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Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2014



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1. Strategy

1.1 CEO Introduction

This is the seventh annual edition of ICCA's CSR report, to be read in conjunction with the 2014 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 organisations.

ICCA regularly consults with the Green Meetings Industry Council to obtain advice on the future development and enhancement of the association's sustainability reporting processes, and is a Gold Partner of GMIC.

Martin Sirk
CEO
ICCA

1.2 Key impacts, risks, and opportunities

As a relatively small organisation employing approximately 40 employees, turning over EURO 4.5 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 – partnering and obtaining consultancy advice from GMIC offers ICCA significant opportunities to support members' sustainability objectives and education on these issues.

Sustainability is more than environmental impact; it relates to the total societal impact of an organisation or an industry. The role of meetings in knowledge transfer, education, capacity building, problem solving, etc, has never been calculated but is clearly significant. ICCA plays a leading role in global meetings industry advocacy work to communicate these impacts, through the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) and Convention Industry Council (CIC), the two leading umbrella organisations for the meetings industry.



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, Africa and Middle East.
- 2.4** Head Office in Amsterdam: 28 staff members from 13 different nationalities.
Regional Offices in Malaysia (9 staff members);
Uruguay (3 staff members);
USA (2 staff members);
Africa (1 representative);
Middle East (1 representative).
- 2.5** Members in 93 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 (end of 2014): 44 staff. EURO 4.5 million turnover in 2014. 962 members at beginning of 2014; 995 members at end of 2014. Approximately 12,000 regularly occurring international association meetings were identified as taking place during the year.



3. Report parameters

- 3.1** The report covers calendar year 2014.
- 3.2** This is the sixth 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: structure and contents originally based on ICCA Board of Directors Working Group analysis of scale of operations, significance of impact, and key issues for ICCA members.
- 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 minimising the carbon impact of ICCA members participating in ICCA activities is regarded as the responsibility of the members themselves rather than 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.org.
- 3.13** ICCA plans is signed up to the Global Reporting Initiative, and will update the format of future reports based on advice received from GRI on best practices for an operation of ICCA's size and scope.



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 organisations 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 (i.e. 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 organisation 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 organisation 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 maximise financial surpluses. CEO remuneration and performance are scrutinised 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. All formal Board meetings have this item as the first point on the agenda.
- 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; updated 2012), 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. Member companies and organisations 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 has the power to appoint an Advisory Group on sustainability issues to evaluate the association's and Board's sustainability performance.
- 4.11** Precautionary principles: In 2014 ICCA had no process of examining whether future plans were analysed for their sustainability impacts. Current plans are not regarded as significantly changing the potential impact of ICCA on environmental or other sustainability factors.
- 4.12** ICCA joined the Green Meetings Industry Council in 2007, began to become more engaged with this organisation in 2008, and obtained "Gold Partner" status in 2011 in recognition of ICCA's role in communicating sustainability issues to members in regions of the world that GMIC itself is less well established. GRI sign-up took place in 2009.
- 4.13** ICCA engages with a number of globally important "umbrella organisations", including CIC; JMIC; UNWTO; GMIC. These are conduits for agreeing and communicating global standards with regard to meetings industry sustainability issues, and for advocating the wider benefits and impacts of international meetings.
- 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 Association 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 (e.g. 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. Senior representatives from GMIC led sustainability educational sessions at ICCA Congresses in Leipzig 2011, Puerto Rico 2012 and Shanghai 2013. 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 organisation 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.

5.1 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. Amsterdam has a policy of central separation of plastic from other waste, rather than requiring separation by businesses or residents.

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. No Christmas/New Year cards are sent out, apart from an electronic message, but the equivalent cost of sending cards is donated annually to Doctors without Borders.

ICCA has allocated a total of **EURO 1,500** in the 2014 budget towards offsetting the carbon impact of day-to-day operations.

5.3 ICCA events

Members bidding to host a major ICCA event are required to provide information on their sustainability/CSR 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 organisation or communication of the event – so for example the 2014 Congress still had a printed final programme (reduced size, incorporating note paper), but previously printed materials have been replaced by online systems, and sponsors are not allowed to distribute brochures to delegates. It is now standard policy that no bags are provided to delegates.

ICCA tries to introduce new environmental initiatives each year, including the meetings App 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 routinely included in educational programmes, 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. Wherever possible, delegates are encouraged to walk, and at the Congress in 2014 all delegates were housed within walking distance of the meeting rooms.

In 2014, delegates and ICCA donated **EURO 4,250** to provide educational equipment and support for a deprived children’s charity in Turkey, TEGV (www.tegv.org/en).

In addition, a student sustainability campaigner, Felix Finkbeiner, was invited as one of the Congress keynote speakers, and his charity was given a donation of **EURO 8,000** in lieu of a speaker fee (www.plant-for-the-planet.org).

5.4 ICCA travel offsets

Staff air travel and travel by Board members attending ICCA events in 2014 have been offset at a cost of **EURO 3,730**. This is based on paying near the top range of 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 10.00 and 15.00 and Amsterdam to European destinations ranged from below EURO 1.00 to EURO 1.80). Delegates attending ICCA events are encouraged to take personal responsibility for offsetting their own carbon travel impacts.

228 long-haul flights @ EURO 15.00 = EURO 3,420.00

155 short-haul flights @ EURO 2.00 = EURO 310.00

5.5 Carbon offsets – CSR charity donation

The total **EURO 5,230** cost of carbon offset-equivalents for 2014 activities (travel + general office activities) have been set aside for a suitable CSR project. A donation has been made to “Meeting Industry Meeting Needs”, a charity that supports CSR and sustainability projects in developing countries, administered by meetings industry volunteers but with all projects verified by leading international CSR organisations and charities.

5.6 ICCA member initiatives and issues

Member initiatives were showcased at a session during 2014 Congress in Antalya, with collaboration from GMIC, and input from the guest keynote speaker Felix Finkbeiner from the sustainability charity “plant-for-the-planet”.

5.7 Meetings industry-wide issues

ICCA maintained senior management level contact with GMIC to ensure that any new initiatives were promoted to ICCA members.

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