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Email: info@ihcai.org

Tel: (506) 2234-6354
(506) 2227-6564
(506) 2226-3047

Fax: (506) 2234-6347

PO box: 1677 - 2100
Costa Rica

Our ref. IHCAI DGCR-PA 456-12
July 29th 2012

Ms

Jini Hetherington

Administrator and Company Secretary

The Cochrane Collaboration Secretariat

Subject: Invitation to hold the mid-year meetings of the Steering Group, Centre Directors and Entity Executives in Panama City, Panama, May 18th – 24th 2014.

The Central America and Spanish Caribbean (CASP) branch of the Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre and the Panama Cochrane Collaborative Unit would be delighted to host the mid-year meeting of the Cochrane Collaboration Steering Group, Centre Directors and Entity Executives in 2014 in Panama City, Republic of Panama.

Benefit to the proposed host

The Central America and Spanish Caribbean branch of the Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre and the Panama Cochrane Collaborative Unit will be delighted to host the mid-year meetings of the Steering Group.

The Panama Cochrane Collaborative Unit was established in late 2009 thanks to active support of the Iberoamerican Centre and CASP branch Director. Through the National Secretariat of Science, Innovation and Technology, the Unit increased its budget to finance research projects. Concurrent actions were advanced on the local context as the formulation of Research Policy, promotion of technology innovation in universities as well as research on public and private schools.

Hosting the mid-year meetings in Panama would provide a huge regional impulse and promotion of The Cochrane Collaboration through its Central America and Spanish Caribbean branch and network. This is a unique opportunity to position the Central American Branch and Panama Unit as a reference on Systematic Reviews and Research applied to health care services. The meeting will allow reaching some key stakeholders from academic institutions, health care systems and organizations responsible for funding research projects.

To encourage the multidisciplinary participation, a two or three-day symposium will be held before or alongside the mid-year meetings. This conference will include multiple events as the 1st Panama Evidence Based Health Care Symposium, IV Congreso de Colegio Médico de Panamá ((IV Conference of Panamenian board and College of Physicians) and , XVII Jornada Científica de la

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Asociación de Estudiantes de Medicina de Panamá (1) (XVII Scientific meeting of Panamanian Medical Students Association. Attendants of the Iberoamerican Cochrane Network annual meeting and Steering Group mid-year meeting could be approached to participate as speakers in the public symposium were it is expected at least 300 participants from Latin America, Spain and Portugal.

The symposium would be a privileged opportunity to address and include local and regional needs of training, sharing of experiences, setting of future technical cooperation projects, and extending an invitation to new members. The proposed program outline includes plenary sessions, panel discussions, and training workshops.

Travel

Panama is considered the first globalized economy between Latin-American countries (Foreign Policy), the third on competitiveness (World Economic Forum) and fourth on Institutional Quality Index.

The country can be easily access by plane as it is the hub of multiple airlines with directs flights from the main cities of Europe, North, Central and South America, receiving the nickname of the "Hub of the Americas". The Tocumen International Airport has fast connection **to and from the city centre by taxis, limousines, hotels shuttles and private buses**. The estimated travel/road distance to the city centre can be around 23.18 km to 25.2 km done in 20 minutes ride. By 2013 will also be available the **new metro line 1 (metropolitan train/underground)** throughout the city centre.

Regarding the communication convenience we can mention that Panama is also a key node in the world broadband system. This brings a diverse of telecommunication services available through four cell phone carriers with update technology.

For more information:

http://www.tocumenpanama.aero/index.php?ccpage=index&set_language=en

Accommodation

There are numerous hotels and hostels around the city, in a wide range of prices. We selected a number of options close to the venue and **negotiated special rates for meeting participants**. The facilities evaluated have available transportation to/from the airport, meetings' venue, shopping malls, and other places of interest. Furthermore, **breakfast might be included and offer room or lobby access to the Internet**.

The City of Knowledge, the meeting selected venue, offers accommodation for about 150 persons in single, double and triple accommodation at **a very reasonable rate (\$20 - \$100 USD, in share room, from two to eight persons)**. In addition of this, the Holiday Inn Panama Canal Hotel is located next to the City of Knowledge campus (Av. Omar Torrijos, Clayton, Panama city, Panama). It is four stars valuated hotel with 137 rooms and one suite.

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For more information: <http://www.holidayinn.com/hotels/gb/en/panama-city/pcyhi/hoteldetail>

Meeting facilities

"City of Knowledge" is a centre of knowledge translation and innovation that is strategically located in 120 hectares in Clayton, placed across from the Panama Canal and **at few minutes from the Panama City centre**. The facilities are based in innovative, bioclimatic, and sustainable designs. The complex includes different types of buildings: a Convention Centre with Auditorium for 500 persons, a Training and Business Centre, an Athenaeum, a Digital Classroom and other areas all equipped with a complete modern technological platform. The Digital Classroom is habilitated with **simultaneous translation booths** and **video recording of the meeting** capacity. The facilities allow the development of numerous activities in a synchronized fashion. The **meetings' rooms** can hold **from 12, 45, 65, and 150 persons**.

There are numerous parking lots, small offices for event organizers, spacious dining rooms with kitchen areas and dormitories for students, professors or other participants. In these residence halls, guests can experience a friendly environment surrounded by a natural landscape with access to community services as restaurant, pharmacy, banks, laundry, and coffee stores.

For more information <http://www.ciudadelsaber.org/en>

Costs

The Central America Cochrane Branch and the Cochrane Panama Collaborative Unit would cover the cost of the Centre Directors' and Executives meetings venue and audiovisual equipment. The host will fund the Centre Directors' catering during meeting activities, and one dinner/evening function. We would make an effort to have the same treatment for the Executives. However, since the number of participants is difficult to predict at the moment, we would be grateful if the Collaboration can to help us in case the expenses exceed our budget. For the Steering Group meeting, we propose to hold one or two evening functions, and we would appreciate if venue, audio-visual, and catering costs were met by the Collaboration.

Attendees of the symposium and conference will be charged a registration fee calculated to cover any expenses related to the symposium, and the above-mentioned expenses for the Centre Directors, Executives, and Steering Group meetings and social functions. Depending on the final format of activities, the registration cost should be around \$60 to \$150 USD.

Internet access

Reliable Internet access will be ensured. Free wireless Internet access for all participants throughout the meetings in the meeting areas.

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Suggested dates

To ensure the participation of Health Ministry and academic authorities, we propose to realize this meeting between 18 and 24 of May 2014. Even though, the general elections in Panama will be held in early May we are certainly open to discuss earlier dates.

We would be delighted if the Steering Group accepted our invitation and look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Dra. Itzel Thomas R.

Director Health and Technology Department, Social Security Institute
Panama, Panama.

Coordinator Cochrane Panama Unit.

itzeltr@gmail.com

(507) 6672-3432

Dr. Mario Tristan

Director – General & CEO

Off Campus Harvard Medical School Associated Professor

University of Connecticut School of Medicine Adjunct Professor

International Health Central American Institute (IHCAI) Foundation

Central American & Spanish Caribbean Branch of the Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre & Network.

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With support from:

Doctor Xavier Bonfill, Director Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre

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Annex 1: Format of proposed academic activities.

We are having several meetings running during the midyear-meeting week as follows:

- 1) 1ST Panama Evidence Based Health Care Symposium,
- 2) IV Congreso de Colegio Médico de Panamá, (IV Conference of Panamanian board of College of Physicians)
- 3) XVII Jornada Científica de la Asociación de Estudiantes de Medicina de Panamá. (XVII Scientific meeting of Panamanian Medical Students Association.

- Dates: May Wednesday 21st to Friday 23rd
- Participants: all local university's student of related programs, health professionals, and patients' organizations in Panama. Iberoamerican and Latin American researchers will also be invited. Total Expected: 300.

- 4) XIII Iberoamerican Cochrane Network meeting.

- Dates: May Wednesday 21st to Friday 23rd
- Participants: contributors from the Iberoamerican Cochrane Network. Total Expected: 40.

The programme of all academic scientific open activities is based in: plenary sessions, panel discussions, training/discussion workshops and social activities.

CC: Xavier Bonfill Director Iberomaerican Cochrane Centre.

File corresp. IHCAI DG PA 465.

Enclosures: Annex 1 Format of Proposed activities

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