

International Congress and Convention Association



ICCA CSR Report 2008

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1. Strategy

1.1 CEO introduction

This is the first edition of what will become an annual exercise for ICCA, to be read in conjunction with the 2008 Annual Report and detailed financial results for the most recent calendar year.

ICCA has signed up to the Global Reporting Initiative, the UN standard for sustainability reporting, and this report is therefore structured according to GRI guidelines.

There are three key areas of relevance to ICCA's CSR policy: the policies, activities and impact of the association itself; the scope for ICCA to influence the activities and impact of its members around the world; and advocacy and global standards issues relating to the overall impact of international meetings, which will primarily be addressed in partnership with other leading meetings industry organizations.

The starting point is to create a standard set of reporting parameters so that members and other stakeholders can understand how ICCA is progressing over time in achieving sustainability objectives and standards.

Martin Sirk
CEO
ICCA

1.2 Key impacts, risks and opportunities

As a relatively small organization employing fewer than 40 employees, turning over less than EURO 4 million annually, and delivering most of its services electronically, the direct environmental and societal impact of ICCA's activities is not of great significance. However, in terms of ICCA's potential to influence the activities and awareness of ICCA members and other key players in the international meetings industry, ICCA's impact is far greater. It is therefore of great importance for ICCA to act as an example of good practice in all areas relating to sustainability.

Risks – the greatest strategic danger is that meetings become perceived purely as a negative contributor to carbon emissions rather than as a force for progress, and ICCA should ensure that a balanced understanding of the impact meetings is communicated. In doing so ICCA should always ensure that it acts and is seen to act as a responsible corporate citizen.

Opportunities – this new annual CSR report is a good opportunity to raise understanding of the important positive role of meetings. There is a reason why the world gathers together in Copenhagen to discuss sustainability rather than handling all the key issues by email.

Sustainability is more than environmental impact; it relates to the total societal impact of an organization or an industry. The role of meetings in knowledge transfer, education, capacity building, problem solving, etc, has never been calculated but is clearly significant.

2. Organisational profile

- 2.1 ICCA, the International Congress & Convention Association
- 2.2 Global leader in research, sales and marketing services relating to the international association meetings sector. Global leading trade association offering members educational and networking opportunities.
- 2.3 Majority of services delivered by Head Office divisions: Membership; Research; Marketing & Sales; Events. Additional services delivered by Regional Offices for Asia-Pacific, Latin America, North America.
- 2.4 Head Office in Amsterdam: 26 staff members from 12 different nationalities. Regional Offices in Malaysia (4 staff members); Uruguay (2 staff members); USA (1 staff member).
- 2.5 Members in 85 countries; activities in all regions of the world.
- 2.6 Membership owned, not-for-profit global trade association registered in The Netherlands.
- 2.7 Specialist in international association market, assisting members in research, sales and marketing to this sector; this services delivered throughout all countries where ICCA has members, given the global nature of the market.
- 2.8 Scale of operations:
33 staff.
EURO 3.7 million turnover in 2008.
816 members at beginning of 2008; 860 members at end of 2008.
Approximately 7,000 regularly occurring international association meetings identified taking place in previous year.
- 2.9 No significant increases in size and structure over the reporting period.

3. Report parameters

- 3.1 The report covers calendar year 2008.
- 3.2 This is the first report of this nature produced by ICCA.
- 3.3 CSR report will be produced annually.
- 3.4 Questions regarding the report should be addressed to ICCA CEO Martin Sirk, m.sirk@icca.nl.
- 3.5 Process: as a first edition report, the process for determining what issues are material, prioritizing topics, and identifying stakeholders, has been the responsibility of an ICCA Board of Directors Advisory Group. The report in future years will be further developed through advice from ICCA members with experience in sustainability reporting.
- 3.6 The report covers the activities and policies of ICCA itself, the potential for ICCA to influence ICCA members, and advocacy potential within the wider international meetings industry.
- 3.7 The report makes no attempt to measure the full sustainability impact of the meetings industry, both positive and negative; a great deal of further research is needed to create a recognised quantitative base-line from which to measure progress.
- 3.8 The report covers all ICCA activities in all regions of the world. Offsetting and/or minimizing the carbon impact of ICCA members participating in ICCA activities is regarded as the responsibility of the members themselves rather than simply that of ICCA, and members are encouraged to take on increased personal responsibility.
- 3.9 ICCA has based the carbon offset costs of staff and Board official flights on the highest estimates calculated by major airlines for short-haul and long-haul flights.
- 3.10 ICCA has a standard Annual Report format which includes best-practice advice on how to report financial data. This information will not be repeated in the CSR report, but will be referred to wherever relevant. ICCA members have full access to both documents.
- 3.11 ICCA will report future changes to reporting processes in all future editions of the CSR report.
- 3.12 The report and all relevant supporting material can be found in the ICCA website, www.iccaworld.com.
- 3.13 ICCA plans to obtain professional analysis of the appropriateness of this report's format, especially whether the report fulfills the requirements of the Global Reporting Initiative. Changes may be required for future editions.

4. Governance, commitments, engagement

- 4.1 ICCA is governed by a Board of Directors which is made up of elected volunteer leaders drawn from each geographical region and from each industry sector. The Board advises the CEO and management team in strategy and policy, and oversees the senior management performance. All member organizations have equal governance rights, able to elect President, and their geographical and sector Board representatives. ICCA members exercise additional governance rights at the annual General Assembly, including the membership fees they pay for the forthcoming year.
- 4.2 The President is a non-executive volunteer leader, elected for a two year term, and able to serve two terms. The senior executive staff member is the CEO, whose employment is on a continuous basis.
- 4.3 There is no requirement for independent (ie non-member) Board members since all branches of ICCA membership are represented, with all members able to influence these representatives.
- 4.4 Members can influence the direction of ICCA in a number of ways: through electing Board representatives; through voting at the General Assembly; through direct approaches to Board or senior management. ICCA is a sufficiently small organization to be able to provide direct channels to senior management for members wishing to raise important issues.
- 4.5 All ICCA staff participate in a standard employee incentive programme, linked to both overall financial performance and to a range of important strategic business objectives. As a not-for-profit organization whose members fees are the primary source of revenue, ICCA believes it is essential to prioritise member benefits whilst maintaining financial discipline, rather than aiming to maximize financial surpluses. CEO remuneration and performance are scrutinized and decided by the organisation's Management & Finance Committee.
- 4.6 Conflicts of interest are avoided by requiring as policy that all Board of Directors declare such potential conflicts whenever they arise during Board discussions on particular issues.
- 4.7 Board members are appointed through an open voting system rather than through selection based on any identification of technical qualifications. Additional technical expertise is brought in by ICCA to assist in strategic issues requiring specific skills.
- 4.8 Statements of values, codes of conduct, sustainability principles: please see section 9.3 in the current edition of the ICCA Strategic Plan (adopted October 2008), which sets out ICCA's principles for acting as an ethical association. This includes the need to be transparent, open, non-corrupt, and to deal in a fair, equal way with staff and members, with no discrimination on the basis of gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, religion. Members are regarded as equal "shareholders" in ICCA.
- 4.9 The Board of Directors will adopt each annual CSR report, as this body is responsible for primary oversight of the association's sustainability performance.
- 4.10 The Board of Directors will regularly appoint an Advisory Group on sustainability issues to evaluate the association's and Board's sustainability performance. In addition, it is intended to regularly submit the ICCA CSR report to GRI evaluators, once the format has been correctly and fully set up.
- 4.11 Precautionary principles: In 2008 ICCA had no process of examining whether future plans were analysed for their sustainability impacts. This issue will be included in future Board discussions and built into future reports.
- 4.12 ICCA joined the Green Meetings Industry Council in 2007, and began to become more engaged with this organization in 2008. GRI sign-up has only happened in 2009.

- 4.13 ICCA engages with a number of globally important “umbrella organizations”, including CIC; JMIC; UNWTO; GMIC. These are conduits for agreeing and communicating global standards with regard to meetings industry sustainability issues.
- 4.14 Stakeholders: ICCA’s primary stakeholders are its members, whose competitive position is the first priority for the association. Also important are the international association meetings community, whose meetings make up the centrally important ICCA database, and with whom ICCA builds a continuous long-term relationship on behalf of its members. Finally, ICCA engages with the broader international meetings industry community, and is trusted as a key leader of the industry.
- 4.15 Stakeholders are identified through the regular strategic planning process.
- 4.16 ICCA engages with its members in multiple ways: formally through the governance process (eg General Assembly); more regularly and less formally through surveys; participation in activities and events; direct communication. International association meeting planners through database and educational resources. Wider meetings industry through JMIC and CIC, and through high-profile PR positioning.
- 4.17 Members have indicated increasing concerns relating to sustainability issues, which have so far been addressed by providing educational and discussion forum opportunities to discuss these issues at ICCA events. ICCA has also joined GMIC and been engaged in supporting the creation of global standards for “green meetings”. Members are particularly concerned with ensuring that the positive impacts of meetings are balanced against negative impacts, whilst at the same time striving to reduce the carbon impact across our industry.

5. Performance issues

5.1 General

ICCA is a relatively small organization with minimal environmental impact through its primary activities, but as a meetings industry leader all efforts are made to follow best practices, to influence members and other meetings industry players.

5.2 Office practices

Location – new Head Office deliberately chosen in 2007 to be close to major public transport intersection; incentives in place to encourage staff to use public transport; but car parking still supplied to those who do not live close to public transport or who are supplied with company cars (4 executives).

Lighting – motion sensors are located in all departments so that only occupied areas are lit.

Heating – building-wide system but with area thermostats to ensure minimal wastage of heat or cooling.

Recycling – all waste paper and glass is recycled; the office building has no provision for recycling plastic, but only minimal amounts of plastic are used by ICCA.

Postage – only materials regarded as essential, such as the membership directory, are physically posted; policy is that materials should be provided electronically unless there is a clear business case for printing.

When printing brochures and other materials, sustainable forest sourced paper or recycled paper is selected, along with non-toxic inks, using printers and suppliers who have signed up to sustainable practices.

Letterhead and envelopes use paper from sustainable forest sources.

ICCA has allocated a total of EURO 1,440.00 in the 2008 budget towards offsetting the carbon impact of day-to-day operations.

5.3 ICCA events

ICCA now includes CSR/Environment as one of its decision-making criteria for where major events take place. Members bidding to host one of these events need to provide information on their policies, initiatives, and plans, and should also highlight challenges that ICCA can help to address were the congress to take place in that location.

ICCA has reduced the amount of printed material that is distributed at the Congress and other events, but continues to print material which it regards as essential to the effective organization or communication of the event – so for example the Congress still has a printed Networking Guide showing photos of all participants, but sponsors are not allowed to distribute brochures to delegates.

ICCA introduces new environmental initiatives each year, including the electronic device Spotme to replace numerous paper processes including evaluation forms; online educational content instead of handouts; recyclable and/or biodegradable materials such as badges, bags and lanyards. "Green" issues are always included in educational sessions, enabling members to exchange information and ideas. Each year the Congress supports a local charity, donating money to, for example, an orphanage or children's hospital.

The charitable cause supported by the 2008 ICCA Congress held in Victoria, Canada was the children's charity "Jeneece and Friends Coin Drive for Variety". In total ICCA delegates donated Can\$ 16,300.

5.4 ICCA travel offsets

Staff air travel and travel by Board members attending ICCA events in 2008 have been offset at a cost of EURO 1,560. This is based on paying a little more than the most expensive offset-calculations by major airlines for long-haul and short-haul flights (eg Amsterdam to North America West Coast or Asia ranged between EURO 9.50 and 15.00 and Amsterdam to European destinations ranged from below EURO 1.00 to EURO 1.66). Delegates attending ICCA events are encouraged to take personal responsibility for offsetting their own carbon travel impacts.

76 long-haul flights @ EURO 18.00 = EURO 1,360.00

96 short-haul flights @ EURO 2.00 = EURO 192.00

5.5 Carbon offsets

The total EURO 3,000 cost of carbon offset-equivalents for 2008 activities have been invested in the Caledonian Forest "Trees for Life" project, a long-term programme to recreate an area of the ancient forests of northern Scotland. A meetings industry-specific area within this sustainability project has been chosen to receive the funds, which will enable the planting of 543 new trees. ICCA members can learn more about this project through the below website:

http://www.treesforlife.org.uk/groves/meeting_media_company.html

5.6 ICCA member initiatives and issues

There were no specific initiatives during 2008 to promote green initiatives amongst ICCA members, with the exception of sessions at the ICCA Congress. This is an area that the Board is considering for future action, since we are aware that numerous members are participating in a very wide range of programmes.

5.7 Meetings industry-wide issues

ICCA joined the Green Meetings Industry Council in 2008, and encouraged the umbrella organizations JMIC and CIC to engage through GMIC with regard to any global initiatives and standards in future. The issue was raised as to whether the meetings industry should attempt to be included in the Copenhagen Climate Change conference, but it was decided not to go ahead with this. Future progress is anticipated in terms of finding a generally accepted standard for "green meetings". It is anticipated that significant progress will take place during 2009 in this area, and ICCA will be considering how to contribute and to assist with spreading communication of key issues.