



6TH GEF BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL WATERS CONFERENCE  
17 - 20 OCTOBER 2011, DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

# Evaluation Report

## 6th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference

*GEF International Waters:LEARN strengthens International Waters (IW) management by facilitating learning and information sharing among IW projects, partners and stakeholders. See <http://www.iwlearn.net> for details.*

## Executive Summary

- ◆ Approximately 31% (103/328) of participants submitted evaluation forms
- ◆ Overall, participants of the 6th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference (IWC6) considered the event a “Success” (4.41 out of 5.0). They found it directly applicable to their work functions (4.14 out of 5.0), and that it allowed sufficient time for networking (4.17 out of 5.0). They felt it enhanced their understanding of the results of the GEF IW portfolio after 20 years as well as a private sector engagement (4.07 out of 5.0). The participant workshops and innovation marketplace were the most highly regarded sessions of the conference.
- ◆ Generally speaking, the IWC improved in all its major agenda features. However, there are still problems in terms of too many plenaries on good themes but with insufficient time for discussion, coupled with excellent smaller workshops, too many of which are offered in parallel.
- ◆ The next IWC should have sessions on: Monitoring & Evaluation/Indicators, Project Manager’s Breakout, Mainstreaming Results into Government Policy

## Introduction

The 6th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC6) ensued from October 17<sup>th</sup> thru the 20<sup>th</sup> in Dubrovnik, Croatia, with the preceding weekend seeing targeted workshops for GEF IW project managers and GEF agency staff. The Republic of Croatia officially hosted the event, via the Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management but including support from other ministries via a national host committee. The IWC6 was organized under the supervision of a steering committee, consisting of the GEF, the GEF agencies and the GEF IW:LEARN project coordination unit. Two other organizations played a critical role in ensuring the success of the IWC6, those being the Croatia Country Office of the United Nations Development Programme and the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme. Numerous sponsors from the private sector and NGOs provided critical cash and in-kind support.

The general objective of the GEF Biennial International Waters Conference is to facilitate portfolio-wide experience sharing. They also exist to solicit advice from the IW project portfolio on burning issues and assist in building participant capacity in key management and technical areas and encourage GEF International Waters projects to apply evolving GEF policies and procedures during implementation. This year, the IWC6 focused on two major themes:

- ◆ Results of the GEF International Waters project portfolio after 20 years of implementation
- ◆ Private Sector Engagement

The IWC6 included the participation of 328 people, including government representatives, IW project managers, staff of international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and transboundary commissions, originating from some 81 countries and representing 73 GEF International Waters projects.

Information and documents (agenda, participant list, presentations, proceedings and conclusions, speeches, reflection videos and other materials) emerging from the conference can be downloaded or watched at: <http://www.iwlearn.net/iwc2011>.

This summary evaluation report of the conference is based on participant responses to an evaluation questionnaire circulated at the conclusion of the conference.

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## Who responded?

Some 102 out of 328 participants in the 6th Biennial GEF IWC submitted evaluation forms, or roughly 31%. This is a significant improvement from IWC5 which had a response rate of 26.3%.. The 102 participants who responded can be broke down as follows:

- ♣ 47 (46.0%) GEF Project Manager or Staff
- ♣ 14 (13.7%) Government Representative
- ♣ 13 (12.7%) GEF Agency
- ♣ 11 (10.7%) Other international organization or transboundary commission
- ♣ 9 (8.8%) Private Sector or NGO
- ♣ 4 (3.9%) Host-Country Institution
- ♣ 2 (1.9%) Other Affiliation

## Key Findings/General Sentiments

Overall, participants of the 6th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference (IWC6) considered the event a success (4.41 out of 5.0). They found it directly applicable to their work functions (4.14 out of 5.0) and that it allowed sufficient time for networking (4.17 out of 5.0). They felt it enhanced their understanding of the results of the GEF IW portfolio after 20 years as well as a private sector engagement (4.07 out of 5.0). These results mark a major improvement over previous IWCs, all of which had an average approval of nearly one full point less. This **makes the IWC6 the best-evaluated IW conference to date**. Incidentally, this IWC also stands as the largest-ever International Waters Conference in terms of attendance.

The IWC6 retained many of the modalities and approach of the previous two IWC's, with a greater emphasis on interaction through various means. Modalities such as small table dialogues, innovation marketplace (exhibit area), project management workshops, participant workshops, technical sessions (for some participant subsets) were retained and improved based on lessons learned from the previous two IWCs.

Reviewing the data, one can state that, by all measures, the IWC6 was major a success as defined by the evaluation data. However, if one looks at the many individual comments a more complete picture emerges of an IWC that was a success, but still with room for improvement. Out of the 103 evaluations, some 54 people provided their name, 47 comments were given on the IWC6 open answer questions, 62 recommendations/questions to GEF IW:LEARN and a further 66 provided additional open comments/suggestions. All of this amounts to 142 comments across the 103 evaluations offering a variety of constructive criticism on the implementation of various sessions, most which is included in this report.

Generally speaking, the IWC improved in all its major agenda features. However, there are still problems in terms of **too many plenaries on good themes but with insufficient time for discussion, coupled with excellent smaller workshops, too many of which are offered in parallel**. A happier medium is desired between the two. The table dialogues were also improved, but again, people still sought a clear result from them. The inclusion of more project presentations was well received, but still **more structure room must be found for the presentation of projects results and innovations**...since not everyone participates in the innovation marketplace.

Key findings and recommendations for the future include:

- ◆ People would like to see more bilateral donors, high-level government officials and greater participation from the private sector
- ◆ There should be more time for participant workshops, there should be less of these workshops in parallel (or they should be repeated) and there should be a limit on their size.
- ◆ People would like to see more discussion in plenaries and more concrete instruction from facilitators of large group sessions
- ◆ Participants thought the most useful factors of attending the IWC are: Face-to-face networking, Learning about the GEF, GEF IW, Portfolio Strategy and Strategic Plan, Experience and Knowledge Sharing, Learning about GEF IW Projects & Meeting GEF IW Project Managers, Enhancing Technical Skills, Technical Site Visits, Interaction with the GEF Secretariat, Breaktime Project Presentations
- ◆ People would have liked to spend more time on: *Private Sector Engagement, TDA-SAP, Dialogue on GEF & GEF Project Cycle*
- ◆ The next IWC should have sessions on: *Monitoring & Evaluation/Indicators, Project Manager's Breakout, Mainstreaming Results into Government Policy,*
- ◆ The next IWC should have more direct project manager input into the agenda well in advance of the conference as well as more concrete/visible outputs from all the sessions

This report contains an analysis of the answers given to each question on the evaluation form. In relevant cases, a statistical analysis is provided. In addition, the vast majority of individual comments, whether positive or negative, are included. Some were dropped due to overlap with already provided comments.

### **1. What is your overall rating of 6th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC6)?**

Number of respondents: 101 (98%)

Average Response: **4.41/5**

Standard Deviation: 0.71

Ratings: 1(0), 2(2), 3(7), 4(40), 5(52)



The vast majority of participants considered the 6th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference to be an **overall success**. 52 people gave a “high” rating, leading to an unprecedented overall rating 4.41. From the first bloc of questions, this question had the second lowest standard deviation, indicating the strongest consensus among participants.

People generally appreciated the **greater focus on private sector engagement, improved round-table dialogues and expanded networking time**. However, criticism fell on the mix of plenaries with insufficient discussion time and the excessive number of parallel participant workshops. Editorial note: for this IWC the number of workshop was capped at six (vs. 8 in both IWC5 and IWC4). This would suggest slightly **less time for plenaries and more time for participant workshops to ensure that less of them occur in parallel**. Also importantly, while progress has been made particularly with private sector participation, people would like to see **strong participation of bilateral donors as well as the private sector**. People would also like to see fewer **themes and more discussion as well as more presentation of project results** thru various means.

#### Participant Comments

- ◆ We will need to seriously discuss if we should let the conference run **a full week**, to allow for more interactions, or if we can manage with the time allocated. If we do manage to get **more high-level politicians involved** (which I think will be crucial for the survival of IW as such) then we will need an extra day.
- ◆ I was pleased that there were not too many parallel sessions crowding the programme, making it difficult to choose which ones to attend. The conference did not seem rushed.
- ◆ I attended IW3 and felt that I got a lot out of it. However, IW6 was even better, with more feedback from GEF IW project participants, more focus on networking and a little more focus on engaging the private sector.
- ◆ Great improvement from IWC-5, more focused and less stressed. The round table dialogues a lot better. And thanks for skipping the presentations during the lunch!
- ◆ First time attendance - from industry...wonderful people and tremendous opportunities to engage...a bit more time for visiting would be well received on my part/or just being available after sessions...may wish to consider (session dependent) having some **"open time" after sessions for networking**, while the session is fresh in one's mind?
- ◆ **Invite more 'political' stakeholders** in order to both integrate & influence country partner perspectives in the future"

#### Participant Critiques

- ◆ I think the agenda covered too much and would suggest **fewer topics and more time allocated for discussion**. Majority of speakers significantly over-ran and one approach would be to give **specific guidance of number of slides, number of words per slide**

**and even font size** for future presentations to avoid 30+ slides to be shown in 5 minutes (for e.g.).

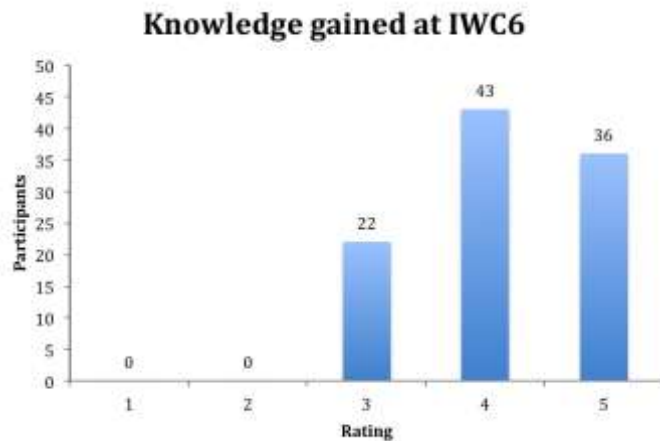
- ◆ It would perhaps be worth considering limitation to key topics since many of the events remained at the surface.
- ◆ Greater and more **meaningful participation from the private sector and bilateral aid agencies.**
- ◆ It was like the conference was for and from people from the **northern hemisphere**; they were dominating especially as reference and key persons.
- ◆ **Francophone people** were completely sidelined as the condition to correctly participate was apparently to be Anglophone despite the fact that GEF is not specifically linked to any language.
- ◆ **Three days** instead of 4 days of the Conference would have been enough.
- ◆ I was disappointed that there were not **more concrete presentations of projects** in the agenda, showing best practice based on the M&E process. The weekend training was quite basic. I expected that it would build on what we had already done, and again utilize real examples. I got the impression that the facilitators themselves did not see very sure what they should be doing.
- ◆ The event was very well organized and was a great opportunity to meet key people working on LMEs worldwide. Some of the sessions with facilitators could have been better with **5 minutes of additional explanation** at the start.
- ◆ Structure of the sessions was not well thought through = **groups were too large** for a positive participant experience
- ◆ Panel speakers were not well selected or vetted for 'added value'
- ◆ The Conference was well-organized in terms of logistics. Because we had a Session to prepare this prevented us from attending all of the plenary which was unfortunate. There is the usual criticism that comes up at every Conference - too many overlapping sessions which A. prevent people from benefiting from the information and exchanges and B. dilutes each of the sessions in terms of inputs. This happens every time.
- ◆ There was relatively much emphasis on marine projects, whereas freshwater and aquifers received less attention in the program.
- ◆ Overall it was a great conference and probably in my view the best so far. The field trips were awesome. However, more **upstream guidance and more clear " marching orders"** to staff being asked to serve on panels would have been beneficial and would have help enhance even more the level of discussion.
- ◆ The last day with participant led workshops was disappointing as there were **too many interesting sessions running however in parallel** making things impossible to attend.
- ◆ We could have **gained more from a thematic structure** within the conference, the sessions which tended to be most useful had a sharp focus."
- ◆ Extensive panels on EVERY subject. Less time needed for large panels and **more time for Q&A and working groups**

Response: Most of these critiques are valid. It has never proven easy to strike a balance between plenary vs. parallel sessions, though the critiques do suggest that at a minimum we did have very interesting and relevant topics for the parallel sessions. We will strive to do better next time in terms of discussion time, as well as a take a closer look at controlling the size of individual sessions (though again not an easy task). Next time, there will be less parallel sessions or at least some of the topics could be repeated. The issue of project presentations is also interesting, as many projects want to share their experiences. This is after all the essence and a major reason for having the IWC. We will continue to look for ways to do this. We have the innovation marketplace and this year we added breaktime presentations, which worked reasonably. We will continue to look for new ways to ensure that projects have a voice.

## **2. To what extent is the knowledge you gained through this IWC directly applicable to your current work or functions?**

Number of respondents: 101 (98%)

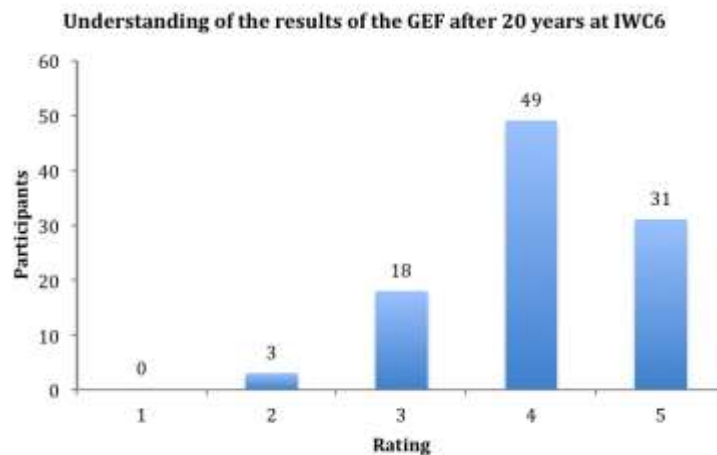
Average Response: **4.1/5**  
Standard Deviation: 0.75  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(0), 3(22), 4(43), 5(36)



Nearly all respondents affirmed that they gained **applicable knowledge** through the conference.

**3. To what extent did IWC6 increase your understanding of the results of the GEF after 20 years and how they might be used to program project investments in the future?**

Number of respondents: 101 (98%)  
Average Response: **4.1/5**  
Standard Deviation: 0.78  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(3), 3(18), 4(49), 5(31)



Most participants felt that the conference **increased their understanding of the results of GEF after 20 years**. Curiously, for this question far more people settled on a level of moderately high. This may have something to do with the fact that most people were generally pleased with the first round of table discussions on project results, however, the wrap-up session on Day 3 was less satisfactory. Moreover, people felt that they **did not hear an ultimate summary of the collected results**.

**Participant Critiques**



- ◆ A plenary session on results of the IW portfolio was scheduled but not really rolled out as a succinct overview session with key achievements and lessons learnt from the portfolio.
- ◆ GEF 20 years of experience was not well summarized or presented
- ◆ **No clear overview was provided of progress/main achievements made by GEF in past 20 years.** It would have been useful if there was a specific presentation and/or brochure providing an overview of the GEF in the past 20 years. Also, it would have been useful to get more information about the (predicted) future of the GEF.

Response: Some of the problems here resulted from considerable variance in the source material, i.e. the IW Results Notes, for this session. We unfortunately had insufficient time to analyze the notes and conduct a revisions cycle. While this was a mistake, the entire effort remains completely valid and important to the central goal of disseminating what the portfolio has achieved in the last twenty years. The plan going forward will be to continue analyzing the inputs received prior to the conference (i.e. the Notes) as well as the summaries of discussions during the Conference. This will form the basis of the final report.

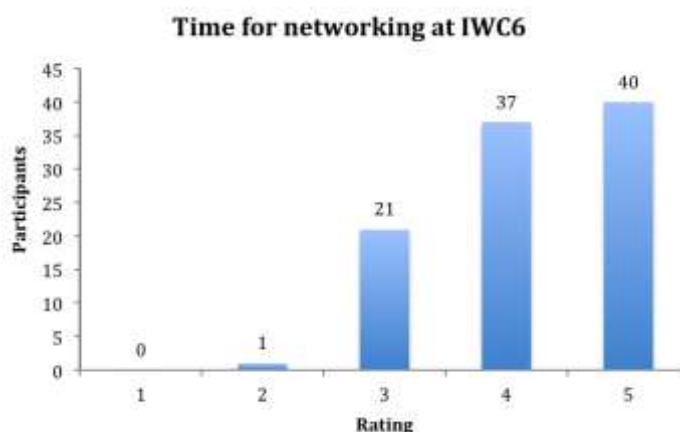
#### 4. To what extent did the IWC agenda allow enough time for (informal) networking?

Number of respondents: 99 (96%)

Average Response: **4.2/5**

Standard Deviation: 0.80

Ratings: 1(0), 2(1), 3(21), 4(37), 5(40)



Participants largely felt that the IWC6 agenda allowed **sufficient time for informal networking**.

#### Participant Comments

- ◆ The IWC agenda was quite dense but allowed enough time for (informal) networking nonetheless as participants know they have to be flexible and can still find opportunities to discuss around the schedule (e.g. during social events) as well as to present their views during the different formal sessions when relevant.

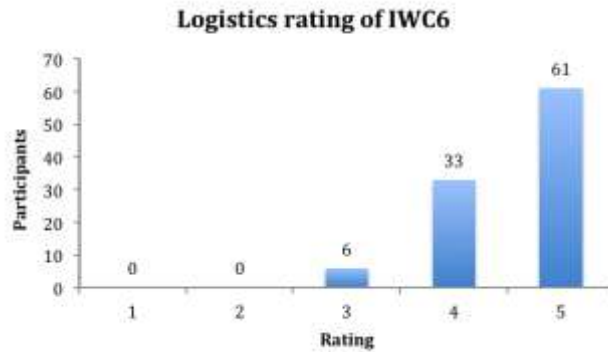
#### 5. How would you rate logistical aspects of the conference?

Number of respondents: 100 (97%)

Average Response: **4.6/5**

Standard Deviation: 0.61

Ratings: 1(0), 2(0), 3(6), 4(33), 5(61)



By staggering margins, and with the lowest standard deviation from the initial set of principal evaluation questions, participants gave the **highest rating to the conference's logistical aspects**. There were some problems with the Internet and exhibit booth setup, and, for some people, also with the acquisition of visas.

#### Participant Comments

- ◆ The format and availability of a finalized agenda probably could use some improvement. Logistics were great and convenient, especially if you were staying in-house. Long haul travel a bit taxing but no matter where you hold this in the world someone is going to get the short end of the stick. **Session chairs were brutal at keeping discussions concise and focused. Keep this up.**

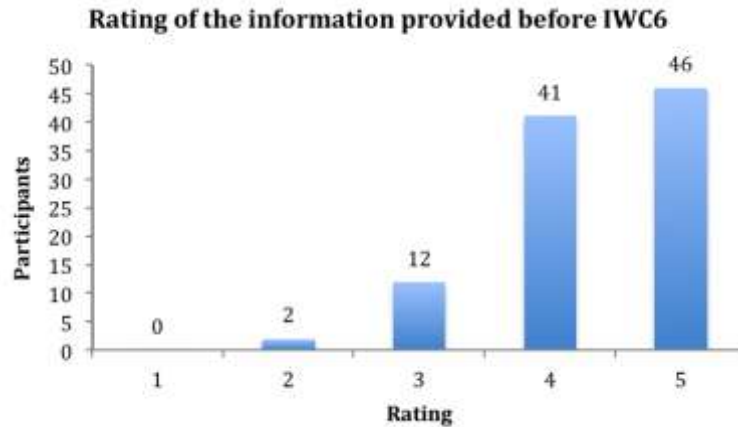
#### Participant Critiques

- ◆ It was a wonderful conference however I am requesting that any time there is a conference in countries without consulates in most countries, the organizers should plan in advance with the host country for participants to **obtain visa at the port of entry**.
- ◆ It would have been helpful for the **hotel internet** to work better during the IT workshop... but I know that was not IW: LEARN's fault.
- ◆ Regarding the booth, we hope for another IW conference, the **booths should be ready one day before** the conference.
- ◆ It was quite difficult to get Croatian Visa.
- ◆ The logistics were great, only minor inconvenient with booth set-up.

Response: The visa situation was indeed a challenge, although the vast majority of people who followed the procedure were granted visas. But we do hear this critique and the arrangements with the next host country will be different. There is also indeed, no excuse for the difficulty with internet connections. We apologize for that, as well as for the delay in setting up the exhibit booths.

#### 6. Did you feel adequately prepared for the Conference? Was there sufficient information provided in advance?

Number of respondents: 101 (98%)  
 Average Response: 4.3/5  
 Standard Deviation: 0.76  
 Ratings: 1(0), 2(2), 3(12), 4(41), 5(46)



A majority of participants also felt **adequately prepared** for the International Waters Conference.

#### Participant Comments

- ◆ Information provided in preparation, and logistics, was actually outstanding and excellent

**8. Reflecting on the four days of the IWC6, what are the three key factors that made this a worthwhile experience for you? How did this Conference benefit you, your GEF IW project and/or home institution?**

The following quote, from one participant evaluation, perhaps best provides an example of the personal value of the IWC, “Having worked on IW projects for 10 years, it was the first IWC conference I attended and as such met many colleagues from past projects to exchange with. This is essential especially when based in a small regional office where little technical exchange is made on a day-to-day basis. As a result I have received many useful recommendations for the improvement of our project which will be implemented.”

Participants offered a variety of responses to this all-important question. The answers were remarkably (perhaps unsurprisingly) similar to those given in past IWC evaluation forms. The responses can be clustered to an extent as follows:

#### *Face-to-face networking (45):*

No less than 45 people made reference to **face-to-face networking as the sine qua non** of the GEF Biennial International Waters Conference. They made reference to it in various ways, calling it interaction for example. Some people indicated specific entities with whom they networked (e.g. GEF agency staff). This result makes networking the most commonly given value of the International Waters Conference.

#### *Learning about the GEF, GEF IW, Portfolio Strategy and Strategic Plans (31)*

31 participants enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the GEF, the IW focal area and portfolio strategy as well as future strategic plans. This represented a shift from the IWC5 where this was a lower priority. People were curious about all aspects, both operational aspects (project cycle, processes, reporting) to new strategic plans and direction of the IW portfolio. For some it was an exposure to the International Waters portfolio itself. Someone wrote, “I learnt a lot about other IW programme. technically and institutionally, what were learnt would be applied to my country's contexts.” Others liked hearing ideas for new projects.

#### *Experience and Knowledge Sharing (25)*

Coming in third place, **participants again selected knowledge or experience sharing as the next most critical feature of the IWC**. People liked being able to interact with more experienced colleagues on technical issues. They enjoyed discussing challenges and sharing information from other projects in their given regions or from similar ecosystem types. Some evaluations highlighted that specific project innovations were shared between participants.

One individual had the following comment: “Knowledge exchange with other projects and colleagues has been extremely valuable. Although we all work in different countries and continents, on different aquatic systems, there are clear similarities in the kind of problems we are all addressing and solutions to these problems. It would **be beneficial if the GEF could take a more structured and explicit approach in sharing these lessons among its projects.**”

#### *Learning about GEF IW Projects & Meeting GEF IW Project Managers (18)*

Many people specifically mentioned **learning about GEF IW projects and meeting GEF IW project managers as a critical benefit** of attending the IWC6. This was mentioned alongside the closely related “networking” and “experience-sharing” and deserves a highlight as a unique feature of the GEF IWC. One person wrote, “By knowing what other projects are doing gives us a challenge to do better and also it was an opportunity to let others be aware of what we are doing.” Many participants wrote that such opportunities lead to future collaboration between projects as well as a transfer of ideas and strategies between projects regarding their implementation. One person called it meeting others with similar issues a kind of “group therapy”. Another described it as, **“incredible level of exchange and dialogue amongst GEF project practitioners, agencies and partners on pressing issues, which affect the success of project interventions,** their results and sustainability of project results

#### *Enhancing Technical Skills (11)*

A dozen **people identified the targeted technical workshops** as a primary reason for the IWC6 worthwhile. The workshop on the revision of the TDA-SAP methodology & course was mentioned several times. People liked the capacity-building aspect of the IWC.

#### *Technical Site Visits (7)*

Several people designated the technical site visits as being useful features of the IWC6. For the first time, a record number of site visits were organized (four), covering three different countries, some five different GEF IW projects and all the different major water ecosystem types.

#### *Interaction with the GEF Secretariat (7)*

Many people also stressed that actual interaction with the GEF Secretariat staff themselves provided a major utility. This can be considered separate to the responses regarding the GEF IW portfolio above. People enjoyed being able to give and get feedback from the Secretariat on current and future needs.

#### *Breaktime Project Presentations (5)*

People also liked attending the **break-time GEF IW project presentations on achievements**. Actually, it was the first time this was attempted by the organizing committee as a way to infuse the conference with more content from the projects.

#### *Other topics and General shout outs*

The evaluation forms included a number of other aspects of the Conference namely:

- ◆ Attendance included the **right mix of people** (as separate from networking) including GEF and GEF Agency staff, project managers, private sector representatives and government officials
- ◆ Targeted agenda featuring a combination of lecture type situations, panel discussions and facilitated group work
- ◆ Information how to engage as well as **meeting actual representatives of the private sector**
- ◆ Small Grants Programme Workshop
- ◆ Presentation on the IW Communities of Practice
- ◆ The Facilities
- ◆ The IW:LEARN Workshop on Communications Tools
- ◆ The Innovation Marketplace
- ◆ Transboundary Commission session
- ◆ Nutrient Reduction Workshop

## 9. What steps do you plan to take (if any) in terms of replicating results and/or private sector engagement as a result of your experience in the IWC6?

### *Replicating Results*

- ◆ We will **be working with each Results Note** to see how it can be improved and forward these information to the Project Manager's that filled them out
- ◆ **Improve communication as the essential link between science and governance/policy**, following some good examples
- ◆ Regular follow-up with stakeholders
- ◆ The conference reinforced inclusion at all levels.
- ◆ Review our project plan by **introducing Gender issue**.
- ◆ She plans on using the TDA/SAP as a conceptual framework for the Dniester project, replicating some best practices in Manure Management from Romania, some best agricultural practices from Croatia and some good ideas from IWCAM on creating a sustainable water-monitoring program.
- ◆ Provide information distributed at the conference with co-workers
- ◆ We produced the **IPad application**, so we were very enthusiastic at the response from all those who attended the presentation, it is always important. This guided us to an even better target of what results we should be producing and how we can leverage our engagement in other technologies to benefit the projects we are working in
- ◆ Going after funding with specific projects in mind. "I plan to **share management interventions at local scales, using the small grant mechanism, to address land-based sources of pollution in the marine environment**. This is outside the scope of the present project that I am involved in.
- ◆ Within the project, I plan to **reinforce the importance of the TDA-SAP process as a foundation phase** in the management intervention in the LME.
- ◆ Interact with colleague project managers on issues of common relevance
- ◆ Explore options + plan forward to combine top-down efforts (policy, legal, institutional reforms etc) and bottom-up approaches through the Small Grants programme in the next SAP implementation phase
- ◆ Hope to **make emphasize project results during and after project a priority**
- ◆ Build on contacts with people met and **set up formal twinning arrangements** with one (possibly two) other LMEs.
- ◆ Yes, we plan to follow recommendations from one of our colleagues on how to **improve stakeholder involvement** in our project (result from an informal discussion during the conference).
- ◆ I think we should focus more on results issues. I think a review of process should be done and discuss at the meeting.
- ◆ I will follow up with my projects on **governance matters**, fostering exchange of best practices between LAC and the Danube Commission, promoting private sector

- engagement making use of the contacts established at the conference, supporting the TDA SAP working group, adding a SGP component in SAP implementation projects, etc.
- ◆ It will be used in formulating the **Country Programme Strategy**.
  - ◆ Invite the decision makers to participate in the activities and make the adaptation between their interests and the GEF projects results.
  - ◆ I made several contacts with projects teams implementing innovative initiatives that are relevant to my project activities. I intend to follow-up/maintain contact with these teams to benefit from their positive experiences (and hopefully **replicate their positive results**).
  - ◆ I think I will start with IWLEARN to use it as a platform for exchanging the knowledge, experience, ideas and visions.

### *Private Sector Engagement*

- ◆ I intend to look at opportunities more closely for private-sector engagement in the follow-on project
- ◆ We are going to establish **contact with Coca-Cola company** to start with so that we can build synergies with private sector.
- ◆ Research private sector engagement before approaching project partners in the private sector
- ◆ Facilitate science-based knowledge sharing on transboundary waters and **approaching the private sector for their support and/or involvement in organizing a specific conference** in this as part of IW: LEARN
- ◆ Definitely will explore enhancing our current partnership with private sector, however close collaboration with participant countries is needed too ensure building a common vision and solid steps to engage them.
- ◆ Contact private sector to get their views and to allow them understand our plans and objectives and how they can be engaged
- ◆ Private sector feedback on their involvement (identifying good experiences, needs and outlining possible fields of contributions) in future projects gave good and useful thoughts to the further project developments and management processes.
- ◆ More **subject oriented specification of private sector** to be involved/engaged. Followed by a clearer strategy to outline win-win situations - benefit to all"
- ◆ Project development and activities must involve the private sector but more guidance would be welcome on how to do so effectively. Private sector involvement seems to be easier in the more developed countries where big corporations exist. However in less developed countries where corporate culture is not developed, this is a challenge.
- ◆ I see a need for **practical guidelines for GEF IW project managers on engaging the private sector**, and based on my experience in that field, I plan to explore with GEF IW: LEARN how that can be cost effectively achieved.
- ◆ **Develop new project proposals that incorporate private sector participation.**
- ◆ **The private sector participation for IW projects need to be consider in the TDA and SAP steps to have it real involvement from the beginning.** As a country representative we are always interested to involve the private sector in the GEF projects.
- ◆ We plan to follow up to **develop a private sector initiative to provide long term funding for IWLEARN.**
- ◆ Create links and **partnerships with private sector entities working on the certification of fisheries.**
- ◆ I would stress more case **studies of engagement of the private sector.**
- ◆ Visit private **companies which have a CSR programs** and propose collaboration in water resources protection and management field, promote creation of public private partnerships in the field of integrated water resources management
- ◆ **Work with private sector outside the traditional box of corporate social responsibility**, means on project implementation of project results or measures designed by the projects to improve the management of affected water body.

**10. On what topic(s), if any, would you have rather spent more time, regardless of whether they were addressed in IWC6 or not? What new issues or questions emerged that remain unanswered from the Conference?**

Participants provided a rather large list of topics on which they would have liked to spend more time. In fact, in contrast to the feedback from IWC5, there were more than a dozen individual recommendations for topics. That being said, the evaluations did show produce some consensus around topics. In particular, participants would have liked to spend more time on: Private Sector Engagement, Monitoring & Evaluation/Indicators, TDA-SAP, Project Manager's Breakout, Dialogue on GEF & GEF Project Cycle, Mainstreaming Results into Government Policy,

**IWC6 Sessions That Should Have Been Longer**

*Private Sector Engagement*

Several people would have liked to spend more time on private sector engagement. Others wrote that they would like to **see more private sector actors** at the next IWC. One person wrote, "I would like to see a little more time spent on successfully engaging the private sector. I would like to help develop **a succinct, practical manual on how GEF IW managers can engage the private sector** and would also be interested in designing and running a workshop at IWC7 focused on helping GEF IW project practitioners engage the private sector." As an editorial note, the IW: LEARN3 project is engaged with exactly this type of activity.

*TDA-SAP*

Once again, IWC6 participants **wanted to hear more about the TDA/SAP process, formulation and the methodology & course revision**. People also wanted to hear more about financing the implementation of TDAs and SAPs.

*Dialogue on GEF & GEF Project Cycle*

Some people wanted to see a more **clear demonstration of the GEF planning for the next decade** and requirements for project approval. Others wrote, "Some more detail on the GEF V programme and expected outcomes would have been useful. Also **more mechanisms to give feedback to GEF Secretariat** through working groups." Some participants wrote that they would have liked to hear more about basic operational questions like terminal evaluations, reporting requirements and the GEF project cycle itself.

**"New" IWC6 Sessions**

*Monitoring & Evaluation/Indicators*

An equal number of participants highlighted **M&E, indicators, establish baselines and other related topics as deserving of more time**. One person asked there be a, "detailed discussion on monitoring and evaluation, establishing baseline data, tools and techniques for effective monitoring." This topic would not actually be a new IWC6 topic, but clearly at least some people would like to see its return to the IWC6 agenda.

*Project Manager's Breakout*

Some participants expressed a wish for a half-day or full-day **breakout session only for project managers to share experiences and common concerns with the GEF secretariat**. This IWC did expressly include sessions aimed at Project Managers (and Agency Representatives) but not the kind of working group session some people suggest.

*Mainstreaming Results into Government Policy*

Some wrote that they would like to have heard more about, “How can GEF and IW projects work better towards making sure **process and results are fully mainstreamed into government policies** and programs.”

#### Other Issues

The evaluation forms resulted in a long-list of additional topics for exploration in future IWC agendas:

- ◆ Social science
- ◆ Separate Science and Admin Sessions
- ◆ Hypoxia/Nutrient Loading
- ◆ Transboundary Commissions
- ◆ Pollution
- ◆ Best Management Practices,
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Outreach/Stakeholder Engagement
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Sea level rise, and its impact on socioeconomic conditions of developing countries and SIDS
- ◆ Sustainable Financing
- ◆ Gender involvement.
- ◆ Science
- ◆ Small Grants Programme
- ◆ Donors
- ◆ Efficiency
- ◆ NGO Access to GEF Funds
- ◆ IWRM
- ◆ Change in Environmental Status of LME's
- ◆ Results Discussion
- ◆ Marine Protected Areas
- ◆ Outcomes of each GEF project
- ◆ Plastic waste
- ◆ Quotas/Credits/Trading Systems
- ◆ Conflict Management
- ◆ Sanitation
- ◆ Links to Global IW Processes/Climate Change Agenda
- ◆ Science to Governance
- ◆ Governance
- ◆ Emerging Issues

#### 11. On what topic(s), if any, would you have rather spent less time in the Conference?

Once again, participants gave few answers to the question of which topics should have gotten less time. In fact, people criticized all sessions of the conference at least once, from the pre-conference workshops, to the opening plenary of speeches, the host-project session, the table dialogues, the follow-up table-dialogue session on Wednesday right through to the closing plenary.

One can extract however, some more general analysis from the comments. Some people did not appreciate the plenaries in general, either because of their panel composition, insufficient time for discussion or their themes (either too focused or too general). People wanted less speeches and plenaries and panels. Some people did not like the second part of the Dialogue on Project Results, but like the table dialogues themselves (the first part). Others still held a perception that the conference was **too heavily biased (in terms of content) towards large marine**



ecosystem projects and also those projects that carry out TDA's and SAPs. Some felt that a **more balanced approach towards the session themes** needs to happen in future. People wanted to see **more time for participant workshops and not so many at the same time**.

## 12. What advice can you give GEF IW:LEARN to improve assistance or services to your project?

### Advice regarding iwlearn.net

- ◆ Update the contact database and e-mail lists.
- ◆ Improve the website, it should be much more dynamic, structured and user-friendly, and **access to lessons-learned, guidance/training documents, and templates** should be more intuitive.
- ◆ **Develop a way to capture data.** Cannot always depend on the projects to provide data.

### Advice regarding Targeted Training Workshops

- ◆ Enhance communication among projects, LMEs, groundwater, freshwater and linking all of them as possible by region. If IWC is biannual, we could **develop regional sessions to address selected common topics among projects** to accelerate lessons learned and information exchange.
- ◆ Perhaps more IWC type forum on a zonal (hemispheric?) basis so that many more persons can benefit from the IW-Learn, including NGOs, CBOs, Governments and Project Managers.
- ◆ The GEF IW:LEARN is a very useful tool. If possible to **provide also training on-line** for specific subjects.
- ◆ Organize more often **workshops on the management/set up of communication channels** and or invite project staff to participate from time to time.
- ◆ Capacity building for those staffs that are involving in the project implementation is needed.

### Advice regarding Online Communities of Practice

- ◆ The community of practitioners is a very important initiative and it should be given a lot of input.
- ◆ Use the website more to continue the dialogue between project teams - but it seems you are already working on that with the new community space

### Advice regarding technology training

- ◆ IW can provide additional **training in lay-outing and up-loading materials in the website.** to be further explored - can/will be communicated to IW:LEARN at later stage
- ◆ Provide more training on new technology Ideas coming to the market and software downloads if any

### Advice regarding Project-Project Twinning Exchanges

- ◆ Provide more information on inter-project exchanges.

### Advice regarding Information Dissemination

- ◆ Disseminate on a **regular basis, lessons learned and results** of projects...
- ◆ The Project Managers' Manual, currently under development will be of great help. **Make sure that the manual is issued as soon as possible** and that it contains all the latest templates required by GEF for reporting & M&E purposes.

- ◆ **Circulate more practical experience** in the form of case studies or so to the project community.

#### Advice regarding Project Outreach

- ◆ Arrange for training and support so that the use of IWLEARN can be promoted as a communication platform for GEF projects
- ◆ IW Learn Newsletter should feature / recall what services could be made available...a bit of advertising
- ◆ Need to **conduct a team webinar** on your services to the project would be most useful.

#### General Advice

- ◆ Continue improving on the tools that help project managers and government officials; make them very **user friendly and focused on results that are relevant to the clients and not only to GEF**.
- ◆ As international projects (transboundary and international waters) the GEF agencies need to support better the overall view of the project given more technical advice in the common issues to be addressed.
- ◆ It **needs a larger staff** to be more omnipresent throughout the community
- ◆ There should also be **more pro-active sharing of relevant information**, more **direct communication from the GEF** to its projects.
- ◆ Development and improvement of: the set of intermediate and outcome project indicators, and the system for the intermediate and outcome results monitoring
- ◆ Have **liaison/contact persons in projects**, etc.

### 13. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or concerns?

#### Participant Comments

- ◆ The profile of the IW portfolio: some **take away messages on the results of 20 years** IW portfolio (some figures?) and key recommendations from the portfolio meeting on 'raising the bar'. Not to day that these questions were not answered - but not at a global level, I believe. These may be synthesized after the meeting though...
- ◆ Congratulations to IW-LEARN staff for the good work, great meeting and hope we could contribute more with the nice job you are conducting there.
- ◆ Great conference! I loved the videos that started each day. These were very well edited. I also appreciated the attempts to make some sessions more interactive. More of the same!
- ◆ It was my first experience and had a wonderful time.
- ◆ In general, thanks to the GEF event team for providing such an atmosphere and environment. Great all around.
- ◆ Personally, I really appreciate the opportunity to be among colleagues in a dynamic environment where exchange of knowledge and lessons-learned is stimulated. I wish we could have an IWC every year ;-)

#### Participant Critique

- ◆ We need to find a format for sessions like the private sector, maybe round tables, which would all for participants to **interact more and get less talked at**.
- ◆ The technical site visit to Skadar-Shkodra Lake was very well organized but could have spent more time on presenting the details of what the issues and the results are besides the leaflet
- ◆ Was concerned that we did not get full disclosure regarding the field trip to Mljet Island to a sewer plant that does not exist.

- ◆ Would have been great if you have **had time cards or something to make sure people stick to their allocated time when speaking**. Some people had 5-7 minutes and talked for 40... That meant we lost the actual discussion and panel debates and it turned into monologues.

Response: We take all these critiques to heart and the next IWC will avoid these oversights. The message about the importance of discussion time has been heard.

#### Ideas for the Future IWC's

- ◆ Better presentation of all the project results. I am looking forward to having tangible results to be presented in the next conference.
- ◆ We should have been allowed to **submit anonymous questions for a session on burning questions**.
- ◆ Environmental aspects should be taken into account when organizing such an event. **Minimize the use of printed materials**, etc. in order to organize to the extent possible ""greener"" events and send out a coherent message.
- ◆ A suggestion would be to have less presentations and more interactive sessions. Also, some of the side events were extremely interesting but there was not enough time to go into depth...In general, **more concrete/visible outputs from each session are needed**. Clear messages to take home.
- ◆ Location of these events has to **consider more the transport issues** - leaving Dubrovnik it was clear that many participants with complex routes were left in trouble due to the limited resources for rerouting and assistance at the airport
- ◆ If (as Al Duda argued on the first day) the IW conference is to become a COP, then it **MUST invite country representatives and not just the project managers** and technical staff in the future. Otherwise it will remain a 'talking shop' for the already converted - and those with the technical oversight, but you should include stakeholders who are also partners in the projects. (Editorial Note: Country representatives are invited and many come)
- ◆ Keep up the good work! IW Conference is always a very valuable time to learn and to discuss. I would like to see more opportunities and indeed **places for small groups with mutual interest to meet** without having to always do it in the early morning, over breakfast or at dinner.
- ◆ Invite **more donors to the conference**, invite high-level officials from those countries where IW where not implemented yet, but need to be implemented in order to give them the possibility to learn from positive experience from other countries and regions. Conferences could be organized in those regions where the projects are very much needed and still were not implemented, where a bigger number of various stakeholders could see what are the accomplishments in IW all over the world
- ◆ I know it was long but maybe adding one more day to spread out participant led workshops would have been useful.
- ◆ I would recommend to invite much more stakeholders from outside the GEF circle: NGOs, private sector, related projects from other agencies, etc. This would enhance networking opportunities and give more criticism to what we do...
- ◆ A simple **request form to the Project Managers perhaps 6 months in advance to suggest topics** and discussions for the Conference? After all, it is the PMs that are at the 'coal-face' and have the questions as well as some of the answers

#### General Requests

- ◆ What are the direct lines of communications with GEF secretariat? There should be more direct communication rather than only biennial meeting. **GEF Secretariat may consider having separate meeting with project managers**. The PIR is very complicated and a one way correspondence. Challenges at project implementation level are not communicated properly to the GEF Secretariat.

- ♦ Will there be a **follow up by the GEF on the recommendations/ comments** provided by the participants during the IW6?

## Session Overview

Before embarking the results of individual sessions, it is worth taking a broad look at the overall evaluation results. The results here should be taken with a grain of salt as they constitute an entirely consistent evaluation. For example, not all participants attended all of the same sessions. Nevertheless, the results below highlight the **enduring popularity of the participant workshops and innovation marketplace**, which received the highest rankings respectively.

- ♦ Manager's Workshops: Project Manager Manual: **3.87**
- ♦ Manager's Workshops: Governance Tools: **3.00**
- ♦ Manager's Workshops: TDA-SAP Course Revision: **3.73**
- ♦ Manager's Workshops: Workshop on Global Warming, Climate Change, and Large Marine Ecosystems: **4.05**
- ♦ Manager's Workshops: Nutrient Reduction Best Practice Technical Training: **3.79**
- ♦ Mediterranean Region Achievements and Initiatives: **3.69**
- ♦ Dialogue on Results of the GEF After 20 Years: **3.89**
- ♦ Interactive Game: **4.05**
- ♦ Private Sector Roundtable: **3.67**
- ♦ A Briefing on Developments in GEF International Waters: **3.89**
- ♦ Transboundary Commission Roundtable: **3.89**
- ♦ GEF Scientific and Advisory Panel: **4.07**
- ♦ Participant Workshop(s) [General]: **4.24**
- ♦ Film Festival: **3.99**
- ♦ Innovation Marketplace: **4.19**

## 1. Manager's Workshops: Project Manager Manual

Number of respondents: 45 (43.7%)  
 Average Response: 3.86/5  
 Standard Deviation: 0.92  
 Ratings: 1(1), 2(0), 3(16), 4(15), 5(13)

### Additional Comments

- ♦ The GEF IW project manager's manual had to be sent to participants before the session.

Response: We had considered this approach, although we determined that to come to the IWC with a "finished" product would have been counterproductive and prone to rejection. The inputs to the manual are all received and we think the manual will be that much stronger for the fantastic inputs.

## 2. Manager's Workshops: Governance Tools

Number of respondents: 46 (44.7%)  
 Average Response: 3.0/5  
 Standard Deviation: 1.15  
 Ratings: 1(8), 2(3), 3(19), 4(13), 5(3)

### Additional Comments

- ♦ The governance workshop was not a workshop; it was a seminar given by the governance consultants and a forum for the PMs to provide their knowledge on governance issues. Nonetheless, the seminar findings were interesting and I hope that

- the papers will be sent to the participants for their reference. A workshop would have been a ""practice"" on how to address one governance issue that they have discovered in their study.
- ◆ The workshop on governance (Saturday PM) was not clear and a waste of time. We spent our time giving self-introductions and never heard from the consultant about project results. The issue is very important and I expected more from it, however, it was our feeling that the consultant in charge of this project was not prepared or did not know where we supposed to go.
  - ◆ Governance workshop, dynamics of the workshop not good. Too much time dedicated to name participant institutions and people involved, little info on governance project results, and to much time for self introductions.

Response: The session probably would have benefitted from a bit more discussion with the target audience on what type of workshop to deliver.

### **3. Manager's Workshops: TDA-SAP Course Revision**

Number of respondents: 49 (47.6%)  
 Average Response: 3.73/5  
 Standard Deviation: 1.02  
 Ratings: 1(0), 2(6), 3(15), 4(14), 5(14)

#### **Additional Comments**

- ◆ The pre-workshop for the TDA-SAP was useful. It would have been better if a few materials were sent out for preparations.

#### **Participant Critique**

- ◆ The TDA SAP training was not adequate in my view as it was oversimplifying situations hence missing out on actual case scenarios. Rather than going through such a superficial training one could have used the practical hand on type expertise of the group to debate the actual content of the TDA-SAP methodology and see how to best modernize it.
- ◆ TDA and SAP session was not target oriented. It was not clear what was the aim of this session.
- ◆ The proposed methodology for revision of TDA and SAP development also had to be drafted and sent to participants before the session.

Response: In fairness to the session, the topic deserves actually significantly more time than half a day. We could have devoted a majority of the IWC to it. That being said these critiques are noted. The project had only just started on the new methodology revision when the IWC occurred, so it was unfortunate timing in that sense. We hope that all people will follow the launch of the new methodology and course in 2012.

### **4. Manager's Workshops: Workshop on Global Warming, Climate Change, and Large Marine Ecosystems**

Number of respondents: 37 (35.9%)  
 Average Response: 4.05/5  
 Standard Deviation: 0.88  
 Ratings: 1(0), 2(2), 3(7), 4(15), 5(13)

### **5. Manager's Workshops: Nutrient Reduction Best Practice Technical Training**

Number of respondents: 34 (33.0%)  
 Average Response: 3.79/5

Standard Deviation: 0.80  
Ratings: 1(1), 2(1), 3(6), 4(22), 5(4)

## 7. Mediterranean Region Achievements and Initiatives

Number of respondents: 54 (52.4%)  
Average Response: 3.69/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.77  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(3), 3(18), 4(26), 5(7)

## 8. Dialogue on Results of the GEF After 20 Years

Number of respondents: 76 (73.9%)  
Average Response: 3.89/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.86  
Ratings: 1(1), 2(3), 3(17), 4(37), 5(18)

### Additional Comments

- ◆ The plenary session where people were standing up etc. I am still not sure what we were supposed to achieve.
- ◆ The "facilitated" discussion on the third day was not very useful. The attempts at getting feedback were awkward.

Response: We note this critiques as well. We will continue to adjust the design of this type of this session.

## 9. Interactive Game

Number of respondents: 64 (62.1%)  
Average Response: 4.05/5  
Standard Deviation: 1.0  
Ratings: 1(2), 2(2), 3(12), 4(23), 5(25)

## 11. Private Sector Roundtable

Number of respondents: 58 (56.3%)  
Average Response: 3.67/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.82  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(5), 3(17), 4(28), 5(8)

### Additional Comments

- ◆ Private sector session: very good addition, but should allow for more interaction with the portfolio and people on the panel had very different roles. It would be good if these are spelled out on the background slide - especially for large panels as these - or introduced by a brief overview from the chair that private sector engagement will be highlighted using different perspectives.
- ◆ More attention to gender on the panels - to have the private sector panel with only men (and to make a woman chair) was not good optics or intent.

Response: Next time, we will have a smaller more diverse panel and ensure more discussion time.

## 12. A Briefing on Developments in GEF International Waters

Number of respondents: 74 (71.8%)  
Average Response: 3.89/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.87  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(4), 3(20), 4(30), 5(20)

#### Additional Comments

- ◆ It was not clear what came out of the last panel on the future direction of GEF.

### 13. Transboundary Commission Roundtable

Number of respondents: 35 (34.0%)  
Average Response: 3.86/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.87  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(1), 3(12), 4(12), 5(10)

### 14. GEF Scientific and Advisory Panel

Number of respondents: 43 (4.07%)  
Average Response: 0.74/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.74  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(0), 3(10), 4(20), 5(13)

### 15a. Participant Workshop(s)

Number of respondents: 58 (56.3%)  
Average Response: 4.24/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.68  
Ratings: 1(), 2(), 3(), 4(), 5()

Please note that the evaluation of the participant workshops in general. In other words, the rating is generic for all the 11 workshops and side events offered that day. As a general point, through the evaluations people asked that there be **less participant workshops in parallel and instead more time allowed for these events.**

#### Additional Comments

- ◆ Participant-led workshops were very interesting and more time for these sessions would be recommended.
- ◆ The format with parallel sessions for the participant workshops did not allow me to attend the findings of the GEF IV:Science Project as well
- ◆ Only have a **maximum of 30 people per side session**

### 16. Film Festival

Number of respondents: 69 (67.0%)  
Average Response: 3.99/5  
Standard Deviation: 0.78  
Ratings: 1(0), 2(1), 3(18), 4(31), 5(19)

#### Additional Comments

- ◆ Film festival was poorly organized, not well announced and in a room that was too small. It really was a shame; because the quality of almost all movies shown was high they are a great tool to raise awareness about projects and their goals/outputs. The movies could

easily have been shown repeatedly during startup sessions in mornings, lunch breaks, etc.

Response: Indeed we apologize. The film festival always ends up being the last part of the agenda that we deal with and indeed the arrangements resulted from this. Next time it will be done differently.

## 17. Innovation Marketplace

Number of respondents: 79 (76.7%)  
 Average Response: 4.19/5  
 Standard Deviation: 0.77  
 Ratings: 1(0), 2(1), 3(14), 4(33), 5(31)

### Additional Comment

- ♦ The incurred cost of preparation and transportation to the IW6 venue was a burden to the project. More diligent supervision on voting was expected. Perhaps **such Marketplace could be performed through presentation of video about the project, implementation, people of the region, interviews, events, etc.**

Response: We have heard also many verbal comments and ideas on how to restructure the innovation marketplace...and we will do so next time.

## Comparisons to past IWC's

The first two Biennial GEF International Waters conferences did not produce evaluation summaries. The 2002 Conference in Dalian, China did produce a needs assessment (IWC2). The evaluation summaries from the last three IWC's (three through five) offered some common questions on which rough (very rough) comparisons can be made. It should be stressed that this comparison doesn't assume ceteris paribus. In the areas where comparison is possible, the IWC6 and IWC4 were overwhelmingly considered an improvement over the IWC3.

Question	2011 Dubrovnik	2009 Cairns	2007 Cape Town	2005 Salvador
Response Rate	101/328 (31%)	77/293 (26.2%)	79/314 (25.2%)	96/293 (32.7%)
Overall Conference	4.4/5	3.84/5	3.9/5	3.0/5
Logistics	4.55/5	3.85/5	4.18/5	3.4/5
Networking Opportunities	4.17/5	3.62/5	4.0/5	3.3/5
Exhibit Area (Innovation Marketplace)	4.19/5	3.96/5	4.07/5	3.2/5
Knowledge Gained	4.14/5	3.72/5	3.6/5	2.8/5
Exchange Innovations	-	-	3.3/5	2.8/5
Informal Discussion Time	4.17/5	-	4.0/5	2.6/5



## Rating comparisons to past IWC's

