



28th International Congress for Conservation Biology

Event Sustainability Report 2017

Prepared by MCI Sustainability Services

Cartagena, Colombia

23-27 July 2017



Society for Conservation Biology



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About SCB

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is an international professional organization dedicated to promoting the scientific study of the phenomena that affect the maintenance, loss, and restoration of biological diversity.

The Society's membership comprises a wide range of people interested in the conservation and study of biological diversity: resource managers, educators, government and private conservation workers, and students make up about 5,000 members world-wide.



About ICCB 2017

ICCB is a global forum for addressing conservation challenges and for presenting new research in conservation science and practice. Most importantly, it serves as the major networking opportunity for more than 1480 conservation professionals and students from 71 countries.

SCB's 28th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB 2017) has focused on *Insights for Sustaining Life on Earth*, responding to the need for conservation science to help create a better tomorrow for both biodiversity and people who depend upon it.



Why should ICCB have a Sustainability program?



Events can have significant impact on their host destinations.

Big congresses produce a lot of carbon emissions mainly through delegate air travels and landfilled waste that is neither recycled nor composted.

But they can also contribute to environmental, social and economic development of the community.



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Event Sustainability Management Approach

To help us develop our strategy we contracted sustainable event experts MCI. They helped SCB to develop a social and environmental approach based on the ISO20121 International Sustainable Events Standard.



ICCB 2017 Sustainability Goals

Engaging our stakeholders, we defined the following goals:



REDUCE

RETHINK

REGENERATE

REPORT

- **Waste:** Switch to more sustainable materials, minimize waste and increase waste diversion
- **Water usage:** Through procurement choices and F&B
- **Emissions:** Reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, and offset

- **Event Design:** How can we leave the lightest environmental footprint and set the bar for sustainable events?
- **Supply Chain:** Increase engagement, innovation and performance of supply chain
- **Food & Beverage:** Offer healthier – tastier and more responsibly sourced produce

Give back: Create community action projects to support local ecosystem regeneration

Measure: Assess and transparently report the environmental, social and economic impacts of ICCB



ICCB 2017 Sustainability Focus Areas

DESTINATION

VENUE

ACCOMMODATION

FOOD & BEVERAGE

TRANSPORTATION

We focused on improving the environmental and social sustainability of 10 key areas of the congress.

PRODUCTION

AUDIOVISUAL / IT

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

EVENT TEAM OFFICE

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Responsible Supply Chain Management



Our Approach: We used questionnaires, checklists, policy and contractual documents to communicate our commitments and requirements to our event partners .

These documents helped our event partners to uphold a high level of sustainable standards while providing us data to see where we could improve.



Our Performance



ICCB17 Sustainability Performance Summary

ICCB 2017 Results

The sustainability approach significantly increasing the event's social, environmental and economic performance.

Reduced Environmental Impact

Produced only
1 tonne of waste.
Diverted
56%
from landfill



Community Development

Invested
\$12K
On 2 certified
conservation projects



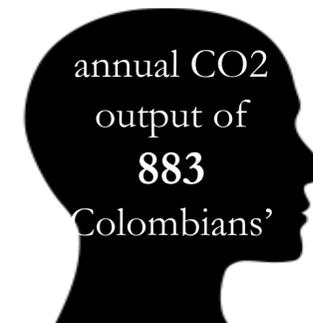
Return on Investment

\$11,700
Saving from
sustainability actions



Reduced Environmental Impact

Produced
1700 tCO₂e
Offset
100%



Local Economic Development

Sourced
53%
of food locally, on
average

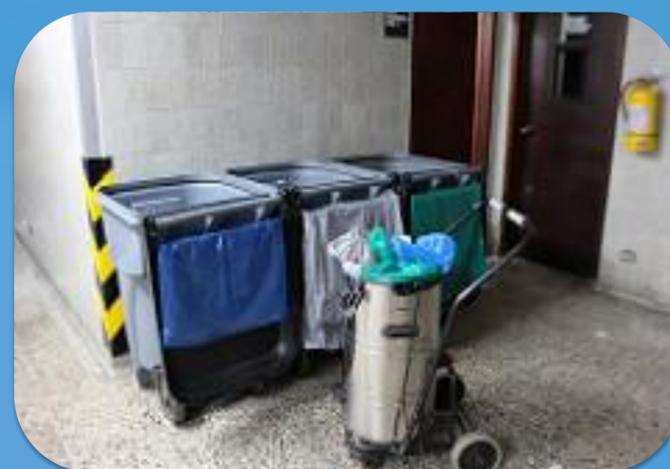


Key Achievements: Reducing Waste

Waste being a great challenge to sustainability, better management was needed...



We worked with the Cartagena Convention Center to adapt and improve their sustainability program



Their committed team developed and launched a new waste management strategy at ICCB



We defined strict requirements for our vendors based on international APEX-ASTM standards



THE RESULTS...?

Key Achievements: Food and Catering

1000 meals were served at ICCB. We worked closely with the venue chef, catering team and sustainability team to...



Use ceramic and metal plates, cups and cutlery, eliminating 98% of disposable service ware



Reduce food waste by requiring advanced purchase and confirmation



Buy MSC certified Salmon and the majority of other seafood from local artisan fisherman



Serve Bird Friendly (BF) coffees that comes from farms that have both organic certification and a shade tree cover that meets the science-based BF criteria based on research by the [Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center \(SMBC\)](#)



Offer a 80% vegetarian and vegan menu options
50% of all food was sourced locally

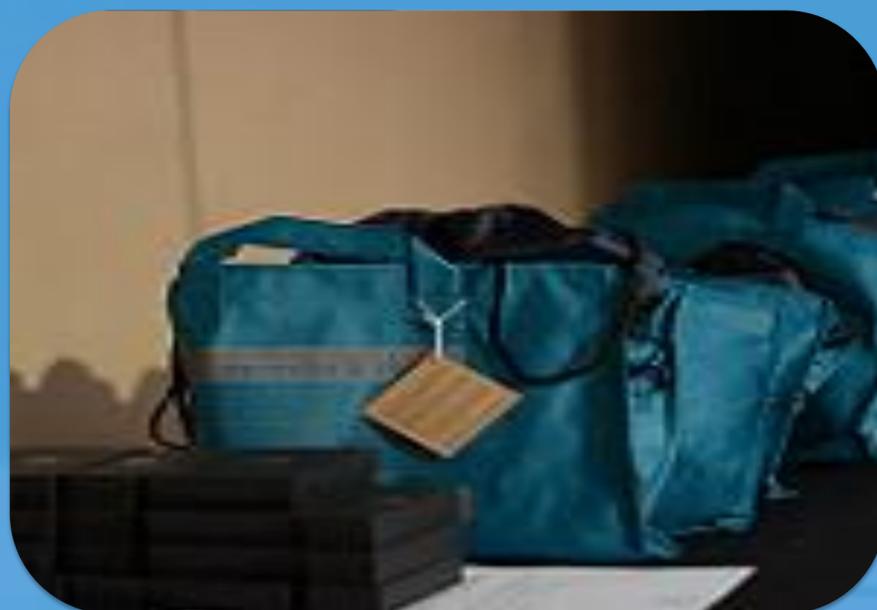


Eliminate all beef from the menu

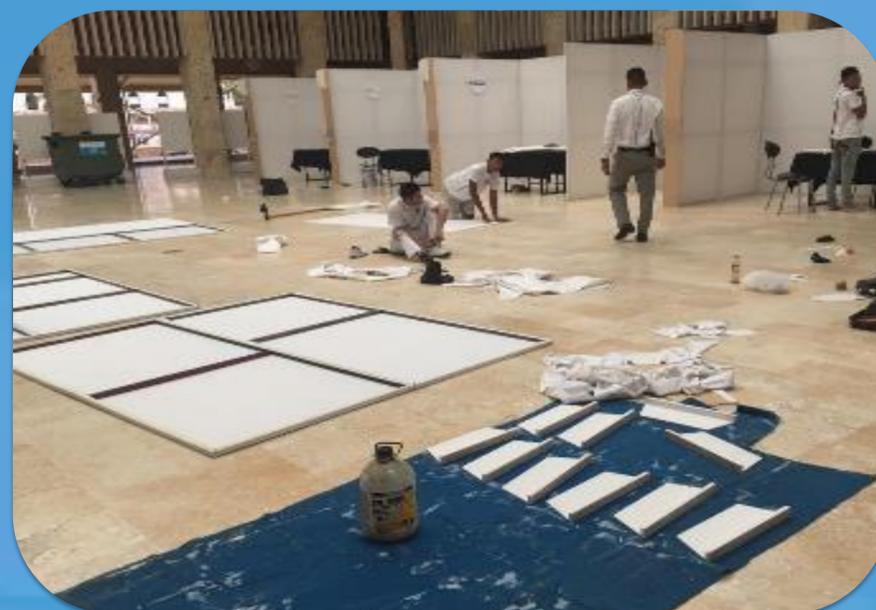


Key Achievements: Exhibition

We worked closely with the SCB, the venue itself and sustainability team to...



Eliminate the use of bags and disposable plastic badges. We used cotton lanyards and recycled cardboard.



For the exhibition *we only used reusable modular stands* with very minimal waste.



Exhibitors were asked to bring the *minimal amount of brochures and merchandising.* We *only printed 50 event program books (instead of 1500)*

Eliminating printing, plastic badge holders and programs produced a saving of \$11,700

Key Achievements: Diversity and Inclusion

In our sustainability quest, diversity and inclusion were prime goals...



Space was created for SCB and local artisans to present and sell goods promoting conservation.



Afro-descendant and indigenous community leaders were invited to share their insights about how to improve the conservation of their ancestral lands in Colombia.

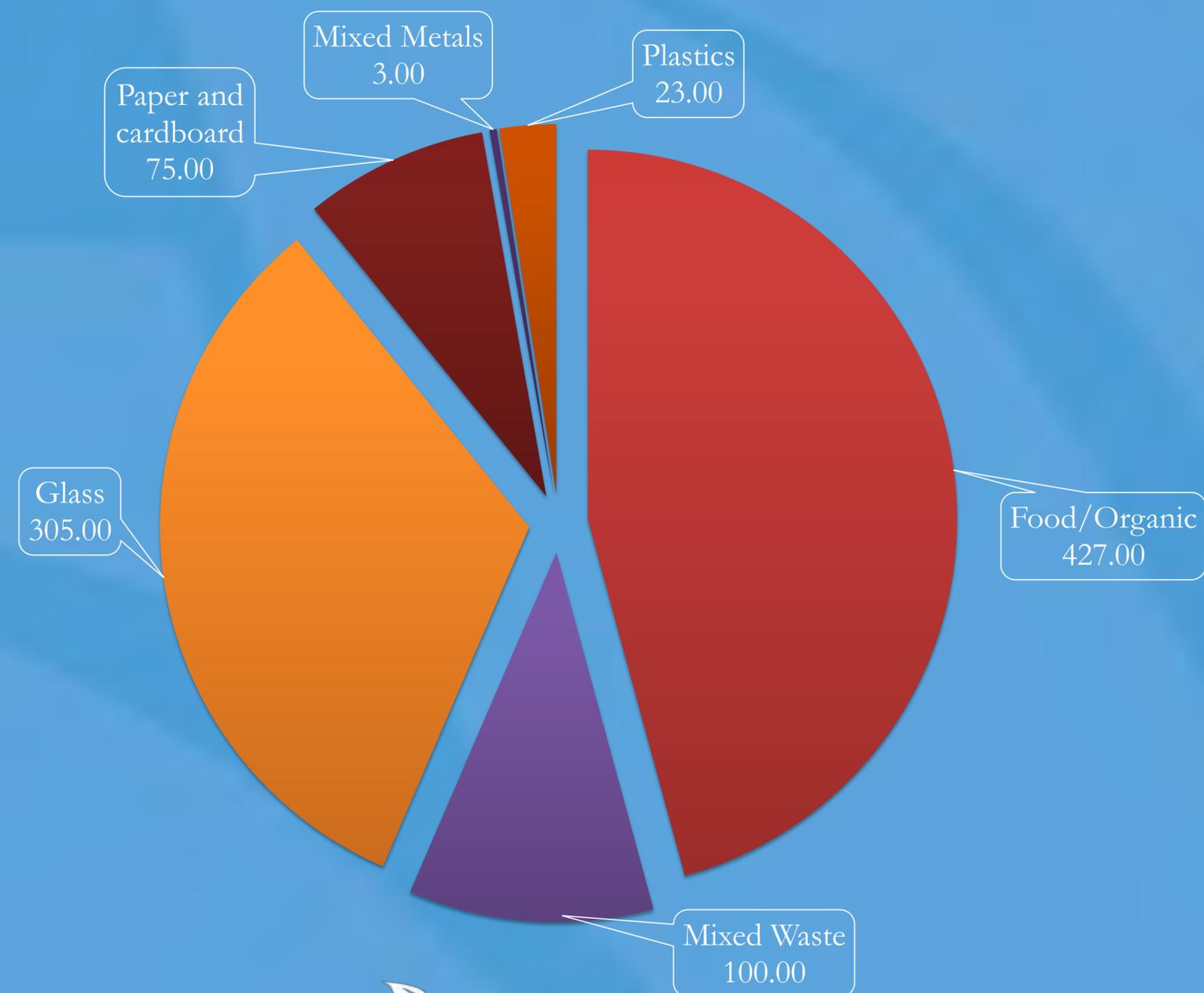


Making ICCB child and parent friendly is important to our members. SCB provided childcare and baby changing facilities.

Waste Management Performance

- ICCB produced a total of 933 kg of waste, and an average of **0.63kg** per person. Less than a bag of sugar and well below the average of 5kg per person for an event of this type.*
- Only 23 kg of plastic and 305 kg of glass waste were produced.
- Unfortunately no commercial composting was available and so 427 kg of Food waste went to the landfill.

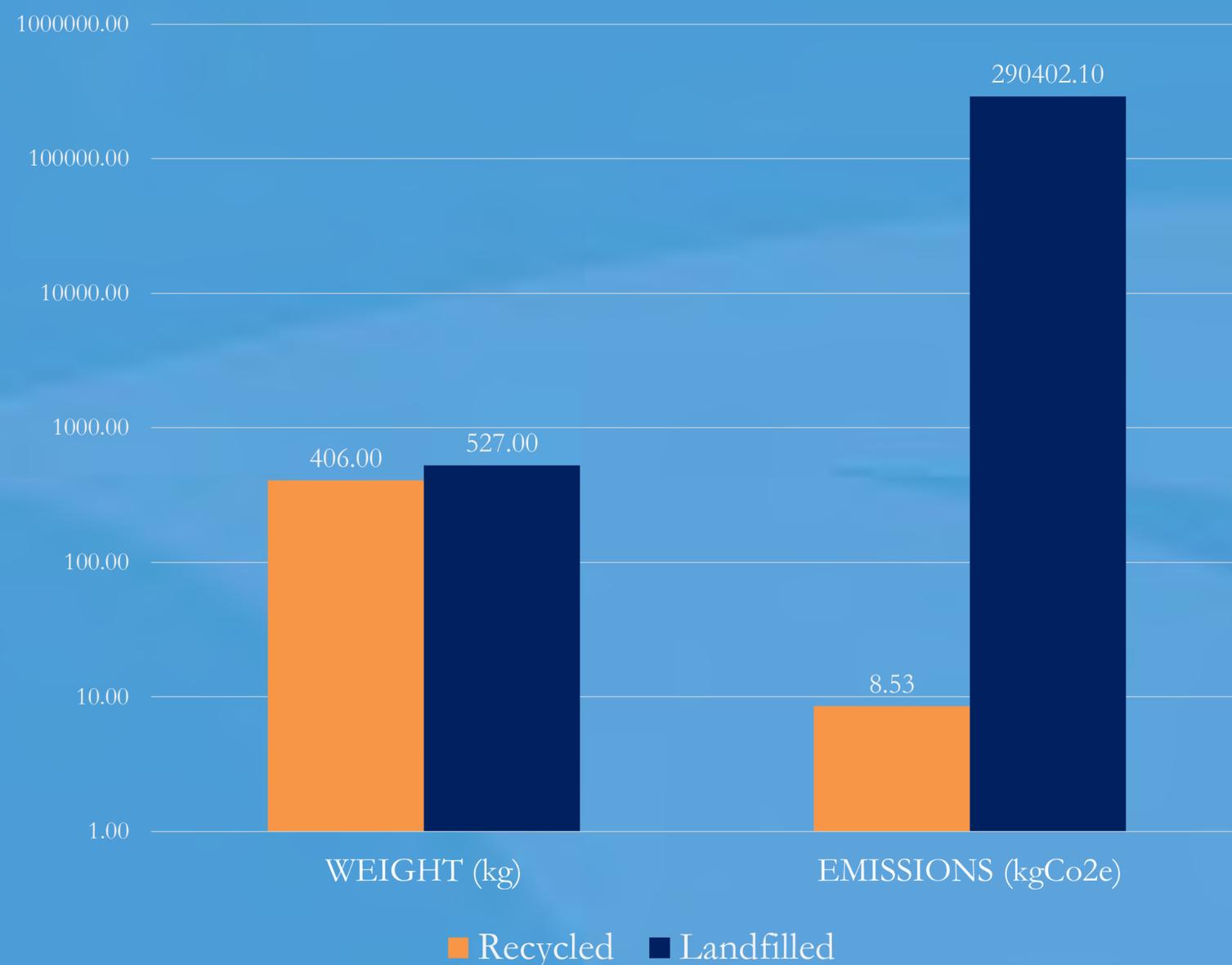
ICCB 2017 Total Waste Weight (kg)



*Source: UNFCCC/UNEP Event benchmarking conducted by MCI

Waste Management Performance

ICCB 2017 Total Waste Weight and Emissions



- **We had a 56% waste diversion rate.**

- The UK average for events is 15%

- We had to use a logarithmic scale due to the wide gap in emissions between recycled and landfilled waste

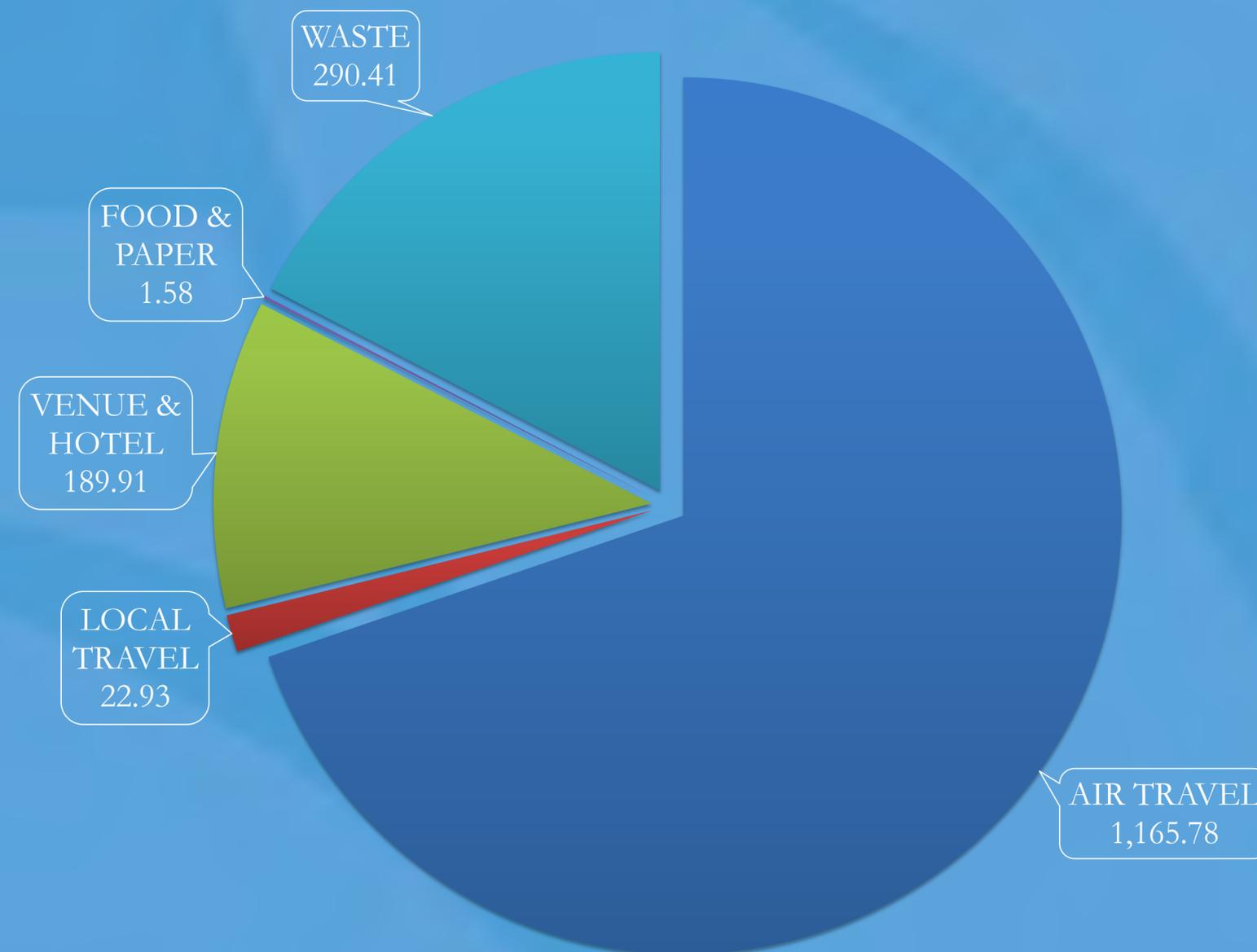
- Although the difference in weight between recycled and landfilled waste is not huge, the difference in carbon emissions is massive



Carbon Emissions

- Travel, water, energy, food and material consumption create greenhouse gas emissions.
- The key source of emissions is delegate travel.
- *The greenhouse gas footprint of ICCB was*
- **1371.46 tCo²e, or 1.13tCo²e per person.**

Event Emission by Category (tCo²e)



Offsetting Our Emissions

SCB's Sustainability Policy requires that emissions for the society's event are offset. We defined the following criteria for selection of an offsetting project:



SCB selected two projects based in Colombia, that are managed by SCB partner Fundación Natura. Member contributions covered 80% of the credits and SCB the rest.



Offsetting Our Emission: Project 1

Description:

Reforestation and restoration of over 4000 hectares in Puerto Carreño, Vichada. The project is verified by VCS and CCB



Project Goals

Changing land use from extensive cattle ranching to sustainable forest productive systems.

Benefits

- **Climate:** Reforestation will deliver an average carbon sequestration of 1 million tCO₂e per annum by 2025 (currently 400k)



Benefits

- **Biodiversity:** Increases in forest cover and enhancement of connectivity of forest ecosystems, as well as improvement of waterways, the conservation of riparian and gallery forests, and other restoration of flora and fauna in the region.



Benefits

- **Social:** Creation of employment, technical training in forestry management, and development of social services and roads, which together improve the quality of life of the local population.



Offsetting Our Emission: Project 2

Description:

Reduce the consumption of firewood by constructing and installing efficient cooking stoves in rural communities of the Country of Colombia. Project is verified by The Gold Standard.



Project Goals

Replacement of 4,900 traditional inefficient stoves with efficient devices in the municipalities of Charalá, Coromoro, Encino, Gambita and Mogotes, in the Department of Santander, Colombia.

Benefits

- **Health:** Reduced inhalation of smoke reducing stomach and respiratory cancer, intense respiratory infections, headaches and muscle pain

Benefits

- **Environmental:** Reduction of wood consumption, reduced deforestation, improvement of water sources and average emission reduction of 8,624 tCO₂e per annum.



Benefits

- **Woman empowerment:** 97% of household cooks are women and children. Significant reduction of time required to collect firewood, allowing more time for studying and working.



Did we achieve our
goals ?



Performance Review and Key Learnings



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ICCB Objectives and KPIs

CATEGORY	ISSUE AREA	OBJECTIVE	KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	Achievement
REDUCE	WASTE	Switch to more sustainable materials, minimize waste and increase waste diversion	50% waste diversion rate	56%
			% signage/lanyards/bags/badges made from sustainable materials	Eliminated bags 100% sustainable badges and lanyards
	ENERGY AND EMISSIONS	Reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, and offset	Measure and analyse carbon emissions	Measured all emissions
			Offset 100% of emissions	100% offset of emissions
RETHINK	FOOD AND BEVERAGE	Offer healthier, tastier and more responsibly sourced food and beverages	50 % local sourcing?	53% local
			10% organic	0% Organic
			50% vegetarian?	79% Vegetarian. All beef eliminated.
	SUPPLY CHAIN	Increase engagement, innovation and performance of supply chain	90% of key suppliers signing sustainability agreement	100% key vendors supported sustainability program
			90% of key suppliers supplying data	100% key vendors supported sustainability program
			Use Indigenous products for some event materials	Not implemented

ICCB Objectives and KPIs

CATEGORY	ISSUE AREA	OBJECTIVE	KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	Achievement
REGENERATE	ENGAGEMENT	Gauge feedback on success of initiative	75% of event attendees consider the Sustainability program as an excellent initiative	Awaiting data
	PROTECT	Invest in Colombian Conservation Initiative, protecting an area the size of event footprint	TBC- SQM measurement X number of years	Invested \$12,000 in 2 offsetting projects
	CATALYSE	Catalyse further action locally	Local Media/Schools engagement metric?	Not implemented
	LEGACY	Impact the local destination leaving a positive legacy	Number of hours/attendees & community hours participating in BioBlitz? Donations?	Not implemented
			Launch of Community Market- Retailing Products	Implemented
EDUCATE	Educate the conservation biologists of tomorrow	# of Graduate/PhD Conservation Fellowship grants provided	Awaiting data	
REPORT	MEASURE	Measure, assess and transparently communicate the environmental, social and economic impacts of SAP events	Produce & publicly release Sustainable Event Report	Achieved

Challenges and Lessons Learned



Signage

- We had problems finding suppliers in Cartagena and Bogota who could supply us with signage and banners that used more sustainable materials (i.e.. eco-board).
- Consequently we reduced the amount we required and then against our wishes we had to use plastic based foam signage and PVC Vinyl banners.



Food

- Cartagena is not in a region with significant local vegetable and fruit farming. This requires the Convention Center to source mainly through wholesalers in Bogota.
- Consequently we were not able source as much organic produce and local food as we aimed for.
- As a result we focused on engaging and sharing knowledge with the catering teams to inspire them to challenge their procurement strategy.



Measurement

- Sustainable event concepts are new in Colombia and client demand is low. The Convention Center was not accustomed to provide the environmental reporting we required.
- To support change, we shared best practices and coached them to develop a measurement system, which was perfectly implemented.



Recommendations

Start Early

- Just as with ICCB17, SCB needs to include sustainability into the event organization from the beginning of the planning cycle

Engage

- All staff, suppliers, and committees need to be made aware of the policy and their role in making a more sustainable event

Contract

- SCBs Sustainability requirements and policy must be included into the vendor sourcing and contracting process

Location

- Should SCB require a high level of sustainability performance then specific destinations and venues offer better performance

Legacy

- However SCB can leave a legacy by inspiring and supporting suppliers to improve



Data Tables

IMPACTS	KPI	DATA	GRI INDICATOR
ENVIRONMENTAL			
GHG emissions	Total Carbon footprint (tonnes co2 equivalents)	1670.60	G4 - EN16, G4 - EN17
	Flight Emissions (tonnes co2e)	1165.78	G4 - EN17, G4 - EO2, G4 - EO3
	Local Transport (tonnes co2)	22.93	G4 - EN17, G4 - EO2, G4 - EO3
	Hotel and venue (tonnes co2)	189.91	G4 - EN17, G4 - EO2, G4 - EO3
	Exhibition (tonnes co2e)	0.00	G4 - EN16, G4 - EN17, G4 - EO2
	Food and paper emissions (tonnes co2e)	1.58	G4 - EN17
	Waste (tonnes co2e)	290.41	G4 - EN17
	Emissions per delegate (tonnes co2e)	1.13	G4 - EN18
Energy	Total electricity consumed (kwh).	79,561	G4 - EN4
Water	Total water used (m ³)	548	G4 - EN8
Paper and materials usage	Approx. sheets of A4/letter paper used for printing (KG)	10	G4 - EN1, G4 - EN27
	Signage and banners (M ²)	20	G4 - EN1, G4 - EN27
	% of Signage Made from Eco Substrates (kg)	0%	G4 - EN1, G4 - EN27
	Carpet used for event (KG)	0	G4 - EN1, G4 - EN27
	Carpet landfilled/incinerated through event (KG)	n/a	G4 - EN1, G4 - EN23
	Badges recollected (number and %)	n/a	G4 - EN1, G4 - EN23
Offsets	Estimated emissions compensated by tree planting (tco2)	1400.00	
	Percentage of emissions compensated	100%	

Data Tables

IMPACTS	KPI	DATA	GRI INDICATOR
ENVIRONMENTAL			
Waste management	Total waste from event (kg)	933	G4 - EN23
	Landfill (kg)	527	G4 - EN23
	Co-mingled mixed waste	100	G4 - EN23
	Organic food waste (kg)	427	G4 - EN23
	Reused (Items normally landfilled) (kg)	0%	G4 - EN23
	Recycled (kg)	406	G4 - EN23
	Paper and cardboard (kg)	75	G4 - EN23
	Glass (kg)	305	G4 - EN23
	Metal (kg)	3	G4 - EN23
	Plastic (kg)	23	G4 - EN23
	Carpet (kg)	0	G4 - EN23
	Other waste (kg)		G4 - EN23
	Diversion rate	56%	G4 - EN23
	Total waste per event participant (kg)	0.63	G4 - EN23
Food	Number meals served	970.00	
	Percentage local (<160km) food sourced for meals	53.33%	G4 - EN27, G4 - EO8
	Percent organic food sourced for meals	0%	G4 - EN27, G4 - EO8
	Percent vegetarian meals served	79.41%	G4 - EN27, G4 - EO8
	Plastic water bottles used in event	1,237	G4 - EN27, G4 - EO8
	Plastic bottles not served due to bulk water dispenser / filter	8,649	G4 - EN27, G4 - EO8



Thank you to all our members and partners for helping us improve our social and environmental impacts.

We have a long way to go but we can be proud of our initial efforts!



Credits

This report was prepared by **Guy Bigwood** and **Nadine Seleem** of MCI with valuable data being provided by Society for Conservation Biology.

Our special thanks go to our event suppliers for their leadership stance in the hospitality industry and their commitment to sustainable practices.

Pictures used in this report were graciously provided by Society for Conservation Biology and MCI.

Society for Conservation Biology

The International Congress on Conservation Biology is organized by the Society for Conservation Biology, an international professional organization, whose mission is to advance the science and practice of conserving Earth's biological diversity.

For more information, see <https://conbio.org/>

MCI Sustainability Services

MCI is proud to be a leader in sustainable event management and consulting. MCI is actively engaged in efforts to change the way the world meets through the promotion of smart, sustainable business solutions.

MCI has been the selected Professional Congress Organiser and Sustainability Guide for more than 850 of the world's leading events on sustainability and renewable energy, including: The UN Climate Change Conference), the UN Conference on BioDiversity, the GRI Global Conference on Sustainability and Reporting, Sustainable Brands and the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit.

For more information, see www.mcisustainability.com

Contact

For continual improvement, we welcome all constructive ideas and comments on this report. Please address comments to:

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