

**First AIACC Latin America/Caribbean Regional Workshop
San José, May 26-30, 2003**

WELCOME LETTER

Dear Participants:

The AIACC, the Regional Committee on Hydraulic Resources from the Central America Integration System (CRRH-SICA) and the University of Costa Rica, desire to give you a cordial welcome to Costa Rica and wish you a very nice stay here.

The workshop sessions on May 27-29 will be held at the Tryp Corobicí Hotel located in San Jose town. On Friday, May 30, we will move to the Research City of the University of Costa Rica (UCR) on the east side of San Jose (San Pedro de Montes de Oca).

We have made all the arrangements to make your stay in San Jose an enjoyable and comfortable one.

The local people in charge of the workshop will be:

Mr. Max Campos (crrhcr@racsa.co.cr), (506) 231-5791, Ext. 101

Ms. Flor Solano (fesolano@racsa.co.cr), (506) 224-2257, celular phone (506) 383-5017.

Ms. Ericka Guevara (506) 385-9290

General Information About the Workshop

Hotel

Tryp Corobicí hotel is located in the west side of downtown San Jose, near the La Sabana Metropolitan Park. It is 15 minutes from de Juan Santamaria International Airport. Tel. (506) 232-8122, Fax (506) 220-1914. Web site: www.solmelia.com. Contact: Ms. Beliza Solís.

The Organization will support your lodging at the hotel. This support includes a daily breakfast starting on Tuesday May 27th, coffee breaks and lunches included in the Agenda. Any additional service at the hotel, such as telephone calls, laundry, room service (meals and beverages) and others, will be at your own expense.

Transportation to and from the Airport

The main port of entrance to Costa Rica is Juan Santamaria International Airport (former El Coco), which is approximately 20 Km west from San Jose and the hotel.

The LAC Regional Workshop participants will be transported to/from the airport by the Tryp Corobicí Hotel shuttle service according to the information you provided in the Registration Form.

In case that you miss your shuttle, please take only the authorized taxis (either orange or red) to and from the airport. The taxis are available in the Ticket Office, just outside the customs exit. Authorized taxis cost US\$12.00 to the Hotel. Please keep your receipts.

Workshop Rooms at the Hotel

The plenary of the Workshop will be held at the **Chirripo Room** on the second floor of the Hotel.

The Secretariat Office for our workshop will be at the **Tobosi Room**, which is located next to the Chirripo Room.

Inside the Tobosi, which is a large room, we'll have a private site with free internet service for all the participants, from Monday May 26 to Thursday May 29, from 8:00 to 20:00 hours.

The **registration** will start on Tuesday May 27th, from 7:30 to 8:30, at the Tobosi Room.

Our staff will be supporting to the participants at this Room until the Thursday, May 29, from 8:00 to 18:00.

Our staff will help the foreign participants to confirm their departure flights according with the information provided in the Registration Forms. Please inform the staff of any change to this information before Thursday, May 29th.

Facilities for the participants

Digital multimedia and overhead projectors will be available at the meeting rooms. A PC with CD-RW driver will also be at the disposal of participants for the presentations. If you bring your own laptop, please advise us on any assistance you may need. Electricity is 110 Volts, 60 Hz.

Mr. Rodolfo Sánchez is in charge of the audiovisual support for our workshop.

Also, the Organization will have simultaneous translation in order to increase the interactions between the participants and to successfully reach all the objectives of the workshop.

The Organization will have some panels to show posters related with the projects of the participants or any information that they could need to share. So, the participants could bring this kind of materials.

LAC Special Activities

1.- Opening session: will be held at the beginning of the Agenda on Tuesday May 27. That evening (19:00 – 21:00 hours), there will be a Welcome Cocktail Reception in the **Gondola Room** at the Hotel.

2.- Closing Session

On Friday, May 30th, participants will be taken from Tryp Corobicí Hotel to the University of Costa Rica. Participants should meet the transportation service at 8:00am in the lobby of the hotel.

At lunch time, after the closing, the participants will be moved to the east of the Central Valley, to **“La Casona del Cafetal”**, a typical restaurant located at the east side of Cartago, one of the seven “provincias” (political units), 35 km east from San José downtown. You will have very nice landscape views of the Ujarras Valley.

For this day, we would like to recommend to all the participants to wear informal clothes, such as jeans, slacks, and comfortable shoes. You can also bring a light sweater, in case of the day turns cooler. It is raining during this time of the year, so in case you are not very familiar with rain in the tropics, we recommend you be to prepared to get a bit wet.

We will be returning to San Jose around 16:00 hours.

COSTA RICA:

General Information

San Jose, the capital city of Costa Rica, is located approximately at 1200 m above sea level and lies in the easternmost part of the Central Valley within a trending chain of volcanic cones that is part of Middle America range of active volcanoes. The main UCR campus is located in San Pedro, a relatively small university town, situated about 4 Km to the east of downtown San Jose.

Weights, Measures, and Time

The MKS is the official metric system. Time is GMT minus 6 hours.

Currency

Costa Rica “colon” (also locally known as “peso”). US\$1.00 = 395 colones, as of May 20th, 2003. Coins are in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 25, 50, 100 and 500 colones. Notes are used in denominations of 500, 1000, 5000, and 10000 colones.

Participants are advised to exchange currency only at Banks. The US dollar is accepted in some places, however, a smaller exchange rate is usually paid; it happens too at the hotels. Major credit cards are accepted in most places.

Banking hours

Monday to Friday : 08:30 to 16:00..

Climate

Daytime temperatures average between 18oC - 25oC; the days getting slightly warm at mid-day. Our country is starting now the rainy season that lasts until October. Showers fall primarily during the afternoon hours and produce refreshing breezes. At nights, the weather turns cooler.

Health

Health care in Costa Rica is very good and sanitary standards are high. First-class hospitals are found throughout San José and some of the other largely populated areas.

The water is safe to drink in all areas of the country.

Early arrivals and late departures (tours)

You can directly contact the travel agency at the Tryp Corobici Hotel. Also you can obtain more information in:

[Costa Rica National Chamber of Tourism - http://www.tourism.co.cr](http://www.tourism.co.cr)

A complete guide to tours, hotels, car rentals and more. You will also find useful information about Costa Rica.

[Costa Rica Tourism Board - http://www.tourism-costarica.com](http://www.tourism-costarica.com)

Official travel website of the Costa Rica Tourism Board.

[Costa Rican Hotel Guide - http://www.lodgingcostarica.com](http://www.lodgingcostarica.com)

Make reservations to hotels, bed and breakfast, and beach-houses.

[Get 2 Costa Rica.com - http://www.get2costarica.com](http://www.get2costarica.com)

Learn about Costa Rica or make your reservations on hotels, car rentals, tours and flights.

[San Jose Map - http://www.costaricamap.com/esp/mfrmap1.html](http://www.costaricamap.com/esp/mfrmap1.html)

San José Downtown Map.

Please, do not hesitate to contact to us if you need more information, or require any help at your arrival to our country.

¡Welcome to Costa Rica!

Organizing Committee, First AIACC Latin America/Caribbean Regional Workshop