

Expression of Interest

7th International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals, Cartagena, Colombia 2019



Proposed Venue: Cartagena, Colombia

Tentative Date: July 23-29 (or flexible), 2019

We propose to host the next 7th International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals in the beautiful city of Cartagena de Indias, in the Caribbean coast of Colombia. Cartagena is highly sought as a venue for diverse meetings and conferences due to its modern infrastructure, architectural beauty, accessibility and affordable prices (e.g., excellent hotel rooms from USD\$70 to \$200 per night, meals from \$3 to \$30, alcoholic beverages from \$1 to \$5). For example, the next International Congress for Conservation Biology (the most important international meeting for conservation, with a regular attendance of ~2,000 people) will be hosted in Cartagena in 2017.

Organizers

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Organizing Institutions

Universidad de los Andes, Colombia

Universidad de Cartagena, Colombia

Ecomar, Colombia

Parque Nacional Natural Corales de Profundidad, Colombia

Invemar, Colombia

About Cartagena

Very few cities in the Americas rival the walled and castled cities of Europe as Cartagena de Indias, a city founded in 1553. With most of the original city preserved and restored, a UNESCO World Heritage site, this city in the shore of Caribbean sea

offers a unique cultural and historical experience. It is also a place of contrasts, including the 16th Century walls, castles and houses, a modern port, sandy beaches, top-notch hotels and skyscrapers, as well as nearby tropical coastal and marine ecosystems. The city is also the epicenter of oceanographic activity in the country. It is one of the main ports in the Caribbean and is home to the largest base of the Colombian navy. Through a pioneer initiative for the protection of deep-sea coral ecosystems in the Caribbean, the Colombian Government designated a large area off the coast of Cartagena as a Marine Protected Area in 2013, the *Parque Nacional Natural Corales de Profundidad* (Deep Corals National Natural Park PNN).

Venue Options

Downtown venues are diverse and all include catering options. The restored *Claustro de Santo Domingo*, a 17th century building, offers ideal conference rooms to host the symposium. The *Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española en Cartagena de Indias* offers funding to host academic meetings at the *Claustro* through a grant application process. This venue is located in the middle of the vibrant environment of Santo Domingo Plaza a hotspot of cafes and restaurants in the historic city. Other alternative venues include Cartagena's Convention Center and the *Hotel Santa Clara*. Cartagena's Convention Center is able to hold events of up to 2,000 attendees. It has a stunning view of the bay and offers different size exhibition halls and rooms to accommodate additional small meetings if needed. The *Hotel Santa Clara* (Santa Clara's convent, 17th century) offers a luxury setting for up to 300 participants. All venues are within a few blocks to the Caribbean sea and/or the Cartagena bay, where sightseeing or ocean view cafes and restaurants are available.

Centro de Convenciones Cartagena de Indias
<http://cccartagena.com/index/>

Hotel Santa Clara
<http://www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-1871-sofitel-legend-santa-clara-cartagena/index.shtml>

Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española, Cartagena de Indias
<http://www.aecidcf.org.co/>

Lodging Options

Downtown Cartagena offers a wide variety of lodging options for every type of budget, within walking distance from the venue. Most of the hotels and hostels preserve the colonial architecture. Five star hotels, such as the *Santa Clara*, can be booked for US\$300 per night. Luxury or boutique hotels four star hotels range between US\$150-250 per night. These are restored colonial houses that offer a limited number of rooms with a personalized service. Three star hotels can be found between US\$ 70-150 per night offering simple but comfortable rooms. Finally, a variety of hostels can be found at or near downtown Cartagena with affordable prices between US\$15-30 per night in dorm or private rooms. Most hotels and hostels in Colombia include complementary breakfast and Wi-Fi.

Recommended Hotels

Hotel Santa Clara

<http://www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-1871-sofitel-legend-santa-clara-cartagena/index.shtml>

Hotel Casa San Agustín

<http://www.hotelcasasanagustin.com/>

Casa Claver

<http://casaclaver.com/nueva/en/>

Santo Toribio Boutique Hotel

<http://www.hotelsantotoribio.com/en/>

Recommended Hostels

Hostal Media Luna

<http://medialunahostel.com/?la=en>

Hostal El Viajero

<http://www.elviajerohostels.com/en/categoria/hostels/contenido/el-viajero-cartagena>

Beachside Resorts

Beachside resorts are also an excellent options just a 15min drive away in *La Boquilla Beach*. Taxi rate from *La Boquilla* to downtown range between US\$5-10.

Hotel Las Americas

<http://www.hotellasamericas.com.co/home/EN?>

Radisson

<https://www.radisson.com/cartagena-hotel-co/cocartag>

Dinning

<http://www.cntraveller.com/guides/south-america/colombia/cartagena/where-to-eat>

Getting to Cartagena

Cartagena is located on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, and the best way to get there is flying. It's airport, *Aeropuerto Internacional Rafael Nuñez*, is an international airport located inside the city perimeter. This airport receives local flights from Colombia's major cities (Bogotá, Medellín, Cali) and international flights from Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Lima, Quito, Madrid, Caracas and Panamá. Taxi fares from the airport to downtown hotels range between US\$7-12. An alternative nearby airport is located in Barranquilla, the largest Colombian coastal city, only a two-hour drive from Cartagena.

Cartagena is also a port city that receives cruise ships that sail in Caribbean waters. Why not take the chance to relax, take a vacation and visit other enchanted Caribbean islands? More info <http://www.puertocartagena.com/es/terminal-de-cruceros#>

Getting around in Cartagena

All the venues and hotels included in this proposal are within walking distance from each other (~15 min radius). Other attractions in the city (Popa hill, San Felipe's castle) can be visited via taxi (\$10-20 USD, short rides are \$2 USD). Daily sightseeing tours are also available at similar same prices. Uber is also available in the city.

Field trips

Tropical coastal or marine ecosystems are plentiful near Cartagena. It is easy to do a day trip to Baru or Rosario islands, SCUBA dive in the same day and go back. There are also worthwhile villas and hotels to stay a few days in one of these Caribbean islands. Cartagena also have a Botanical garden to have a glimpse of the incredibly plant biodiversity in the country. Only a five hours drive there is one of the most spectacular sites in Colombia, Tayrona park, with some of the most unspoiled rain forests and beaches in the world.

Additional Information

More information about Cartagena, its historic places, lodging, shopping and dining, can be found at its official site:

<http://www.cartagenadeindias.travel/?la=en>

Local stakeholders and potential sponsoring institutions

COLCIENCIAS

Universidad de los Andes

Banco de la Republica

Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales

Consejo Profesional de Biología

Dirección General Marítima - DIMAR

Centro de Investigaciones Oceanográficas e Hidrográficas - CIOH

Comisión Colombiana del Océano - CCO

Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Agencia de Cooperación Española

Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos-ANH