The Business Alliance for Sustainability in Central America reported significant achievements in its first year - INCAE Business School
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The Alliance consists of 23 companies in the retail trade sector and is coordinated by INCAE CLACDS.

Individual efforts in 2015 by the companies making up the Alliance for Sustainability had a significant impact on sustainability. Savings equal to the amount of power needed to light more than 2,000 homes in a year, supply water to 3,000 people, and eliminate the yearly solid waste from the population in the metropolitan area of Costa Rica were achieved.

These positive impacts on the quality of life of Central Americans and on earth's sustainability show the commitment made by these companies, as well as their transforming power, as they implement sustainable commercial and manufacturing practices throughout the entire value chain.

The potential of the Alliance was presented in Costa Rica at the Third Sustainability Forum "Together for a Better Planet", organized by Walmart Mexico and Central America. The work of this group of leading companies will continue this year under the academic guidance and knowledge of the Latin American Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development (CLACDS) of INCAE Business School.

In 2016 six new members joined the Alliance, allowing it to expand its scope. This year the
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Alliance chose the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations as its strategic guide. This will allow the Alliance to not only embrace environmental efforts made by companies but also to include corporate social responsibility practices.

According to CLACDS Director Víctor Umaña, the key to this regional initiative is "to not wait for others to decide for the company, but jointly anticipate the future and build it out." Thus, for the year the Alliance has been operating, companies have worked together in learning about the environment, setting metrics, and sharing successful experiences while implementing their own sustainability initiatives.

Carlos Arroyo, Vice President and CEO of Walmart Mexico and Central America pointed out that "consumers will surely trust and prefer the most sustainable business models. Best sustainability practices in retail trade, product packaging, and supply chain will help consolidate customer confidence."

During the Third Sustainability Forum "Together for a Better Planet" held in February 2016 success stories from some members of the Alliance were presented. These included companies such as Hanes, Florida Ice & Farm, and Florex and were related to the development of sustainable methods. "A pillar of sustainability is to partner with business firms, schools, and research centers," said Florex Vice-president Silvia Chávez. Incidentally, Florex recently joined the Alliance.

The challenges faced now by the Alliance include maintaining its success and meeting new paradigms and scenarios in a more comprehensive way. "Sustainability has no longer to do just with the environment. A comprehensive concept is needed to encompass social, environmental, and economic issues," said CLACDS Director Víctor Umaña. "We are proposing collaborative leadership efforts. All companies have something to contribute."

The Business Alliance for Sustainability in Central America has now 23 members and will continue to support efforts leading to sustainable action, leveraging each company's strengths and creating synergies with support from CLACDS.