

Congress Objectives

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Background

The World Conservation Congress offers an unprecedented opportunity for achieving real influence on the external environment within which IUCN operates. However, evaluation evidence from a series of congress evaluations suggests that results are only achieved if they are planned for and conversely without clear identification of intended results.

Congress objectives and a results oriented approach

IUCN operates in a results based programming format, which in simplest terms, compels the various parts of IUCN to identify and plan for the kinds of behavioral or policy changes that IUCN can influence through its work. We want to extend this results-based approach to all our work including the Congress in order to measure the influences that the Congress has.

The evaluation of the 2008 Congress in Barcelona revealed that the “absence of clear objectives specifying the changes that IUCN would like to see occurring at the output and outcome levels rendered the definition of success less tangible and therefore more difficult to assess”. The evaluation team therefore strongly suggested setting strategic objectives for the 2012 World Conservation Congress which “should cut across the Forum and Assembly and provide an overarching framework that supports the role of Congress within a rapidly evolving global environmental governance arena”.

This paper therefore sets both the operational objectives and Programme objectives for the 2012 Congress.

Operational objectives

In order to be seen as a success from an operational point of view the 2012 Congress needs to

- Fulfil the statutory requirements for the Congress as a whole and the Members’ Assembly in particular and increase Members’ participation in the statutory processes
- Be perceived as an enriching experience by all participants (including staff, Councilors and Host Country), worthwhile the investment of participants and IUCN’s time and money
- Be efficiently planned and managed and leave IUCN with at least a neutral accounting balance
- Minimize and compensate the direct and indirect negative impacts of the Congress and has a reduced carbon footprint per participant compared to the past Congresses
- Reach new partners and constituents

- Enable debates and the sharing of knowledge and experiences amongst participants

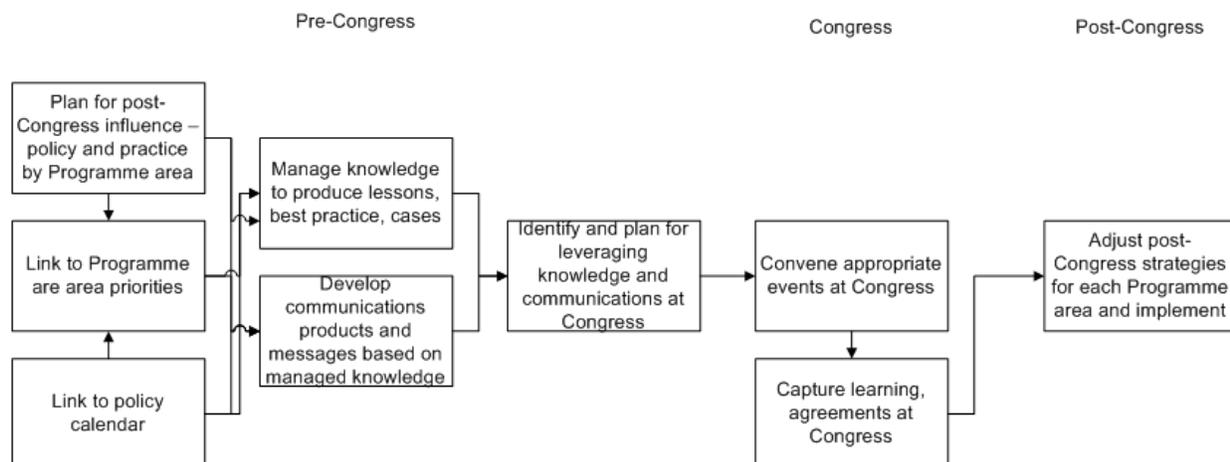
Programme objectives

Leveraging the World Conservation Congress to create a global shift on the practice and policy of conservation will require careful planning and must be firmly rooted in a few key initiatives, so as not to dilute the overall message. This will present a considerable challenge given the diverse and democratic nature of IUCN

In the diagram below, the Congress becomes the centerpiece to a longer term influencing strategy¹ which is planned out well in advance. In all three cases, an influencing strategy would identify the medium term intended results around these topics to be achieved after the Congress. Planning for the Congress would entail identifying what science should be profiled at the event (through appropriate knowledge management and communications products and strategies), what agreements should be made and what positions should reach convergence in order to create influence after the event. Then the events and participants at the Congress are planned. In this scenario, the team responsible for the influencing strategy would be responsible for the strategy itself, but also detailed planning for the Congress. Elements of a sound influencing strategy should include non-traditional audiences who IUCN is trying to influence, including those in private sector, development sector and wider political processes.

A key part of this planning is, of course, planning for results to be achieved after the Congress. An example from IUCN's recent past may help illustrate this point. Around the time of the last World Parks Congress (which is set on a 10 year cycle), organizers realized that there was an opportunity to influence the upcoming development of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The entire Parks Congress was designed to produce a message that would have a strong influence on the technical and negotiating bodies of CBD. In the end, most agree that the Durban Accords, the message from the Parks Congress, had a strong influence on the POWPA.

¹ An influencing strategy is a planning document that sets out a results-oriented plan around a particular theme. The influencing strategy should identify what results are intended, how these will be achieved (using the Value Proposition), identify critical events on a time line, necessary outputs, roles and responsibilities of key players who will implement the strategy and how the team will interact, communicate and make adjustments.



Objectives for Congress from the Programme

Building on the proposition that planning for the Congress should focus on opportunities for influence after the Congress, thereby using the event itself as an opportunity to create that influence, this paper focuses on what exactly each Programme area will focus upon, what positioning or evidence gathering will be required in advance and the types of events necessary at the Congress itself.

Specific objectives (for Programme) at the Congress combining both are

- To leverage the strategic influencing potential of the Congress to influence Post-congress events and policy processes
- To debate and create consensus on issues relevant to the implementation of the three Programme areas
- To showcase the new concepts and evidence on the topic of nature based solutions
- To showcase successes and conservation results leveraged by the Union in the previous intersessional period
- Identification and development of programme initiatives that involve different strands of the Union