



REPORT  
**First Global Meeting  
for ECTI Alumni**

Spain, May 2026

**Effective  
Conservation**  
TRAINING INITIATIVE



FRANKFURT  
ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY



*With support  
from:*



FUNDACIÓN  
OCEANOGRÀFIC  
VALÈNCIA



# SUMMARY

## First Global Meeting for ECTI Alumni

The **First Global Meeting for ECTI Alumni** took place in Spain between May 1st and 8th. Twenty-eight ECTI participants from four continents, ten organizations, fourteen countries, and four cohorts attended the event.


### Goals of the meeting:

- a) Reinforce interpersonal relationships among ECTI alumni and strengthen the resulting global network of conservationists.
- b) Demonstrate and practice group facilitation tools.
- c) Identify concerns and hopes related to the participants' work and the functioning of ECTI.
- d) Inspire and re-energize participants so they can face their everyday challenges with renewed energy and tools.
- e) Reinforce a global perspective on how effective conservation works around the world.



### The Global Meeting was composed of two parts:

**Part 1.** From May 1st to 5th, the group engaged in several group dynamics using facilitation tools such as Active Listening, Peer Coaching/Troika, World Café, Open Space Technology, and theatre representations. These tools helped harvest collective ideas about the participants' main concerns as conservationists and explore future paths for the improvement and expansion of ECTI. Details and results from these sessions can be found here:

 [ECTI Global 2026 | Process and Facilitation Tools and Results \(pdf\)](#)

During this phase of the meeting, ECTI alumni also attended presentations on conservation in Spain and Europe and explored different areas of Alto Tajo Natural Park.

# SUMMARY

## First Global Meeting for ECTI Alumni

Part 2. Between May 6th and 8th, the group attended the **Effective Conservation in Action** public event at the Oceanogràfic in Valencia.

During the event, participants were able to listen to—and in some cases deliver—presentations analyzing some of the world’s most successful long-term conservation initiatives and outstanding conservation NGOs.

Details and presentations from this event can be found here:

 [Effective Conservation In Action \(website\)](#)

Finally, results from a post-meeting survey show high levels of participant satisfaction, significant interest in attending future ECTI Global Meetings, and useful and highly encouraging recommendations and comments for improving or reinforcing the activities and methods used in this kind of meeting.



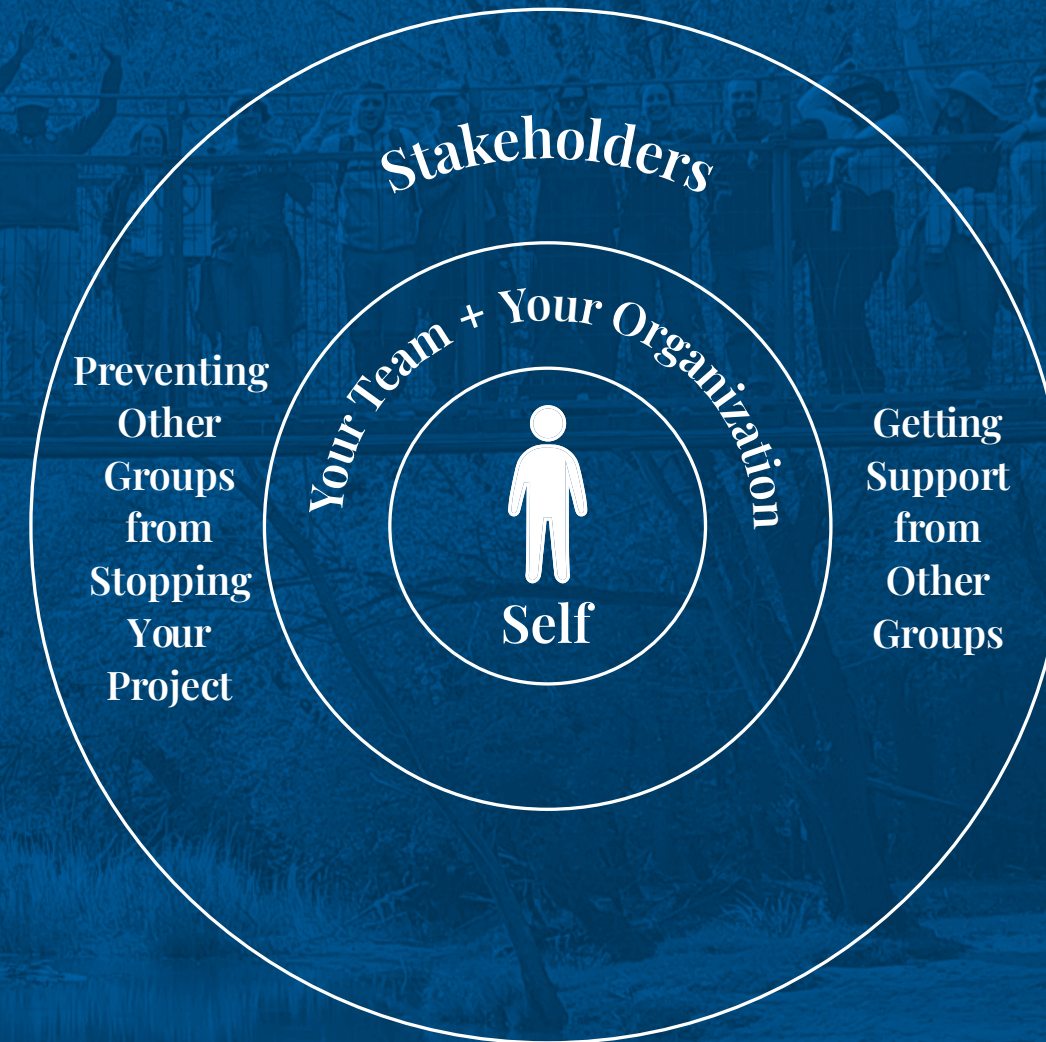
# The Three Circles of Influence

## GOALS

### Effective Conservation Training Initiative

Our goal is to increase the amount of conservation leaders who are ready to manage complex programs and multidisciplinary teams in conservation landscapes of global significance.

We identify, train, inspire, and connect a new generation of conservationists working in wild areas so they learn about team management and how to build constructive relations with key stakeholders and partners.



Effective Conservation = People Management



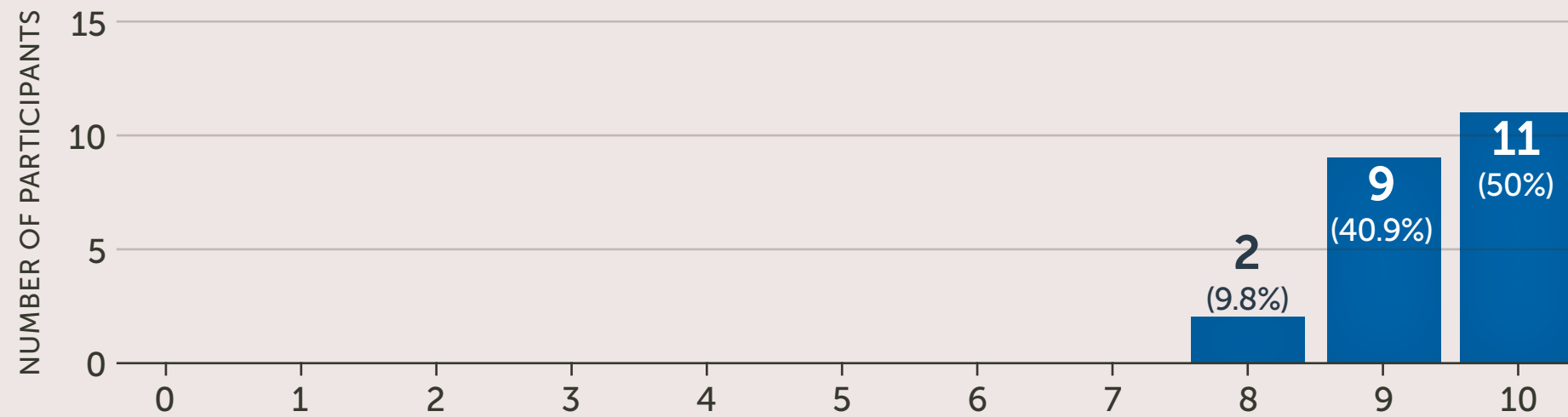
RESULTS

# Evaluation Survey Completed by Participants

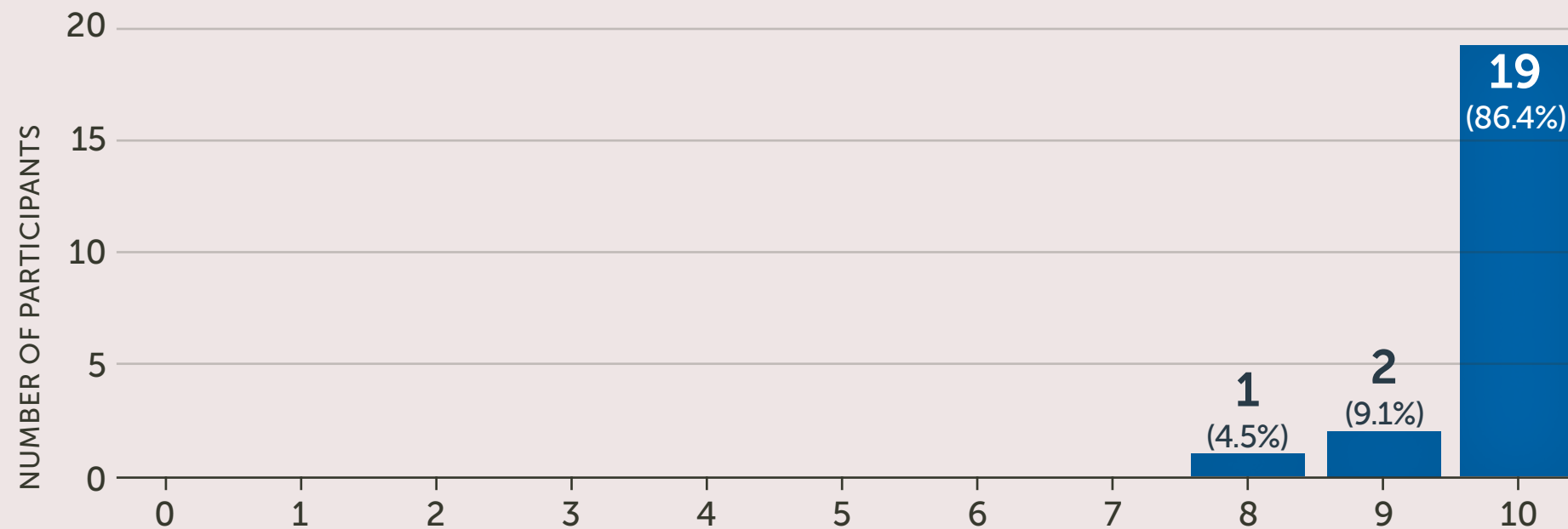


# RESULTS Evaluation Survey

From 1 to 10, how would you rate the meeting regarding its logistics?



From 1 to 10, how would you rate the meeting regarding its potential for networking and connecting with other colleagues and renewing your energy?



ANSWERS BY TRAINEES:  
22 PARTICIPANTS

# RESULTS Evaluation Survey

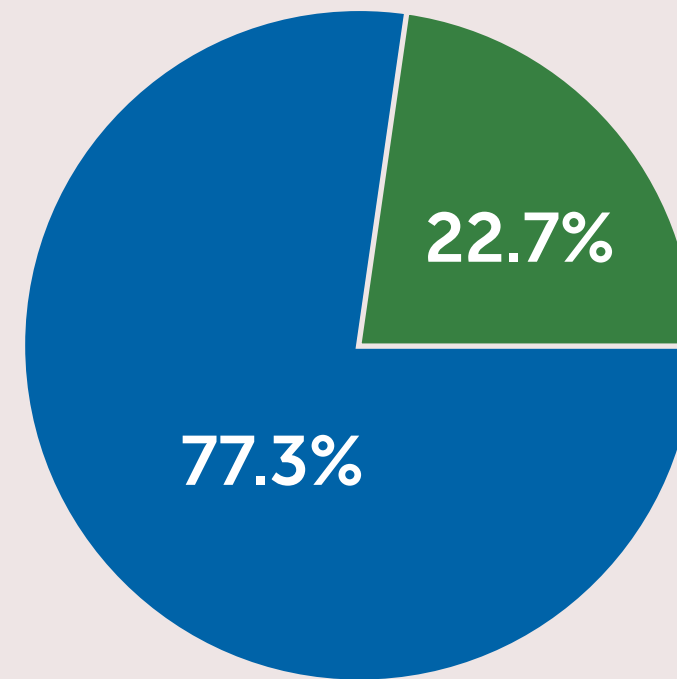
From 1 to 10, how would you rate the meeting in terms of its value for learning about new facilitation tools and conservation programs, including the presentations at the public event in Valencia?



ANSWERS BY TRAINEES:  
22 PARTICIPANTS

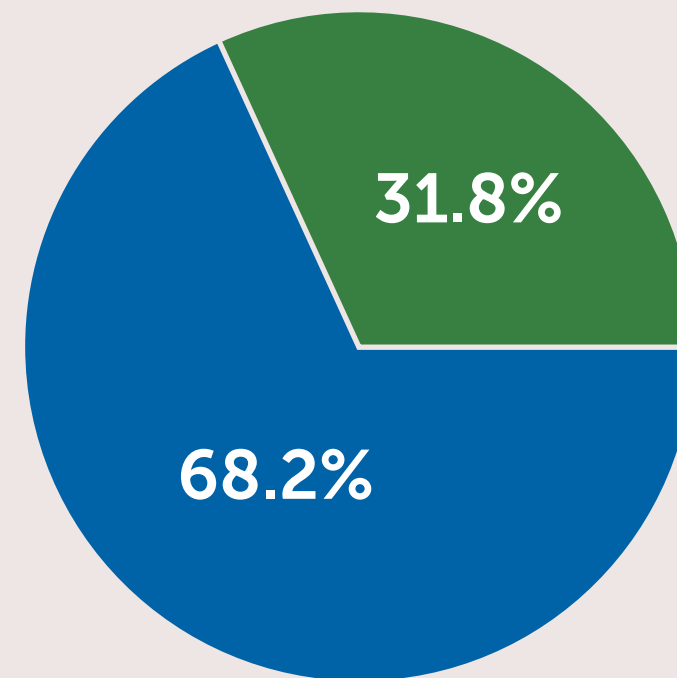
# RESULTS Evaluation Survey

Choose the phrase that best describes your experience after the meeting



- It exceeded my expectations
- It met my expectations
- It did not meet my expectations

Choose the phrase that best describes the chances that you'll attend a future Global Meeting of ECTI Alumni in 2 or 3 years



- Very likely: >75%
- Quite likely: 50%-75%
- Quite low: 25%-50%
- Extremely low: <25%

ANSWERS BY TRAINEES:  
22 PARTICIPANTS



LOGISTICS

# What Worked Well and What Could Be Improved

Selected Comments by Participants





## LOGISTICS

### Selected Comments by Participants

“ The food in the first day was awesome, eating on the grass close to the river, inside a town, locals preparing and serving, explaining details about the food. I think the next days would be also good to have more of this kind of food sharing. ”

“ For future events, I would recommend arranging someone to welcome participants at the airport, especially those arriving in Europe for the first time. Online instructions are helpful, but airport support would make the arrival process easier and more reassuring. ”

“ The event logistics were very well organized. There was always great attention to making sure everyone felt comfortable and included, considering cultural differences, dietary needs, accommodation, and even room sharing arrangements that created valuable opportunities for exchange and connection. The planning behind the experience was wonderful, and there was always clarity about next steps. ”

## LOGISTICS Selected Comments by Participants

“ The organization of the meeting was very professional and well-coordinated. Accommodation, transportation, meals, and communication with participants were well managed. I would encourage maintaining the welcoming atmosphere, punctuality, and the balance between formal sessions and field activities. ”

“ The travel and coordination of meal times etc. was really well done! It was great having Valeria take that off the trainers' hands and it worked very well. I loved that we had overland trips across the three locations. That gave us some time to appreciate the country and spend some time together networking outside of the sessions. ”

“ It would be great to centralize all the pre-meeting information in a single document. Also, sharing the information not only through WhatsApp but also by email would make it much easier to find and reference later. ”

“ It worked perfectly. Enough information but also flexibility and adaptability. ”



## LOGISTICS Selected Comments by Participants

“ The availability for recreational activities such as trekking to the natural park, swimming in Benicassim, were really great. For some us, it was a first time to eat and drink such excellent food. ”

“ I liked the place that was chosen for the meeting, very peaceful and created the right atmosphere for the encounter. The hikes and more sort of “resting” activities came just in the right moment, great to give a break to the mind to recover energies and keep going. I liked the fact that we switched locations, going to Benicassim was a great choice. Enjoyed the food, and the timeframes, even when it was busy it was a very productive agenda! ”

“ The logistics were overall excellent. Transportation between locations was always very professional and punctual, accommodations were comfortable, and the quality and diversity of meals were very good throughout the meeting. Some meals were truly outstanding. I also appreciated the organization and professionalism of the entire team, which helped the experience run very smoothly despite the complexity of the program. ”



## LOGISTICS Selected Comments by Participants

“ Communication in the lead up to the course could be streamlined. All info in one place. ”

“ Build in a day for rest and allow team members to have time to explore the new places/markets and other interesting places, and just have plain fun! ”

“ The only point I would suggest improving is the reception at the airport, especially for participants arriving in Europe for the first time. Airport support would make the arrival process easier and more reassuring. ”

“ Since I started travelling a few days before the meeting, it would have been helpful to receive the practicalities document earlier to guide me in preparing/packing for the trip. ”



ENERGIZING  
& NETWORKING

# What Worked Well and What Could Be Improved

Selected Comments by Participants



## ENERGIZING & NETWORKING Selected Comments by Participants

“ The networking and energizing component of the meeting was one of the most valuable parts for me. I felt like I was part of a family. My professional network increased significantly, and I truly appreciated the opportunity to share meaningful moments with new people from different countries, cultures, backgrounds, and areas of knowledge and experience. I was also able to share my own leadership experiences and challenges with other participants, and through these exchanges, I received useful guidance, advice, and possible solutions. I would strongly recommend maintaining and expanding this networking component in future events. It would be very valuable for this network to continue growing and for participants to have the opportunity to meet like this every two years. ”

“ In my opinion, one of the most valuable parts was the opportunity to work in groups, the talks, and the different dynamics that helped spark important questions and reflections. I also really appreciated having dedicated time to develop our own ideas, think about the challenges we care about, and work through them together. The Open Space dynamic was especially interesting. What was created there generated a lot of energy, inspiration, and real possibilities for future collaboration and working together. ”

ENERGIZING  
& NETWORKING  
**Selected  
Comments by  
Participants**

“ I would suggest maintaining the opening and closing circles, as they help break the ice and encourage people to connect. I also appreciated the longer intervals between activities, which allowed time to talk and share without rush, creating a relaxed atmosphere that really supports connection. ”

“ I would increase the problem-solving discussion where in a group someone presents the most complex operation problem he faces for his work and the other members of the group have to think with him finding solution. This part helps knowing each other and what some face, wearing their shoes reinforce the connection. ”

“ Good size group, good mix, good amount of time to reconnect during pre-conference days. Felt well connected going into the conference which allowed good further networking there. Good balance of workshops, so well curated to bring everyone’s ideas and energy together. ”

“ Swapping roommates was fantastic. Including a day for “one on one” sessions with the trainers would be beneficial. ”

## ENERGIZING & NETWORKING Selected Comments by Participants

“ The meeting created an excellent environment for collaboration, exchange of experiences, and strengthening professional relationships among alumni from different countries. The group activities, discussions, and informal moments were very valuable and motivating. I would encourage maintaining multicultural exchanges and interactive activities. ”

“ The energy from EVERYONE from the beginning when it was just us the alumni, till the end with the global community was just phenomenal! ECTI has this power to enable people to de-role and just interact honestly creating a safe space for everyone to learn, unlearn and grow. This is what I enjoyed the most- creating those relationships. Keep up the Magic! ”

“ The agenda was extremely productive and well used, but also very intense. Many days started early and continued with high-energy activities until late, which could become tiring over time. Perhaps future meetings could include a few more open or flexible spaces in the agenda for spontaneous conversations, reflection, rest, or informal networking, which are also very valuable parts of these gatherings. ”

ENERGIZING  
& NETWORKING  
**Selected  
Comments by  
Participants**

“ The networking dinners and long breaks between presentations helps the networking. ”

“ For future events, it could be useful to increase the time dedicated to informal exchanges, group discussions, and experience-sharing sessions among participants. These moments help participants build stronger connections, learn from each other’s leadership experiences, and maintain the energy of the network beyond the meeting. ”

“ The meeting was exceptional for networking and creating meaningful connections. We were able not only to reconnect emotionally with colleagues, but also to build concrete plans for future collaborations between people and institutions. The combination of formal sessions, facilitation exercises, and informal interactions created many powerful and emotional moments. I especially appreciated the feedback exercises and the collaborative sessions where we could collectively create products, ideas, and future pathways while immediately seeing the results of our work. The atmosphere of trust, openness, and shared mission was truly inspiring and energizing. ”

## ENERGIZING & NETWORKING Selected Comments by Participants

“ The space and environment were just perfect to connect with all the participants. The fact that everybody that wanted to participate was invited to go also made it very accessible to exchange with and connect with so many and different people. I think that the activities were also very well distributed regarding the amount of people you had to interact with in each of them. The time and space distribution to make interactions and connections possible were great as always. ”

“ I would recommend balancing indoor and outdoor activities throughout the day. Spending the whole day in the classroom can be quite tiring, and by the end of the day it may be harder to stay fully energized and engaged in meaningful interaction. Including outdoor activities helps a lot in keeping energy levels higher and fostering better connection among participants. ”

“ I think the program needs some free time or lower-intensity moments to keep it from becoming too intense. ”



LEARNING

# What Worked Well and What Could Be Improved

Selected Comments by Participants



## LEARNING Selected Comments by Participants

“ Applying the facilitation tools to co-create something together worked really well and helped us understand in practice how we can benefit from them. The presentations were also very valuable for understanding the different contexts and what may or may not be applicable to our own. For me, it was particularly interesting to have the directors’ presentations, as they helped me understand how their organizations operate, their models, and different leadership perspectives on conservation. It was very inspiring to see such senior leaders sharing their time and knowledge with us. ”

“ It was interesting to revisit things I had learned in the past and reinterpret or adapt them to a new stage in my organization. It was also a great opportunity to listen to and learn from leading experts in the field. Personally, I found the experience extremely valuable. ”

“ The learning component was very valuable and should be maintained. I appreciated learning new facilitation tools, discovering different conservation programs, and hearing inspiring presentations during the public event in Valencia. ”

## LEARNING Selected Comments by Participants

“ The training sessions and presentations were highly inspiring and practical. Learning about new conservation initiatives, leadership approaches, and facilitation tools strengthened my professional capacity and provided ideas that can be applied in my work in Mozambique. The public event in Valencia was also very enriching and motivating. ”

“ The training was very interactive and watching the facilitators figure out OST during the session was such a powerful show of honest, realistic representation of how real life is! I love that we keep it real, we discuss the good the bad and the ugly and this is how learning really takes place. Then the way that learning material is packaged and shared afterwards is really useful and easy to refer to. ”

“ Have one or two of the CEO or high-level Manager or Leader to give a speech not on his program but his style of leadership and his lessons learnt. We could have the chance to ask question about specific leadership issues we may face. ”

“ Great opportunities for ECTI alumni to present alongside leaders. Everyone felt so supported and welcome. Great mix of presenters, NGOs and topics to learn from. ”

## LEARNING Selected Comments by Participants

“ For me, the conversations we had before Valencia were very valuable. I really like the format—having a short presentation, but especially the relaxed question-and-answer space afterward. Being able to listen and learn from everything the speakers had to share felt extremely valuable. On the other hand, I think the work being done to strengthen concepts and tools is very important, because it allows us to keep growing our knowledge and learning more and more over time. I would definitely keep that approach. Regarding the Valencia presentations, I heard many very good talks. I also really liked the format of having questions at the end and the curation behind the sessions. I found it very interesting, and I would absolutely keep that as well. ”

“ I think it was a good idea to spend some time reviewing past concepts of the course, it was good refreshment and a good way to be in the same page. Including Pablo and Marc to tell us about their experience was also great. ”

“ The World Cafe and the Troika are the facilitation tools that I liked the most. I think we could have more time to learn about one or two more additional tools with the time that we had. ”

## LEARNING Selected Comments by Participants

“ One of the strongest aspects of the meeting was seeing facilitation methodologies applied in practice instead of only learning them theoretically. I am already planning to apply several of these tools in my own work. The Open Space and World Café sessions were especially productive and inspiring. Troika Consulting worked very well to strengthen personal connections and support among participants, and the theatre activities were both inspiring and genuinely fun. It was also fantastic to see ECTI colleagues presenting their work, it made me feel very proud, and they did an excellent job. ”

“ It was amazing to learn from other organizations during the presentations in Valencia. I have taken away so many things from the event. ”

“ I really liked the refresher material such as about leadership vs management, the 4 P's, and about the 4 dimension of renewal. ”

# General Comments about the Meeting



“ Participating in the Global Meeting was a unique and meaningful opportunity for me. It helped me renew my energy, reflect on my leadership journey, learn from others, and strengthen valuable connections with people who are committed to the future of conservation. It was also wonderful to reconnect with our inspiring trainers, Ignacio, Astrid, and Jorge, whose dedication to conservation leadership is truly remarkable. I sincerely hope there will be another opportunity to organize a meeting like this in the future. ”

“ I believe creating this kind of spaces helps us tremendously to continue moving our work forward, sharpen our thinking, and keep growing. They create the perfect environment for new and innovative ideas to emerge—ideas that can truly challenge and transform reality. ”

“ I believe it creates and enables new opportunities that would be very difficult for individual organizations to achieve on their own. The gathering serves as an exceptional catalyst for connecting people and organizations on a global scale, and I do not believe there is any other event of this kind worldwide that offers a comparable level of collaboration and exchange. It was an immensely enriching experience. ”

“ Empowering, inspiring, uplifting, encouraging, fun, life changing! Thank you so much. ”

“ Personally, it was a great way to recharge my energy and learn about conservation around the world. This is the best event and training initiative that I have ever experienced. ”

“ The Global meeting was energizing. Got a chance to get my head out from being buried in work and remembering to breathe and also interact. The networking was useful for my work. ”

“ It was a dream come true in my career. ”

“ An honor! And the final step to convince myself of being actively engaged with ECTI forever. Thanks a lot Ignacio for dreaming this and making it real. Also, to Jorge and Astrid for their incredible and useful inputs. ”

“ ECTI and the Global Meeting is the best connection and learning network. Our organizations should help improve its expansion development by contributing to his next future plan. ”

“ It was an energizing experience of human and professional connection on a global scale, and a starting point for building networks of collaboration and joint action at both regional and international levels, extending the impact of what we can achieve for conservation beyond what any individual or institution could accomplish alone. ”

“ The meeting was amazing, significant, and very relevant to contemporary conservation issues. The global conservation networking will help to co-create solutions to the challenges faced by our conservation organisations. Personally, I have learnt the importance of time management and need to have fun in order to become effective leaders. ”

“ The Global Meeting was an inspiring and transformative experience that strengthened my leadership skills, expanded my professional network, and renewed my motivation to continue working in conservation and community development. It was also a valuable opportunity to exchange experiences with professionals from different cultural and conservation contexts around the world. ”

“ The meeting was deeply inspiring and helped us better understand both our role and the next steps for ECTI and its global network. What impacted me the most was seeing the consolidation of a truly global effective conservation network, with commitments and leadership emerging across different continents. We left the meeting with many concrete ideas and collaborations, especially around strengthening the South American Effective Conservation Network through projects, exchanges, future meetings, and joint initiatives. I also left feeling very motivated about the possibility of helping support future ECTI editions in Brazil. ”

“ It inspired me and appears to be a great platform to launch collaboration and networking. Made me revisit the Effective Conservation method and how to apply and focus on it in my work. Looking forward to the Australian chapter to see these links and cross pollination also growing in our part of the world! ”

“ I go back home with the certainty that we are going to create something very big from this, with even a bigger sense of belonging about the ECTI network. ”

“ For me, the Global Meeting was a time for reflection and for fully embracing the idea that what we do is supported by so many more people around the world; that the concern over the loss of biodiversity and the impacts that result from it is shared by so many, and that many more will yet be brought into our fold. ”

“ The Global Meeting provided a much-needed platform for me to feel reconnected with my incredible ECTI colleagues and the amazing and very knowledgeable facilitators in a beautiful country. I feel incredibly blessed, and am immensely grateful for this opportunity. A huge thank you to all of you, especially Ignacio, for making this happen! ”

“ The Global Meeting was a very meaningful experience for me. In a world often filled with discouraging news about nature and social issues, it was inspiring to be reminded of how many committed and passionate people are working to make a positive difference. It helped me reconnect with my sense of purpose and strengthened my motivation to continue my work and believe that change is possible. It was also very meaningful to meet and reconnect with people I identify with, creating a strong sense of belonging, collaboration, and friendship. The experience reinforced for me the power of collective action and the importance of spaces like this. ”

“ So appreciative of the time and energy that went in to creating the opportunity and the course. The 3-day conference structure was the best conference I have ever been to. Extremely engaging and meaningful. I walked away feeling inspired but all the great work and people. Thank you! Excited for the future cohorts to join the journey and network. ”

“ It really taught me the importance of creating and maintaining networks. We're a big network already, and I can't imagine how big this network will look like in 10 years. Learning and experiencing nature conservation in Europe was a rewarding activity for me. I look forward to learning and seeing how it is done in South America and Australia. ”

“ It was a space for me to get energized again. It’s like a little booster pill for good vibes, energy and encouragement which helps me to refocus and have a new perspective looking at my work. I enjoyed learning from other programs from other organizations and seeing how to also apply it to my work. I have already started pitching ideas I got from my colleagues during the peer coaching session and even just from their presentations. I absolutely loved Valencia and if I get another chance I will definitely visit again in the future! ”

“ New paradigm in Conservation! ”

