

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING CASE STUDY



**COMPAÑÍA NACIONAL DE FUERZA Y LUZ S.A.  
COSTA RICA**

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## 2. General information about the company



Figure #1: CNFL values. Source: Library of photos provided by CNFL.

CNFL is a public company that distributes and commercializes electrical energy in the "Great Metropolitan Area" of Costa Rica, founded by means of the Contract - Law N° 2 called "Electrical Contract" of April 8, 1941 (modified through Law N° 4197 of September 20, 1968 and Law N° 4977 of May 19, 1972). Likewise, it is governed by the provisions of the Law "Strengthening and Modernization of Public Entities in the Telecommunications Sector" No. 8660 of August 13, 2008 and the rest of the applicable legal system.

The coverage area corresponds to 932.49 km<sup>2</sup>, in which 100% of electrification is registered, for a total of 564,010 invoiced services (clients).

The company generates electricity using clean and renewable energy through the following Hydroelectric power Plants:

- **Balsa Inferior power plant:** Located in the province of Alajuela, in canton 10° San Carlos, district 2° Florencia.
- **Belén power plant:** It is located in the province of San José, in canton 9° Santa Ana, district 3° Pozos.
- **Brazil power plant:** It is located in the basin of the Virilla River, province of San José, canton 9° Santa Ana, district 6° Brasil, 20 km from the capital city.
- **Cote power plant:** Built approximately 24 km to the northeast of the Canton of Tilarán, province of Guanacaste.
- **Daniel Gutiérrez power plant:** Located in the province of Alajuela, canton of San Ramon, 8th district "Los Angeles", 30 km north of the city of San Ramon.

- **El Encanto power plant:** In the province of Puntarenas, districts of Acapulco and Pitahaya, approximately 3.5 km from the town of Bajo Caliente, downstream on the Aranjuez River.
- **Electriona power plant:** It is located in the province of San Jose, canton 1, district 7.
- **Río Segundo power plant:** Located in the province of Alajuela, 1<sup>st</sup> Central canton, 9th district, Río Segundo.
- **Ventanas power plant:** It is located in the province of Alajuela, in the Central canton, district 5°, La Guácima.

We also generate electricity through wind:

- **Central Valley Wind Farm:** It is located in the district of Salitral, canton of Santa Ana, in the province of San José, specifically in the high part of the mountainous row between the Tacuacó Hill in Corralar, at 1,800 m above sea level.

Within its power generation system, it has ten (10) step-up substations. For its electricity distribution system, it has twenty-one (21) step-down substations for its overhead distribution system; three (3) substations for its subway distribution system, three (3) switchyards and two (2) mobile substations for backup.

In addition, its distribution system comprises 6,887 km of lines in operation, of which 3,404 km are primary and 3,483 km are secondary lines and of that total (6,887 km), 6,138 km are overhead lines and 749 km are subway lines. It has 2,363 MVA of installed capacity in distribution transformers.

### 2.1. The company's working population

CNFL currently has 1,945 staff members, 23% of whom are women. Only 6.89% of the women workers are holding technical positions.

Labor Population by Stratum and Gender		
Stratum	Men	Women
PROFESSIONAL	382	237
ADMINISTRATIVE	9	42
EXECUTIVE	74	25
TECHNICAL	886	134
SERVICES	144	11
SUPERIOR	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1496</b>	<b>449</b>

Data provided by the CNFL.

## 2.2. Context of their business. Prospective of the company

CNFL's business strategy outlines the path to achieve its short, medium and long term objectives. However, the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated and is generating at the national level, has forced the company to focus on the very short term to address the emergency and its immediate impacts. At the same time, the company has reviewed its business strategy, financial plan and strategic risks in order to achieve consistency with current conditions.

In the field of electricity, similar to what has happened in different countries, there has been an increase in consumption in the residential sector as a result of government health measures and the modality of working from home or home office that much of the workforce both public and private, has adopted. On the other hand, many companies in the services and industrial sectors have had to temporarily close their operations in whole or in part. A proportion of them have had to close down permanently. The net effect for the CNFL has been a decrease in energy demand and thus a reduction in its income from kWh sales. On the other hand, given that electricity is a foundation for the functioning of the economic and social apparatus of the country, there is permanent pressure on the CNFL to guarantee continuity of the service despite the fact that some clients have liquidity problems in paying their electric bills. Given that there is a lot of uncertainty about the end of the pandemic, additional measures that the company must undertake in the near future, are not ruled out.

The main challenges for the company in the short term are summarized below:

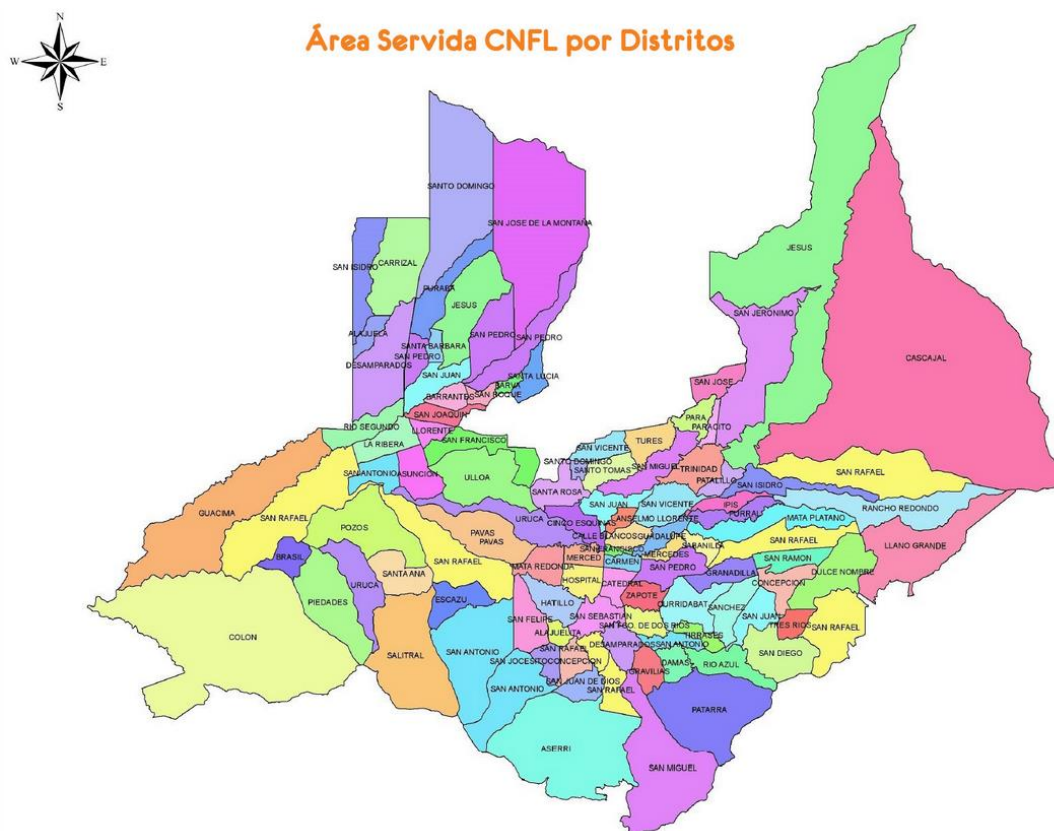
- 1) Implementation of a virtual agency to carry out different paperwork procedures, social networks or the 800-energy telephone number. Additionally, actions will be carried out so that more and more procedures can be done via virtual agency.
- 2) To offer increasingly competitive rates.
- 3) To develop additional actions or actions to reinforce those established in the business strategy that counteract the decrease of its total income, that can help avoid the delays in payment, energy theft and the total or partial closing of the companies.

The CNFL as an electricity distribution company must guarantee the continuity of the electricity services. To this end, it has stopped electricity disconnections due to non-payment by residential customers and has postponed scheduled maintenance shutdowns when feasible, as a measure to address the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic.



### 2.3. Geographic context where CNFL is located

Its service area covers a total of 581,000 billed services (clients) of the Great Metropolitan Area of the Central Valley of Costa Rica, where the greatest amount of the population, the public institutions and the main commercial and productive activities of the country are concentrated.



**Figure #2:** Geographic area where CNFL is located. **Source:** Library of images provided by CNFL.

### 3. Gender Equality and Equity Policy CNFL

CNFL's gender equality and equity policy, known as "PIEG" (for its acronym in Spanish), was created in 2012, with the purpose of making the principles of equality and equity between women and men part of the company's integral management, in full realization of the human rights of both and as a fundamental strategy to manage human talent under equal conditions.

It has a national and international legal basis, its main points of reference are the Political Constitution of Costa Rica, the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)", as well as the Beijing Platform for Action; the Belem do Para Convention to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Violence against Women; the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and other national and international instruments.

"Gender equality can only be achieved through proper communication, awareness and social inclusion for development, it is an issue that concerns both women and men. To achieve it, it is necessary to work with both to induce changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles and responsibilities in the area of

human fulfillment that will impact on improving the living conditions of all people. We have the right to be treated equally, no matter how different we are. *\*\*Extract taken from the introductory text of the CNFL policy on gender equality and equity.*

**Purpose:** This policy will respond to the principles, business values and legislation in force in the different media in an articulated and coherent way. It will also promote gender equality and equity using inclusive language, eliminating any type of discrimination.

**Content:** The "CNFL" will integrate the gender perspective in its policies, programs, projects, procedures, internal and external communication actions, action plans, among others, that are issued in the different units, because it considers that gender equality and equity are part of our human rights. It will foster an entrepreneurial culture that promotes the equitable participation of men and women in institutional work. It will establish signaling criteria and infrastructure conditions that guarantee no gender-based discrimination. Similarly, the managers must ensure the rights of staff, clients or others in their value chain, against all forms of discrimination, violence or abuse, strengthening and expanding the systems of communication, advice, knowledge and application of the regulations in force. The CNFL, through its health-related units, will disseminate and promote concrete actions for the self-care of the physical and emotional health of its personnel, in accordance with gender issues.

**People responsible for its application:** The General Management will designate the Human Talent Unit as responsible for establishing the Gender Program in the Human Development Area. The Human Talent Unit will ensure that gender equity in equal pay for equal work continues to be maintained. It will ensure that the recruitment and internal appointment processes are carried out on an equal opportunity basis. At the same time, it will receive and address any proposal or complaint presented by the staff on gender and sexual harassment issues, as appropriate. In case of non-compliance with this Policy, it will be sanctioned, according to the procedures established for such purposes. The Gender Program will have within its functions: the awareness, training and advice on gender issues to all persons working in the CNFL or to all those who require it; in order to foster a corporate culture of respect and equal rights, promoting improvements in the skills in this area. Similarly, it will be the responsibility of the CNFL to communicate, in a timely and accessible manner, about the national updating on gender issues and regulations of interest to businesses, as well as the events recognized by the UN, in commemoration of those dates with gender issues. In addition to carrying out the planning, execution, control and annual evaluation of the Work Plan. Failure to comply with this Policy will be sanctioned, according to the procedures established for that purpose.

### 3.1. Human resources policy to ensure recruitment and encourage the professional growth of women.

In the CNFL, female personnel are motivated to participate in different recruitment and promotion processes. The selection depends on the competencies and other criteria, regardless of the gender of the contestants.



**Figure #3:** Women who are part of the CNFL workforce. **Source:** Library of images provided by CNFL.

### 3.2. Facilities that allow women to be an integral part of the company

CNFL has an agreement with the ICE Group's Childcare Center so that staff can choose to provide childcare at the center. There is also the option of telework for those positions where this modality of work is possible.

There is a guideline of authorizations and work permissions with and without established salaries, in case employees face a specific situation, where the company can offer him/her a viable solution.

There are also leaves of absences such as maternity leaves, death of father, mother, children, spouse and marriage.

### 3.3. Projects developed in support of communities



In the communities intervened by CNFL, there are projects that include the empowerment of women through training that is carried out in the communities focused on adopting good habits in the rational use of energy, legal electric connections and the adequate care of natural resources in benefit of the inhabitants of the area served. This is done without any gender distinction. It is clear that many women are heads of their households but at the same time there is male participation.

**Figure #4:** Work in communities served by CNFL. **Source:** Library of images provided by CNFL



### 3.4. Barriers within the company and in the energy sector to achieve gender equality and equity.

In order to achieve the goal of real gender equality and equity in our company, it is important to first emphasize that cultural change in the population is always a challenge and an initial barrier. In our case, this challenge has been decreasing due to the support and commitment of the General Management where the issue of Gender is addressed and put into practice throughout the organization.

A barrier that will always need continuous work is the cultural issue (very closely linked to society and not to the company), since this is a process and it is normal that for different human aspects of the staff and society, there are issues or moments when there will be some resistance or regression, however, these types of situations are part of the constant challenges in gender issues.



**Figure #5:** Cultural changes that allows women to join non-traditional roles within the company.  
**Source:** Image library provided by CNFL-

### 3.5. Current challenges and challenges that have been overcome

Through the work done on gender issues, CNFL has overcome some challenges that are detailed below:

- ✓ Include gender issues in the practical reality of CNFL.
- ✓ Highlight the social, financial and human benefits of the gender perspective within the company.
- ✓ Build training and education materials from the needs detected in the different CNFL units, in topics such as
  - Gender
  - Equality and Equity
  - Diversity
  - Inclusive Communication
  - Interpersonal relations with a gender perspective
  - Positive masculinities
  - Women's empowerment
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Gender-Sensitive Planning

- Prevention of symbolic violence in work environments, among others.
- ✓ To have the buy-in and engagement of the leadership positions on gender issues in their operations and human talent.



**Figure #6:** The talent of women working in operational areas of the company. **Source:** Library of images provided by CNFL

**Current challenges:**

- Currently a great challenge has been to be able to continue the whole process of gender mainstreaming in the company through the virtual working modality, given the norms of social distancing that we have in place today.
- To provide follow-up and maintenance on the subject in all the business units, which entails generating communication campaigns, refreshing and updating knowledge and contemporary topics related to equality and equity.

**3.6. Opportunities identified through progress made on gender issues**

The opportunities that gender equality has provided to the CNFL have been identified due to the development of a management tool to follow up on different business actions developed by the units, through a Gender Matrix.

This has been possible thanks to a lot of work that has taken place in education and identification of needs, strategies and concrete actions, together with the staff from the different business units with which this stage of the process is generated (In CNFL we identify it as Level 2 in Gender).

Through the execution of the work mentioned before, it has been possible to develop different business actions that were not foreseen some time ago, for example:

- ✓ Methodological adaptation of the trainings using Inclusive Communication
- ✓ Greater promotion of female practitioners in traditionally male-dominated jobs.
- ✓ Incorporation of gender issues in the CNFL Manual of Competencies.

- ✓ Inclusion of gender issues as a desirable requirement in subcontracted personnel.
- ✓ Identification of gender-sensitive indicators.

### 3.7. Qualitative and quantitative impact of gender mainstreaming

A strong effort has been made to train and sensitize the staff in quantitative terms:

Hours of Training per Person annually -Gender Program				
2017	2018	2019	2020 (to June)	Total
10.625	9.861	9.568,5	3.238	33.292,5

Data on participants by gender to main training topics as of July 2020			
Workshops	Men	Women	Total
Introductory Gender Workshop	1372	437	1809
Gender View (Masculinities)	1190	0	1190
Women at CNFL -Empower Yourself	0	433	433
Sexual harassment and legal regulations	1310	421	1731
Participatory Gender Assessment	339	150	489
Human relationships with Awareness	124	27	151
Equality and Equity	94	39	133

Changes have been made at the cultural level in the personnel and the idiosyncrasies of the CNFL by incorporating the gender perspective, and the CNFL Gender Matrix has been implemented to monitor gender actions in CNFL departments.

At an external level, the CNFL won the Central American Prize in 2018 among more than 60 private and public companies, on behalf of the Fundación Justicia y Género (*Justice and Gender Foundation*), and<sup>1</sup>has also managed to be characterized as a company focused on Equality, Equity and Respect.

### 3.8. Lessons learned from the road travelled

Among the lessons learned from CNFL's experience in the area of gender, we can highlight the following:

- ✓ The engagement of the company's top authorities in gender issues, in this case the General Management, is relevant since with this support all the goals are achieved.
- ✓ It is important to make a diagnosis of gender gaps, this provides the possibility of having an objective view of the areas to work on.
- ✓ There must be a team committed to mainstreaming gender in order to implement the different actions proposed.

<sup>1</sup> Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1H1vNOv0p74>

- ✓ Learning from the experiences of other organizations, whether or not they are in the same line of business is very important.
- ✓ Making strategic alliances with different entities that can collaborate in diagnostics, third-party training courses, etc.
- ✓ Keeping the staff involved in these activities up to date with the issues, investing in training and strengthening the skills of the staff who carry out the Gender actions in the company is fundamental.
- ✓ Being patient, since much of the gender issues is related to cultural change. Consistency and patience with the staff and with the understanding of the subject matter is fundamental.
- ✓ Listening. We must listen to all points of view in order to understand the feelings of the personnel and seek better strategies together for the adaptation of the topic.
- ✓ To have a clear and strategic regulatory framework that facilitates the execution of actions.
- ✓ Engage personnel in the topic so that they can take ownership of this and see it as something natural within institutions.
- ✓ To innovate, in every sense. And during these times where social distancing restricts interpersonal relations, to know how to reach out to others via virtual mediums.
- ✓ Demonstrating to others what has been achieved is very important to strengthen and motivate personnel on the subject.
- ✓ To have a gender-sensitive business view.



#### 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- i. University of Costa Rica participates in the study: Labor situation with a gender perspective in the CNFL:  
<http://repositorio.sibdi.ucr.ac.cr:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/5776/1/40491.pdf>
- ii. UNED and INAMU completed an introductory course on the gender approach (in which CNFL participated):  
<https://www.uned.ac.cr/acontecer/a-diario/juncos/51-a-diario-/gestion-universitaria/2772-uned-e-inamu-culminaron-curso-introductorio-al-enfoque-de-genero>
- iii. CNFL wins award for good practices in gender equity  
<https://elperiodicocr.com/cnfl-gana-premio-buenas-practicas-en-equidad-de-genero/>
- iv. Participation in the course on gender mainstreaming the gender approach at institutions:
- v. CNFL workers have three new breastfeeding rooms: <https://www.elmundo.cr/costa-rica/trabajadoras-de-la-cnfl-cuentan-con-tres-nuevas-salas-de-lactancia/>.
- vi. CNFL wins contest of good practices of equality for productivity:  
<https://www.facebook.com/fundacionjusticiaygenero/photos/a.360412200687898/2160186424043791/?type=3&theater>
- vii. Promotion among the company's good practices of Training and Gender Mainstreaming:  
<http://fundacionjyg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CNFL.pdf>
- viii. Commemoration of International Women's Day at CNFL:  
<https://electronoticiascnfl.com/2020/03/09/mujeres-cnfl-conmemoracion-dia-internacional-de-la-mujer-2020/>

## 5. Annex #1: Gender Equality and Equity Policy CNFL



Compañía Nacional  
de Fuerza y Luz, S.A

GERENCIA GENERAL

POLÍTICA DE IGUALDAD Y EQUIDAD DE GÉNERO

21/08/2017

## POLÍTICA DE IGUALDAD Y EQUIDAD DE GÉNERO

### 1. INTRODUCCIÓN

La Política de igualdad y equidad de género (PIEG) cuenta con un fundamento jurídico nacional e internacional, sus principales referentes son la Constitución Política de Costa Rica, la “Convención sobre la Eliminación de Todas las Formas de Discriminación contra la Mujer (CEDAW)”, así como la Plataforma de Acción de Beijing; la Convención Belem do Pará para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres; las Metas de Desarrollo del Milenio de Naciones Unidas, y otros instrumentos nacionales e internacionales.

La igualdad de género sólo se puede alcanzar por medio de una correcta comunicación, sensibilización e inclusión social para el desarrollo, es un asunto que nos atañe tanto a mujeres como a hombres. Para lograrla, es necesario trabajar con ambos para inducir cambios en las actitudes, los comportamientos, las funciones y las responsabilidades en el ámbito de las plenitudes humanas que repercutirán en la mejora de las condiciones de vida de todas las personas. Tenemos derecho a ser tratados igual sin importar que seamos diferentes.

### 2. AUTORIDAD DE EMISIÓN Y VIGENCIA

La Política de igualdad y equidad de género (PIEG) ha sido formulada por la Comisión de Género Empresarial y cuenta con el apoyo de la Gerencia General, que la ratifica como un mecanismo de acción en contra de la discriminación laboral por género. La misma impulsa la equidad de género como un derecho fundamental de los seres humanos y un acto de justicia social.

#### BITÁCORA DE CAMBIOS REALIZADOS

Nº Revisión	Fecha de emisión	Aprobado por	Firma
0	31/10/2012	Gerencia General	Ing. Pablo Cob Saborío
1	01/02/2017	Gerencia General	Víctor Solís Rodríguez
2	21/08/2017	Gerencia General	Víctor Solís Rodríguez



## POLÍTICA DE IGUALDAD Y EQUIDAD DE GÉNERO

<b>a. PROPÓSITO:</b>	Esta política en forma articulada y coherente, responderá a los principios, y valores empresariales y legislación vigente en los diferentes medios de difusión. Asimismo, fomentará la igualdad y la equidad de género utilizando lenguaje inclusivo, eliminando cualquier tipo de discriminación.
<b>b. DEFINICIONES:</b>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>c. CONTENIDO:</b>	<p>La "CNFL" integrará en sus políticas, programas, proyectos, procedimientos, acciones de comunicación internas y externas, planes de acción, entre otros, que se emitan en las diferentes dependencias el enfoque de género, por considerar que la igualdad y equidad de género son parte de los derechos humanos.</p> <p>Fomentará una cultura empresarial que promueva la participación equitativa de hombres y mujeres en el quehacer institucional.</p> <p>Establecerá criterios de señalización y condiciones de infraestructura que garanticen la no discriminación por distinción de Género. Del mismo modo, las Jefaturas deberán velar por los derechos del personal, clientela u otros en su cadena de valor, frente a todas las formas de discriminación, violencia o abuso, fortaleciendo y ampliando los sistemas de comunicación, asesoría, conocimiento y aplicación de la normativa vigente.</p> <p>La "CNFL" a través de las dependencias relacionadas con temas de salud, divulgarán y propiciarán acciones concretas del autocuidado de la salud, física y emocional del personal, atinentes a la temática de género.</p>

<p><b>d. RESPONSABLE DE SU APLICACION:</b></p>	<p>La Gerencia General, designará a la Unidad de Talento Humano, como responsable de establecer en el Área de Desarrollo Humano el Programa de Género.</p> <p>La Unidad de Talento Humano velará por continuar manteniendo la equidad de género en la remuneración igualitaria por igual trabajo. Garantizará que los procesos de contratación y nombramientos internos se desarrollen en igualdad de oportunidades. Así mismo, recibirá y atenderá cualquier planteamiento o denuncia presentada por el personal en temáticas de género y hostigamiento sexual, según corresponda. En caso de incumplimiento de esta Política, se sancionará, según los procedimientos establecidos para esos efectos.</p> <p>El Programa de Género tendrá dentro de sus funciones: la sensibilización, capacitación y asesoramiento en materia de Género a todas las personas que trabajan en la CNFL o bien a todas aquellas que así lo requieran; con el fin de fomentar una cultura empresarial de respeto e igualdad de derechos, promoviendo las mejoras de las competencias en esta temática. De igual forma le corresponderá comunicar oportunamente y de manera accesible, sobre la actualización nacional en temáticas y normativa referente a Género, que sean de interés empresarial, así como las efemérides reconocidas por la ONU, en conmemoración de aquellas fechas con temas de género. Además de realizar la planificación, ejecución, control y evaluación anual del Plan de Trabajo.</p> <p>En caso de incumplimiento de esta Política, se sancionará, según los procedimientos establecidos para esos efectos.</p>
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