

**Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress -
Final Report**

Executive Summary

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

The major findings of the WCC evaluation are summarized as follows:

1)

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Contents

1. Introduction	10.
2. A	

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Exhibits

Exhibit 3.1

Text Boxes

2.1 Barcelona WCC Journeys	2
2.2 Barcelona WCC Pavilions	3
4.1 Comments on the relevance of IUCN as a convener:	8
4.2 IUCN Value Proposition, as highlighted in the 2009-2012 Programme:	11
4.3 Major strengths of the WCC related to the issues of scale:	13
4.4 Forum discussions on multiple scales of intervention	13
4.5 Congress showcased the work of IUCN and its constituencies	15
4.6 Issues covered during the WCC:	17
4.7 Post-Congress survey comments on the Congress relevance to key issues	18
4.8 Comments from the post-Congress survey illustrating the diversity of issues	20
4.9 Comments on the learning benefits of the WCC	22
4.10 IUCN Press Release	23
4.11 Comments on networking cited by Post-Congress Survey respondents:	24
4.13 Selected Comments on Women Entrepreneurs	27
4.12 Selected Comments on the Exhibits	27
4.14 Comments from Post-Congress Survey (Strengths)	28

1. Introduction

At the request of the Congress Preparatory Committee of Council, IUCN commissioned an external evaluation of the World Conservation Congress held in Barcelona, Spain in October 2008. After an international bidding process, Universalia Management Group, based in Montreal, was contracted to conduct the evaluation.

The evaluation of the WCC was designed to support the ongoing learning interests of IUCN and its accountability to key stakeholders. The specific objectives of this evaluation are outlined below in Section 3.1 of this report.

The Barcelona Congress evaluation was coordinated by Mr. Alex Moiseev, Senior Programme Officer, Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and led by Dr. Charles Lusthaus, with the support of Mr. Alain Fréchette, Ms. Katrina Rojas, and Ms. Mariane Arsenault from Universalia Management Group. It should be noted that the WCC evaluation is part of a broader effort designed to capture Congress related learning at a strategic, programmatic and operational level, which include: 1) Congress and Forum Learning Capture – aimed at capturing data on key issues related to Congress planning, management and implement

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

April 2009

© UNIVERSALIA

01386 p:\int\1386 external evaluation of lucn wort

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress -

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

4. Evaluation Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation in the areas of relevance, effectiveness, management effectiveness, and value for money.

4.1 Relevance

This section focuses on the extent to which the WCC is consistent with the needs, interests, and priorities of 1) the Union as a whole, 2) its constituencies, and 3) key conservation/development issues. Retrospective consideration of the appropriateness of the WCC and its design, in the context of a rapidly evolving global environmental governance arena, is discussed in Section 6, Conclusions and Recommendations.

The relevance of the World Conservation Congress is discussed in terms of the extent to which Congress: 1) strengthens the Union's relevance and strategic position as a global conservation leader; 2) confirms IUCN's value proposition; 3) highlights the relevance of the IUCN Intersessional Programme; 4) is relevant to the Union's constituencies; and 5) is relevant to key conservation and development issues.

4.1.1 Strengthening the Union's Relevance and Strategic Position

The WCC convened participants from 183 countries representing a wide range of interests including national and international NGOs, donor agencies, multilateral organizations, governments, the private sector, academia, indigenous groups, and youth, in addition to Secretariat staff and Commission members (see Section 4.2.2 on the Effectiveness of the Union’s Convening Platform). When asked to identify the major strength of the Congress, over a third of respondents underscored the relative importance of the Union’s ability to bring together a wide range of participants from around the world to address common concerns. However, some respondents also pointed to the need for better representation from the global South and involvement of youth (see textbox 4.1)⁵.



Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

“IUCN brings together 111 governments agencies and 874 non-governmental organizations and about 10,000 scientists”.⁷ In addition to the 1,600 articles that were published on or about the Congress between September 15th and October 15th, 68 press events were held during the Congress itself, thus reinforcing the Union’s presence as a global conservation leader.

The adoption of a forward looking programme for the 2009-2012 intersessional period helped to set an important precedent for IUCN and the conservation community as a whole. By bringing the issues of climate change, sustainable energy production and green economics front and center, the 2008 WCC provided IUCN and its members / partners with a unique opportunity to reinstate the relevance / importance of conservation and sustainable ecosystem management in relation to the major environmental and developmental challenges of the 21st century. Hence, according to Post-Congress Survey results, nearly three quarters of respondents felt that the WCC had helped to strengthen their commitment to the IUCN 2009-2012 Programme (see Exhibit 4.2). As the proposed Forum Evaluation of the WCC unfolds over the coming year, some effort will be invested in understanding how such influence plays out over the long term.



Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

April 2009

© UNIVERSALIA

01386 p:\intl\1386 external evaluation of lucn world conservation congrb_105_\b7b_l_bltSKVO_z-IISKVO_z-IoS6_wA7_...IS6-b\~z_bj.S6_-O_b0b-IgS6-b\~0_1657k_...lcS6-b\~VO_z-IISKf-IoS6_wA7-IuS7k_-zk.II3FAQ]65798k_...bASS9A2A_bj29696-b\blHS4VO_zzHIS8A0.S4-b6S3KoBMA56@Nnzjfl06.F1652W15H3G...

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

April 2009

© UNIVERSALIA

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

benefits of Congress cited in the post-Congress survey, events were generally praised for their relevance to the work of participants (see Exhibit 4.5), for the range of topics presented, for the multiple levels of inquiry used to address issues and for providing access to new sources of information and knowledge.



Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

**Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress -
Final Report**

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report



**Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress -
Final Report**

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

By all accounts, the 2008 WCC has done more to showcase the work of members and participants than any other previous Congress. It featured an astounding 972 events, 9 Pavilions, 130 Exhibitors, a Conservation Cinema, and an

While generally positive throughout, varying levels of dissatisfaction were expressed in regards to some of the walk-in venues. Apart from the Poster sessions, which were ideally located in a high traffic area, and the Pavilions, which played a key convening function during Congress (see Finding 9 below), most of the venues that relied on visibility to attract participant interest were located beyond the main gathering areas (see textbox 4.12). Many participants, as well as those who exposed their work felt that the walk-in exhibits had been marginalized by the venue layout. In particular, the exhibition booths, the International Fair for Women Entrepreneurs, and the boats that took part in the Sailing to Barcelona event were all housed outside of the main thoroughfares of the Congress, thus reducing their ability to profile their work or contributions. Congress organizers should give careful attention to such matters in the future (see comments in textbox 4.13).

Nevertheless, an informal sampling of 15 exhibitors revealed that all but one thought their presence at the Congress had been well worth their investment in terms of the exposure they received, and the networking and partnership building opportunities that their booths generated.

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

April 2009

© UNIVERSALIA

01386 p:\intl\1386 external evaluation of lucn world conservation congress-2008\final report\wcc evalu

Pavilions within the overall Congress architecture should be clarified so as to avoid creating structures that try to be everything to everyone (e.g., decide whether or not Pavilions should be used to showcase specific contributions and host events or if the focus should rest more squarely on networking and constituency outreach). Regardless of the strategy adopted, the structure and organization of the Pavilions should be streamlined to support the course of action that will guide future investments so that better seating arrangements and sound proofing are integrated if Pavilions intend to host events; staffing, amenities and informal areas are to be improved if networking, partnership building and outreach become the core mandate of the Pavilions; linkages across Pavilions and between Pavilions and the Forum, the Assembly and the themes of the Congress should be more clearly stated if Pavilions are used to guide participant interaction and involvement in the Congress; etc.

Beyond the need to better align certain organizational elements of the Pavilions with their intended purpose, most Secretariat staff involved i

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

experience to build on and no clear guidelines or set of procedures to follow²⁶.

As detailed in the subsequent findings of this section, the high number of motions presented before Congress and the time constraints for carrying out the business of the Assembly led to dissatisfaction over the lack of opportunities for debate and constructive dialogue on the more controversial motions and the IUCN Intersessional Programme as a whole. As revealed by the Assembly survey, only 56% of respondents felt that the amount of time set aside to debate motions during the Plenary was adequate. Contact groups however, were seen by the vast majority of post-Congress survey respondents (93%) as being helpful for resolving controversial issues (see Exhibit 4.15). While the need for more opportunities to debate was one of the more prominent concerns raised by survey respondents, few if any questioned the relatively small proportion of members that actually participated in Assembly proceedings. Similarly, Assembly survey results reveal another contradiction in respondent perceptions regarding access to motion information. As per the requirements of the Statutes, accepted motions were posted on the IUCN website and circulated to all members sixty days in advance of Congress. However, even though more than 70% of Assembly survey respondents confirmed that they were able to use this information to better prepare themselves, less than 60% actually felt that they were given this information adequately in advance.



Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

In spite of some criticisms regarding the motions process and missed opportunities for debate, the Members' Assembly was largely praised by senior officials, Secretariat staff and post-Congress survey respondents for being well organized, fairly conducted and effectively managed (over 88% of survey respondents agreed – see Exhibit 4.16). As one respondent summed it up: "To succeed in

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report



Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Secretariat suggests, efforts to improve Congress-wide linkages could eventually prove beneficial for IUCN: “The results of partnerships with the private sector could have been showcased during the Forum (but wasn’t). By having such a discussion in the Forum you are able to draw in a greater diversity of perspectives than you would in a Conta

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

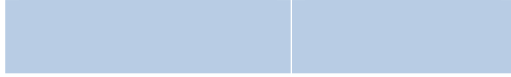
weaknesses in the motions process. The Resolution's Working Group responsible for processing the motions submitted to Congress mobilized the time and energy of more than 25 individuals, including staff and Council members. Yet, motions management at Congress was severely hindered by a lack of institutional memory. To do the work, the team had no record of how this had been done in the past, no document explaining the procedures to follow, and no guidelines outlining what they should try to do. As one respondent indicated, "We are making the rules as we go." The team basically had to track down individuals (who had since left the Secretariat) who had worked on motions during past congresses. Contradictory opinions were common and procedural gaps, such as how motions can be submitted

motions submitted before the
process

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

implies that all resolutions, recommendations, elections results, and even approval of the 2009-2012 Programme could effectively be challenged.



Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

The Barcelona WCC was largely touted by evaluation respondents as the best organized and smoothest running Congress ever, resolutely demonstrating IUCN's rising level of maturity in terms of successfully planning, organizing, and delivering large international forums. In spite of the size of the WCC in terms of the number of participants, events and motions presented before Congress, and the inherent complexity of orchestrating the many elements that conditioned its delivery, IUCN was able to meet the expectations of its constituencies and address the requirements of its statutes. A number of factors lead us to these conclusions.

According to post-Congress survey results, the WCC was considered to be well organized by nearly 90% of respondents while 85% of those who completed the survey felt that it met their overall expectations. As highlighted in textbox 4.23, the quality of the Barcelona Congress from an organizational perspective, was identified as one of the key strengths of the WCC.

Similarly, results from the Forum survey indicate that in terms of pre-congress information and registration, 85% of respondents appreciated the ease with which the on-line registration process could be completed, and over 75% appreciated the usefulness of the Congress-related on-line materials. With respect to on-site logistics and management, the confidence of participants in the professionalism of the Congress set-up was confirmed by a number of observations. Close to 95% of Forum survey respondents found that it was easy to obtain their identification badge. The majority of respondents (more than 80%) indicated that the Congress facilities were adequate, easy to navigate through, and provided access to sufficient services. The members' lounge was thought

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

As evidenced by the results of the Forum Survey, barely 50% of respondents were able to use the

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

number of motions since Bangkok with little or no guidance or set of procedures to follow. Such conditions were also experienced by the onsite Motions/Resolutions Team who, in spite of numerous calls for amendments and a voting process that considered all 145 motions individually, was able to pull it all together, coordinate with Contact Groups, Friends-of-the-Chair²⁸ and document translations under very tight timelines. As one interview respondent put it, “they did an extremely good job under the circumstances.”

Finally, on-site management of the Barcelona Congress was singled out by Secretariat staff, Councilors, Commission Heads, and opinion leaders as instrumental to the success of the overall Congress. The calming and responsive demeanor of the Congress Manager helped to reassure staff, handle emerging issues effectively, and provide the leadership that was essential to the delivery of such a large and complex event.

While evidence suggests that overall, IUCN did a remarkable job, it also makes it clear that the management process leading up to Congress was not as effective as it could have been.

- Because of the absence of clearly defined objectives, the Forum planning process emerged as an overly complex and close to unmanageable organization with inadequate coordination between the Forum Team and logistical support.
- The lack of experience, poor teamwork, inadequate management oversight and interpersonal communications, and unclear roles and responsibilities were used to qualify the experience of the motions team in the Learning Capture exercise.
- To make things worse, there was little in the way of clear guidelines and procedures to direct the motions process. Each segment of the Members’ Assembly (i.e., Motions team, Documentation center, Resolutions Committee, Programme Committee) more or less followed independent strategies, further aggravating tensions and coordination problems in what was already a complex process.
- Staff working on the motions process had to contend with a dysfunctional IT system (SharePoint), an unsystematized (i.e., undocumented) process, and heavy disproportionate

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

More than half of those spoken to questioned the rationale of the Congress beyond the immediacy of the statutory requirements. In the context of poorly defined benefits and indirectly reckoned positive externalities, many senior managers and staff privately wondered whether or not Congress is actually worth the actual costs it entails – a question that remains difficult to answer in the absence of full cost accounting mechanisms. Whether or not the additionality of Congress outweighs the benefits that could be attained through less costly alternatives is a question that preoccupied many. Perspectives on these issues tend

5. Value for Money

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, results of the 2008 World Conservation Congress evaluation point to a successful event that confirmed IUCN's role as a leader in the global conservation movement. The Barcelona Congress convened the largest and most diverse group of participants ever; provided a rich and diverse programme that effectively showcased the work of the Union and of members more specifically; and fulfilled the requirements of the Statutes in spite of a dense Assembly agenda. Through this Congress, IUCN was able to further the global conservation agenda and strengthen the alliances, partnerships, and capacities that will support the work of members over the next four years and aid in the delivery of an ambitious intersessional programme.

While the criteria used by IUCN to measure the perf

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress - Final Report

April 2009

© UNIVERSALIA

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

- 5) require proponents to provide an estimate of the costs of implementing the motion and identify real sources of funds.

Presently, members bear no obligations regarding the motions they submit. Motions are cast in an open access system in which no one, except for the Secretariat, is accountable, thus providing substantial political gains for relatively little cost³³. For the Secretariat however, transaction costs for handling each motion from submission to resolution are high and opportunity costs for

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

of members and partners (during the Forum and the Members' Assembly – with secure online voting mechanisms) who choose to reduce their carbon footprint by not travelling to Congress

Appendix I List of Findings

- Finding 1:** The convening authority of IUCN and the adoption of a forward looking agenda considerably strengthened the Union's relevance as a strategic leader in the global conservation movement.
- Finding 2:** Overall, the WCC confirmed IUCN's relevance as a purveyor of credible and trusted knowledge, a convener of partnerships for action, a catalyst for change at multiple levels, and a leader in setting conservation standards and practices.
- Finding 3:** Congress helped to position the 2009-2012 Programme for adoption and support discussions on the achievements and lessons learned from the 2005-2008 Programme.
- Finding 4:** The Barcelona Congress is widely perceived to have been successful in meeting the needs of the Union's constituencies and in advancing their respective interests.
- Finding 5:** The Congress addressed the key issues and concerns of the conservation and sustainable development movements in the world today.
- Finding 6:** The 2008 WCC was successful in convening a debate around an ambitious global conservation agenda.
- Finding 7:** The Barcelona World Conservation Congress highlighted IUCN's effectiveness as a convening platform.
- Finding 8:** Forum events and Pavilions provided enabling conditions for the effective delivery of the Congress objectives.
- Finding 9:** Pavilions provided an innovative design feature that supported outreach activities by various communities of practice within the Secretariat and the Union more broadly.
- Finding 10:** The Learning Opportunities were highly regarded for their content, quality learning materials, skillful facilitation, and contribution to participant learning.
- Finding 11:** The large number of events, complex programming structure and lack of printed information made it difficult for participants to select where to go and make appropriate use of their time.
- Finding 12:** The stated objectives of the WCC were not clearly defined and broadly disseminated.
- Finding 13:**

Evaluation of the Barcelona World Conservation Congress – Final Report

Finding 16: The governance institutions regulating the overall motions process (from submission to resolution) is complex and needs to be overhauled.

Finding 17: The relatively low rates of participation and high levels of abstentions in the voting processes represent a concern for the democratic health of the Union.

Finding 18: In spite of its size and complexity, the Barcelona

Appendix II List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Council should reaffirm the role of Congress in the global conservation arena.

Recommendation 2: Council should set strategic objectives for the World Conservation Congress.

Recommendation 3: IUCN Congress management should develop a performance management framework to guide the design and evaluation of Congress.

Recommendation 4: IUCN Congress management should align the design of the WCC to planned objectives.

Recommendation 5: Council should reaffirm linkages between the Forum and the Assembly or consider the separation of the two.

Recommendation 6: IUCN should try to broaden its constituencies.

Recommendation 7: IUCN needs to revise its management model for the Congress.

Recommendation 8: Council should refine the motions process to ensure improved ownership and engagement