

Environmental Framework for the World Conservation Congress

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) strives to influence, encourage and assist “societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”. The quadrennial World Conservation Congress provides a public forum to address this mission and shape the international agenda. Yet the Congress also places IUCN in the public eye and represents an opportunity for IUCN to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable values and ensure that the social and environmental footprint is as positive as possible.

“Greening” the 2008 Barcelona Congress is consistent with recent efforts by IUCN to “walk the talk”. Our aim is to minimize and compensate our direct and indirect impacts relating to all aspects of the congress and leave a positive legacy. Building on sustainability initiatives in the city of Barcelona and the knowledge of our hosts as well as the experience of other organizations, IUCN endeavours to minimize the consumption of natural resources and the production of waste related to all phases in the lead up to, during and after the Congress. We will foster actions that avoid harm to biodiversity and human health, minimize our impact from CO2 emissions, and contribute to the sustainable development of the local economy. We will also be helping the city of Barcelona to position itself as a city of sustainable tourism and conferences.

The standards we set before the Congress should influence the perceptions and behaviour of all groups involved. In pursuing this goal we want to engage all Congress contributors to adopt an environmentally sensitive, coherent approach. We will encourage our suppliers and contractors to adopt sustainability standards and we will help our staff, delegates, partners and visitors to minimize the footprint of the Congress.

Greening the Congress is not an isolated activity, but an ongoing process with standards that serve as an exemplary role model for future IUCN events. It represents a significant step in what will be a continuous process to encourage IUCN and its stakeholders to “walk the talk” in achieving the IUCN mission. As such we will evaluate our progress and report our successes and the limitations of this endeavour in order to ensure an iterative learning process as we look to the future.