

INFORMATION FOR THE PLENARY MEETING IN ALMERIA, SPAIN, 3-7 OCTOBER 2011

Version August 4th, 2011

Dates

- The plenary meeting will be held from 3rd to 6th October 2011.
- The field trip will be the 5th October.
- Optional field trips will be the 7th October 2011 (scientific-touristic tours).

Venue

The meeting will be held at Hotel AC Almeria, Plaza Flores 1, Almeria.

Registration

A registration form will be implemented on the Desire website. You will receive an email when the registration page for the meeting becomes operative.

A registration fee of 250 € includes: renting conference rooms at the hotel, mid-meeting excursion (bus + lunch), lunches and coffee-tea breaks, meeting dinner.

Hotels

We recommend everybody stay at the AC-Almeria hotel, centrally located, where the meeting will be. However for those seeking cheaper possibilities, there are two other hotels under option 2:

1.- Hotel AC Almeria (former Torreluz 4)

<http://www.hotel-rez.com/hw/a267306/index.htm?lbl=ggl-en>

Room (Single or Double): 55 €) per night, breakfast included.

2.- Another somewhat cheaper option, is from hotels Torreluz III and Torreluz II, just in front of Hotel AC Almeria:

<http://es.hotusa.com/hoteles/espana/almeria/almeria/hotel-torreluz-iii.html?gclid=CPTX6uHwlqgCFZBkfAodc3jYCO>

http://www.tripadvisor.es/Hotel_Review-g187429-d232713-Reviews-Torreluz_Hotel_II-Almeria_Costa_de_Almeria_Andalusia.html

The prices for Torreluz III and Torreluz II are, respectively, 45 € and 40 € for individual rooms, breakfast included. Double rooms are 50 € and 45 € respectively.

Trip to the DESIRE field site

The Spanish DESIRE field site is in the municipality of Lorca, in the neighboring province of Murcia, 183 km from Almeria, about 2 h by bus. We'll leave Almeria at 8:00. Arrival at the field site: 10:00. Coffee break. Visit and poster presentation of results until 13:00. Lunch in a typical restaurant (13:30-15:00). Afternoon-evening: irrigation agriculture in the Guadalentin basin and solar power plants. Visit of the town of Aledo and its tower from which we can see an abandoned urbanization and its geomorphic effects. Arrival at Almeria around 21:00.

Weather

At the beginning of autumn some showers might occur, which could give us the opportunity to see the *boquera* and the runoff-erosion plots at work.

	Almería	Lorca (Murcia)
Average temperature	19.3°C	18°C
Average Monthly Precipitation	28 mm	27 mm

Travel Information

Almeria, coast of SE Spain, can be reached by plane, train, road and ship. Almeria International Airport (LEI) has regular flights to major European cities via either Madrid or Barcelona or direct low-cost flights to Brussels, London, Berlin, and some other cities. There are several daily flights to Madrid and Barcelona (Iberia, Ryanair, Spanair). The airport is about 8 km from downtown Almeria, and the cost of taxis should not be higher than 15 €. Almeria is also connected to the Spanish railway network though as distances to Europe are relatively large, travel durations might become excessive. Almeria is also connected to Europe through motorway E-15 and to northern Africa by ferries serving Melilla (Spain) and Nador (Morocco).

Organizing Committee

Albert Solé-Benet

Joris de Vente

Yolanda Cantón, Francisco Domingo, Ashraf Afana.

Excursion leaders

Albert Solé-Benet, Joris de Vente, Yolanda Cantón.

Week schedule

Monday 3 Oct	Tuesday 4 Oct	Wednesday 5 Oct	Thursday 6 Oct	Friday 7 Oct
		Excursion (part of programme)		Optional excursions A and B
Meeting diner			Meeting dinner	

Post-Congress Excursion (2 single excursions to choose)

Two options to choose from:

No.	Date	Itinerary	Subject	Maximum n. of participants
A	7th Oct	"Cabo de Gata – Nijar" Natural Park	Agriculture and tourism compatible with environmental protection. See details in annex 1.	50 (but we can find a Solution if more people are interested)
B	7th Oct	Campo de Dalias (largest concentration of greenhouses in Europe) and the "Tabernas desert"	Greenhouse agriculture and overexploitation of water. Scenic arid landscapes and badlands and experimental site. See details in annex 2.	50 (but we can find a Solution if more people are interested)

Post meeting excursion includes excursion guide, lunch, and transport (bus or mini-bus); Fee: 50 € for each excursion.

These excursions can only be held if at least 15 people register. If less people register for one of the excursions, only the other excursion will be organized. In that case, those who registered for the excursion that cannot be organized can join the other excursion if they want.

Money

The official currency of Spain is the Euro (€). There are ATM machines at the airport and everywhere in the city where to withdraw money with main cards (VISA, MASTER, etc)

Banks are open from 8:15 to 13:30 and only very few open in the afternoon.

Visa

Citizens from some European and non-European countries are required to obtain a visa to enter Spain. In such cases we can provide invitation letters. Since visas are never issued in Spain, you must apply for them before you leave your country of residency. Generally, you should apply for your visa about 8-12 weeks before the date of your arrival in Spain, normally through the Spanish consulate nearest to your residence. You must first have a valid passport with at least three months until expiry in order to apply, so be sure to allow adequate time to obtain or renew both the passport and get the visa application processed.

For additional information, please contact:

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- Rudi Hessel - ALTERRA

Other information about Almeria

from <http://www.almeria-lei.airports-guides.com/>

Almeria sits at the foot of the Gador mountain (belonging to the Betic range) that is crowned by the spectacular Alcazaba, an Arab fortress with three huge walled enclosures built by Abderrahman III, the Caliph of Cordoba. In addition to tourism, Almeria has the largest surface of greenhouses in Europe concentrated in 3 areas around the city: Campo de Dalias at the west (about 20,000 ha), and campo de Almeria and Campo de Nijar at the East (over 5,000 ha).

People arriving at Almeria Airport (LEI) will be able to enjoy the city's historical sites, such as its grand Gothic-Renaissance-style cathedral, built in the 1500s. There are also a few interesting museums around Almeria, which show remnants of the region's long and fascinating history. The city is also known for its great Tapas bars, cafés, quaint shops and lengthy sandy beachfront, next to the Paseo Maritimo. This warm, sunny, historical region has a wide range of things to do.

Annex 1

Optional excursion to the Natural Park “Cabo de Gata – Níjar”

The excursion will consist in a visit to the Natural Park “Cabo de Gata – Níjar”, UNESCO-MAB biosphere reserve, combining very interesting marine and terrestrial ecosystems in one of the driest spots in Europe where tourism, mining, ecological agriculture and research activities try to get along. The visit will include the following: scenic landscapes (beaches, lagoon and salt mining, columnar basalts, phonolithic columns, etc); traditional water harvesting systems (*aljibes*, *foggaras* and *norias*), park information center (house of volcanoes), abandoned gold mine, bentonite mining, ecological agriculture, EEZA-CSIC field site on hydro-ecological research (monitoring of water and CO₂ fluxes from soils and alpha grass ecosystems, rainfall exclusion and runoff redistribution by alpha grass tussocks, biological soil crusts evolution under experimental scenarios).

Before the field guide is completed, attendants will find some information in:

<http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=SPA+15&mode=all>

<http://www.europeangeoparks.org/isite/geopark/74,1,0.asp>

<http://www.ecopark-nijar.com/ecopark/index.php/es/cultivos> (only in Spanish).

<http://www.orodenijar.com/es/orodenijar.html> (Spanish and German)

Annex 2

Optional excursion to the Tabernas desert and to Campo de Dalias (greenhouse area)

The so-called Tabernas desert is an area a few km north of the city of Almeria containing one of the most scenic badlands in Spain developed on calcic-gypsiferous mudstones (or marls). EEZA-CSIC maintains an instrumented field site since 1990 for geo-ecological research (climate, erosion, runoff, plant community evolution, soil crusting).

The economic miracle of Almeria is mostly due to the prosperous greenhouse agriculture which developed since 1970 and now reaches over 30,000 ha, the largest part of it concentrated in the Campo de Dalias. The evolution of the different types of greenhouses will be observed at a private experimental research station in La Mojonera.

And just a few web sites about the Tabernas desert:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabernas_Desert

<http://www.andalucia.com/environment/protect/tabernas.htm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhSdODTkg0c>

<http://www.unique-almeria.com/deserts-of-the-world.html>

and about the Experimental Station (Fundacion CAJAMAR)

<http://www.laspalmerillas.cajamar.es/Default.htm> (in Spanish)