

# Guardians of Nature

Walking the Path to Equity

COSTA RICA







**Costa Rica is globally recognized for its commitment to conservation, protecting its biodiversity, and safeguarding key land and ocean ecosystems.**

More than 25% of the country's landmass falls under some form of Protected Wildlife Area (ASP, from its acronym in Spanish), preserving vital ecosystems that are home to 6.5% of the world's biodiversity.







**However, this natural wealth is not reflected in the diversity of those protecting it.**

In 2023, only 33% of National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC, from its acronym in Spanish) employees were women, facing structural barriers in a field shaped by traditional gender roles.







Traditional roles persist in daily operations. While men are assigned to patrols and fieldwork, women are typically given administrative, cleaning, and cooking duties.

**This division reinforces stereotypes and limits women's participation in strategic conservation efforts.**







**Beyond these assigned roles, infrastructure and equipment are not designed to meet their needs. Many sites lack separate sanitation facilities and rest areas for women, as well as nursing spaces, maternity-friendly uniforms, and childcare support.**

These conditions make it difficult for women to perform their duties effectively, compromising both their safety and well-being.







Reina Sánchez and Yocelin Ríos are two park rangers united by a shared mission: protecting Costa Rica's natural resources. Like many other female rangers, they balance their passion for conservation with family life, facing any challenges head-on.

**Their stories reflect the strength of all women leaving their mark on conservation.**





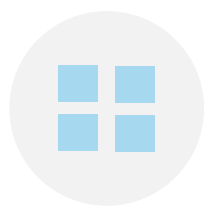


**For Reina, an administrator of Irazú Volcano and Turrialba National Parks, each day is an exercise in perseverance.**

Like her colleagues, she works 10-day shifts followed by 5 days off – a demanding schedule that challenges her to balance her two greatest passions: being a mother and safeguarding nature.







**“I’m a park ranger mom with three children. When the strongest eruptions happened in 2016, I couldn’t go to the volcano because I was pregnant. I’ve missed many important moments with my kids, and they’ve had to adapt. It’s been hard, but I’ve made it work.”**

**Reina Sánchez**  
**Administrator, Irazú Volcano and Turrialba**  
**National Parks**







**Yocelin has dedicated her life to conserving natural resources. Having experienced gender inequality firsthand, she took on the challenge of transforming the landscape for women in conservation.**

Her leadership has championed the integration of gender equity into the management of Protected Wildlife Areas, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable conservation movement.

Her story, like those of many other female rangers, highlights a key reality: **to strengthen conservation, we must ensure equal opportunities.**







Recognizing the need for a gender-responsive approach to biodiversity protection, Costa Rica advocated for the inclusion of an additional target in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) during negotiations at COP15 in Canada.

**Target 23 aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and effective participation in biodiversity conservation.**







To advance this goal, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (MINAE, from its acronym in Spanish) and SINAC, with support from German Development Cooperation GLZ, formed a partnership.

**Together, they have created spaces for dialogue where female park rangers share their experiences, highlight challenges, and propose solutions, ensuring their voices drive meaningful change.**





**In May 2023, Costa Rica held its first-ever national gathering of female park rangers – a key step toward equity in conservation.**

With support from SINAC and GIZ, 30 women park rangers came together to share their experiences, identify obstacles, and propose solutions that address inequalities while strengthening their role in biodiversity protection.



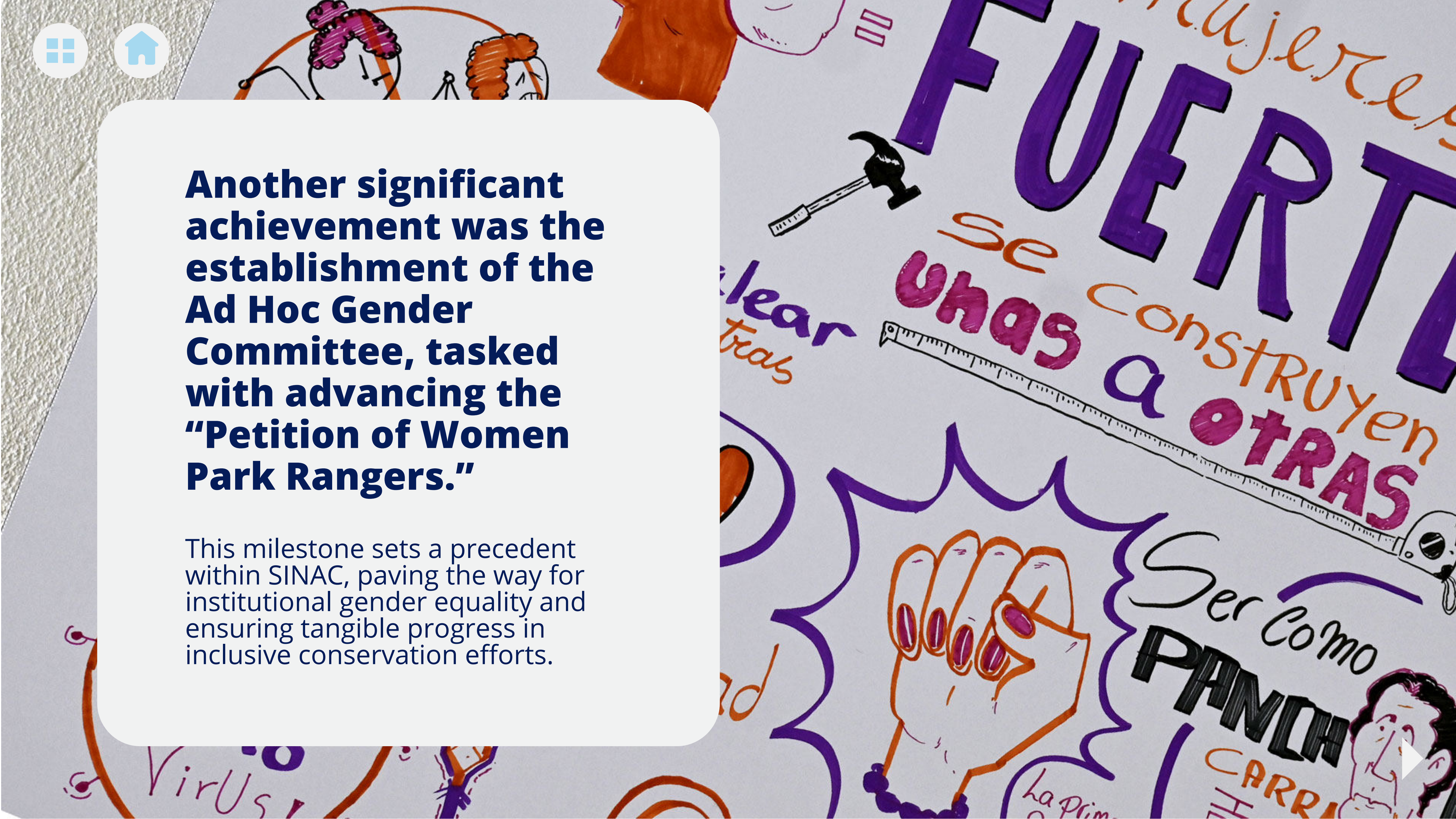


**“Through these initiatives, we recognize and address the barriers to gender equity. I’ve always worked surrounded by men, but the support of other women is essential in the workplace. Finding a balance between conservation and equality is crucial.”**

**Reina Sánchez**  
Administrator, Irazú Volcano and Turrialba  
National Parks





The background is a collage of various artistic elements. At the top left, there are two circular icons: one with a blue grid and another with a blue house. The main background features a mix of hand-drawn sketches and graffiti. A large, bold, purple word 'FUERTE' is prominent in the upper right. Below it, there's a drawing of a hammer and a measuring tape. To the left of the hammer, the word 'Se' is written in orange, and 'Uhas' is written in purple. Further down, the word 'construyen' is written in orange, and 'a OTRAS' is written in purple. In the bottom right, there's a drawing of a hand with purple nail polish, and the words 'Ser como PANDORA' are written in black. Other visible words include 'Virus' in purple at the bottom left and 'La Prim' in purple at the bottom center. The overall style is a mix of bold, blocky letters and more fluid, hand-drawn sketches.

**Another significant achievement was the establishment of the Ad Hoc Gender Committee, tasked with advancing the “Petition of Women Park Rangers.”**

This milestone sets a precedent within SINAC, paving the way for institutional gender equality and ensuring tangible progress in inclusive conservation efforts.





*“This committee is committed to creating spaces for dialogue, capacity building and strengthening, and institutional change in pursuit of gender equality. It acknowledges a historical debt to all the women whose rights have been impacted in one way or another.”*

**Yocelin Ríos**

Coordinator, Ad Hoc Gender Committee







## **Women park rangers, are reshaping conservation and carving a path toward a more just and inclusive environment.**

Their work not only protects biodiversity, but also fosters a fairer and more equitable workplace for all SINAC employees.











*“As women, we contribute to biodiversity conservation from many perspectives. It’s an honor to be able to say that female park rangers are warriors – not with weapons, but with specific requests that reflect our lived experiences and those of countless others who have not had the chance to speak up. We are their voice.”*

**Yocelin Ríos**

Coordinator, Ad Hoc Gender Committee





## Learn more about ACCION Clima:

- [Perfil de proyecto](#)   [Instagram](#)   [LinkedIn](#)   [Facebook](#)
- IKI-CAC. (2023). Encuentro de mujeres guardaparques de Costa Rica: Un espacio de empoderamiento.
- IKI-CAC. (2023). Mujeres guardaparques unen fuerzas mediante petitoria por la igualdad de género.
- International Climate Initiative. (2023, September 15). Championing Biodiversity Through the Eyes of Women and Girls.

ACCION Clima is funded by Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI).

### Fuentes:

- MINAE, SINAC, CONAGEBIO & FONAFIFO. (2018). Summary of Costa Rica's Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (link in Spanish), Costa Rica.
- University of Costa Rica. (2019, August 21). Two Women Research How to Conserve Nature (link in Spanish).
- Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE). (2023). Female Park Rangers Empower Themselves to Rebuild Biodiversity from a Women's Perspective (link in Spanish).
- National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC). (2023). SEMEC 2023 Report (link in Spanish).
- National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC). (2024, October 28). In Advancing Target 23 of the Global Biodiversity Framework: MINAE-SINAC Forms Gender Committee (link in Spanish).

### Fotografías:

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MINISTERIO DE  
AMBIENTE Y ENERGÍA

GOBIERNO  
DE COSTA RICA

SISTEMA NACIONAL DE  
ÁREAS DE CONSERVACIÓN

Fomentado por:



en virtud de una decisión  
del Bundestag alemán

