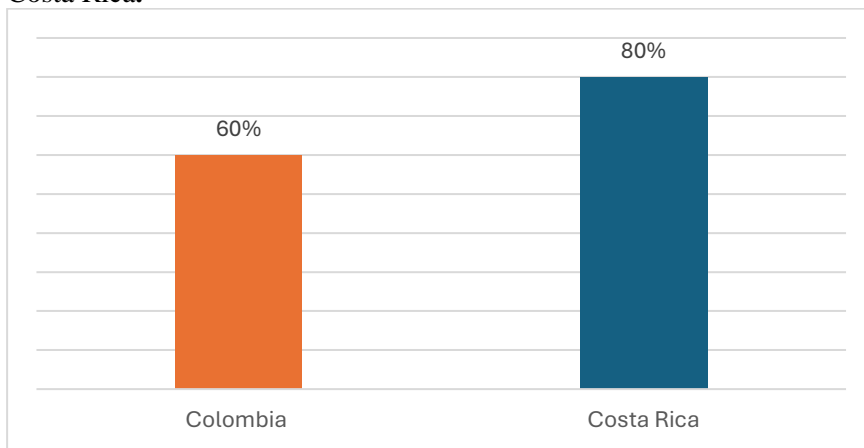
In Costa Rica, the tourism sector has a regulatory framework that promotes the protection, as well as the health and well-being of workers. Occupational health legislation establishes the obligation to conduct assessments to identify hazards and implement preventive actions in the workplace. In addition, employers must provide training to their employees on protection and wellbeing in the workplace, especially in aspects connected with equipment management, accident prevention and emergencies.

However, despite the existence of these regulations, incidences of labor incidents have been reported in the tourism industry, especially in activities related to the operation of machinery and the handling of chemical substances. Ongoing training and monitoring of compliance with regulations are essential to mitigate these risks.

Occupational health and safety in Colombia, specifically in the tourism industry, faces similar challenges. Although the OSHMS establishes clear standards for the protection of the welfare and protection of employees, the informal labor economy and the absence of adequate training are ongoing problems. Many workers in the tourism sector do not have access to protection and care programs in the occupational environment, which increases their vulnerability to occupational hazards.



**Figure 1.** Conformity with labor regulations on safety and health in the tourism industry. Colombia vs. Costa Rica.

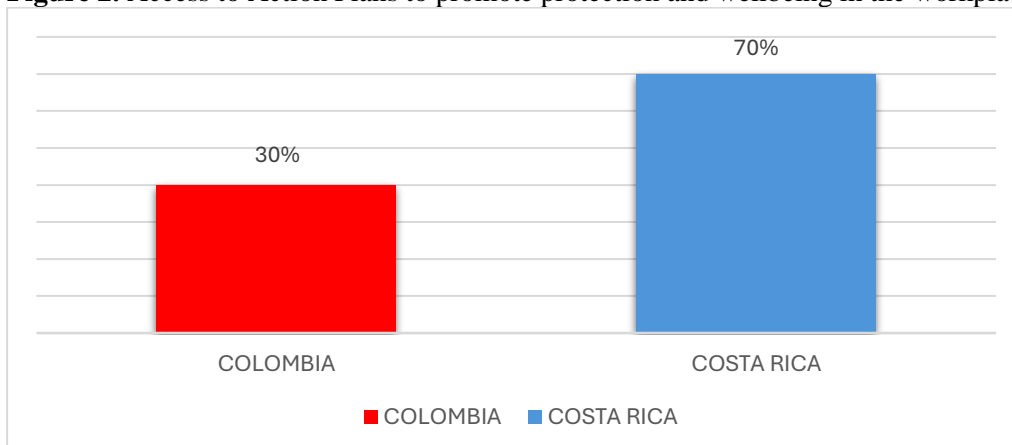


Fuente: Pabón,H.(2025)

This bar chart compares the level of adherence to labor protection and occupational health regulations in the tourism industry in Costa Rica and Colombia. The graph shows that Costa Rica has 80% compliance, indicating more effective management in the implementation of labor protection and occupational health regulations. In contrast, Colombia has 60% compliance, suggesting areas for improvement in this area.

Both countries have adopted regulations aimed at ensuring the protection of their physical and emotional health in the tourism industry. However, there are differences in the application and adherence to these regulations. In Costa Rica, the Occupational Health Law is more specific in terms of training health teams and conducting risk studies, while in Colombia, the focus is more on the practical application of the system to manage occupational health and safety..

**Figure 2.** Access to Action Plans to promote protection and wellbeing in the workplace

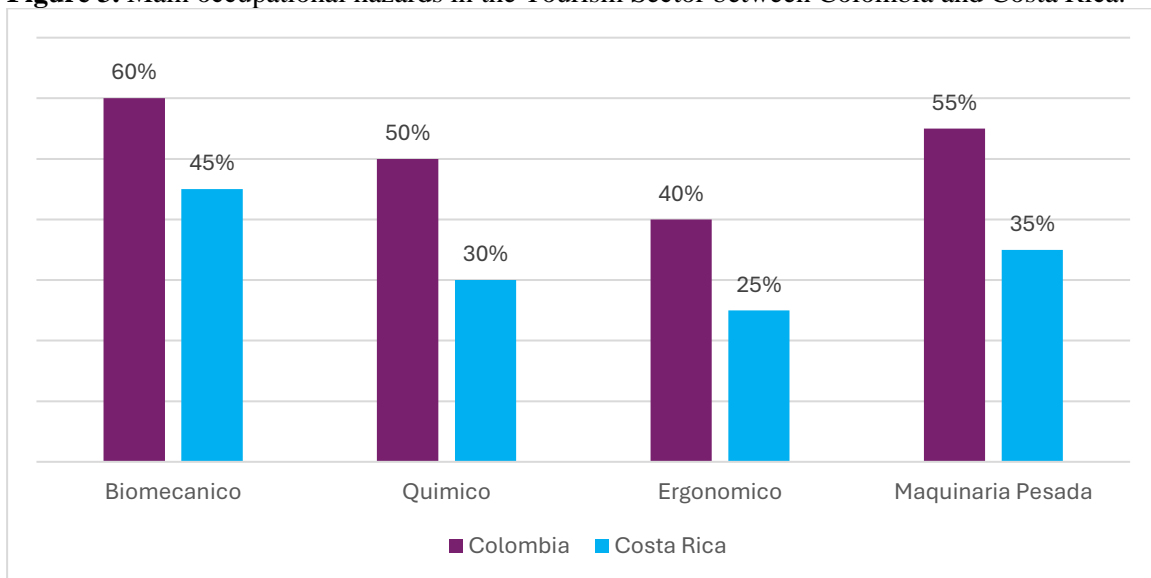


Fuente: Pabon,H.(2025)



This pie chart illustrates the percentage of workers in the tourism sector who have access to programs on protection and well-being in the work environment in Costa Rica and Colombia. In Costa Rica, 70% of employees have access to these intervention programs, reflecting a proactive approach to protection and well-being in the work environment. In Colombia, only 30% of employees have access, suggesting the urgency of optimizing the availability and accessibility of such intervention programs.

**Figure 3.** Main occupational hazards in the Tourism Sector between Colombia and Costa Rica.



Fuente: Pabon,H.(2025)

This bar chart compares exposure to different types of occupational hazards in the tourism industry in Costa Rica and Colombia. It shows that, in Costa Rica, the greatest risk is biomechanical (45%), followed by chemical risks (30%) and heavy machinery (35%). In Colombia, exposure to biomechanical (60%) and chemical (50%) risks is significantly higher, suggesting a riskier work environment compared to Costa Rica.

Studies have shown that workers in the Colombian tourism sector are also exposed to biomechanical and ergonomic risks, as well as risks associated with the use of chemical products and the handling of heavy equipment. It is essential to implement hazard identification and prevention programs in order to reduce the accident rate.

One of the factors to be taken into account is Colombia's labor informality, which hinders effective compliance with labor protection and occupational health standards, as many workers do not have the opportunity to benefit from the services offered by social security and prevention programs. In contrast,

Costa Rica has a higher rate of formalization in tourism employment, which helps to adhere to established regulations.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Both countries have established regulatory frameworks to ensure the protection and well-being of employees in tourism, but the effectiveness of these regulations varies depending on their implementation and adherence..

Costa Rica has made greater progress in the formalization of tourism employment, allowing for better enforcement of labor protection and occupational health standards. In contrast, Colombia faces significant challenges due to the lack of formality in the sector's work environment.

Education and ongoing training development are important in both countries to prevent occupational incidents and illnesses in the tourism industry. It is crucial that employers prioritize the welfare and protection of their employees to create care and safety for their staff.

It is recommended to strengthen training and awareness programs in terms of labor protection and occupational welfare in the tourism sector in Colombia, in order to promote greater formalization of employment to ensure the possibility of accessing the benefits of the social security system.

The difference in regulations and methods of application are different in both countries, but they have a parallel approach when applying them in the labor spheres in this sector. But in the labor formality they do differ since Colombia stands out for the high accident rate and high demand by workers since they do not have any social security benefits, as on the other hand if Costa Rica complies, in an acceptable manner with several observations and findings to improve.

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