



Ecsite Annual Conference 2011
Evaluation and Recommendations

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1. Introduction

The Ecsite Annual Conference 2011

Dear Ecsite Annual Conference participants,

The Ecsite Annual Conference 2011 was held from the **24th to the 26th of May in Warsaw, Poland**. The Conference, hosted by the **Copernicus Science Centre**, had **“Freedom”** as the main Focus. It consisted of two days of pre-conference meetings and training courses followed by three days of a main conference with **75 sessions**. The 75 programme sessions were **selected amongst 148 proposals** that Ecsite received until October 2010. **842 delegates from 44 countries in Europe and worldwide** participated at the Ecsite AC2011.

Ecsite would like to thank all of you for your contribution to the success of this event. We are particularly grateful to the ones who took some time to give us their valuable feedback and recommendations for improvement of future conferences.

This document gives an overview of the Ecsite Annual conference 2011 as seen by its delegates.

It is a summary report drawn from the 200 conference feedback forms gathered from the delegates after the Conference via an online form that was posted on the Ecsite conference website, as well as from the individual comments and from the session feedback forms gathered from every session. Heather King from King's College University, as a member of the ACPC, contributed into redesigning both the session feedback forms and the overall feedback form, and we thank her for her help.

These results are analysed and used by the ACPC and the Ecsite Executive Office while speakers and convenors receive individual emails regarding their sessions. Both results (from session feedback forms and conference feedback forms) are important and are taken into consideration when the next Annual Conference is organized and the sessions are being selected.

The Ecsite Annual Programme Conference Committee (ACPC), the Executive Office, the Ecsite Board and the next Host will carefully look at your comments to improve the most significant annual gathering of the network.

Thanks again for your contribution,

Ecsite

2. Overview of the evaluation of the Ecsite Annual Conference 2011

	Themes	Key findings
1	Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sessions, speakers and convenors were rated very positively - The delegates enjoyed the interactive sessions and sessions with lessons to learn - Negative comments : lack of relevance with the mentioned topic from some speakers, self promotion, communication skills of some speakers - Delegates would like to see sessions on science communication theory, science in society, exhibits - Opening Ceremony and keynote speeches were rated very positively
2	Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gala dinner, nocturne and farewell party were very positively rated - Wifi connection, technical support and room facilities were positively rated as well as quality of food in pre and main conference - Negative points : food at the farewell party, vegetarian and vegan options in all meals, registration desk on Thursday morning

The Ecsite Annual Conference 2011 was rated similarly to the Ecsite Annual Conference 2010 (AC2010, Dortmund, Germany) in aspects of content (sessions, speakers, convenors) and networking possibilities. The social programme and facilities of the venue have been notably more successful than in 2010.

3. Results

Out of the 842 participants of the conference, 200 forms were gathered (24% of the participants). Results were received from an anonymous questionnaire that was put online on the conference website once the AC2011 ended.

3.1. Characterize the conference with three words

People gave 549 words for characterizing the conference. 93 % of the words given were positive and 7% were negative. The number in front of each word corresponds to the number of people who selected this word as one of their keywords.

Here are the words most often used:

43 networking , 36 interesting, 27 fun, 21 inspiring, 20 nice venue, 19 well organised , 13 friendly, 10 informative, 10 contacts, 10 tasty, 10 good experiences, 9 quality, 9 interesting people, 9 hospitality, 8 useful, 8 friendly, 8 knowledge, 7 busy, 7 exciting, 7 mind opening , 6 beautiful city

3.2 Quality of the content

3.2.1 The Opening Ceremony

The Opening ceremony took place inside the Copernicus Science centre building. The ceremony was co chaired by Mr Robert Firmhofer and Mr Hans Gubbels and consisted of three parts. The welcoming speech of the host and the Prof. Barbara Kudrycka – Minister of Science and Higher Education, the welcoming speeches of the Ecsite representatives, Mr Hans Gubbels and Ms Catherine Franche, and a speech by Dr Mamoru Mohri, the Director of Miraikan the Japanese science centre in Tokyo. In between the speeches two intervals took place with short animated show by the Copernicus staff.



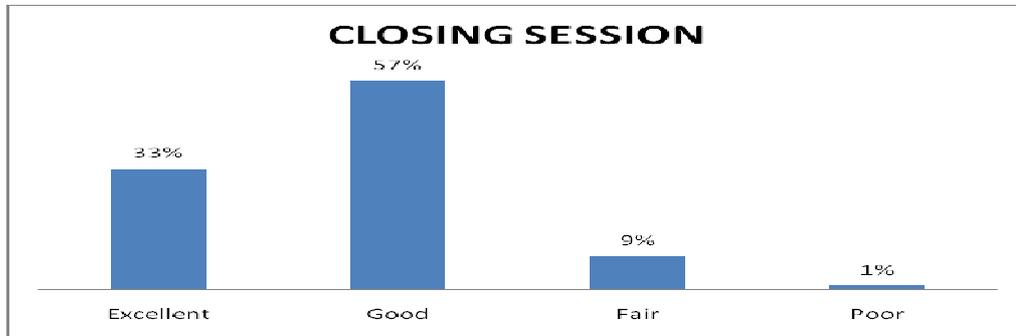
These results are the most positive for the Opening Ceremony since 2007 (AC2007, Lisbon).

3.2.2 The Closing Event

164 people answered this question.

The closing ceremony took part in the same area as the opening event. it was attended by approximately 250 participants. It consisted of short speeches from Robert

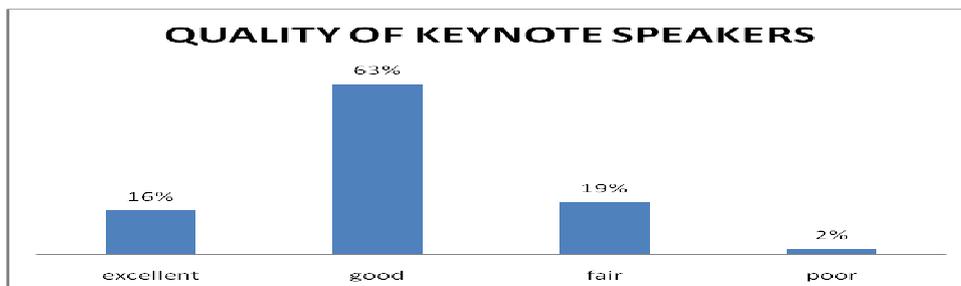
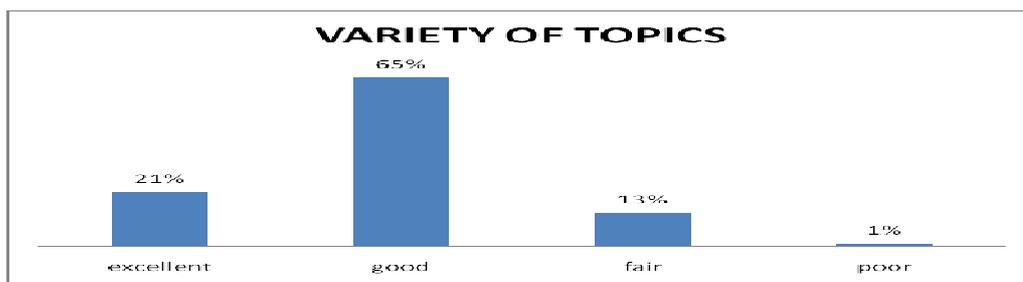
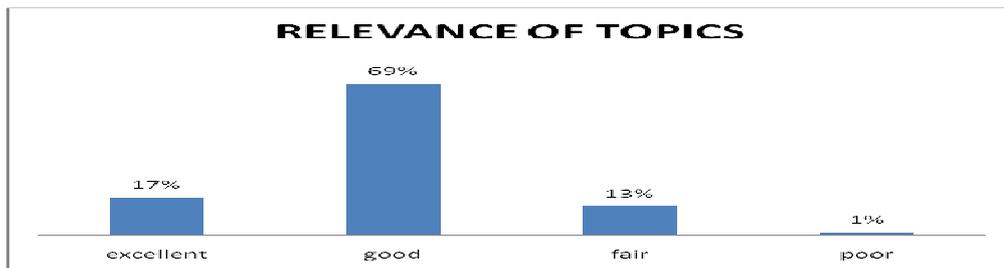
Firmhofer, Director of the host institution for the Ecsite AC2011 and newly elected Ecsite President, Antonio Gomes Da Costa, Chairperson of the Annual Conference Programme Committee for 2011 and Marc Moutin, representative of Cité de l'Espace, the host institution for the Ecsite AC2012 (Toulouse, France) and a short video prepared by the team of Cité de l'Espace that featured an Italian astronaut sending a message to the Ecsite delegates from space.



The rating for this event has been from far more positive comparing with past years.

3.2.3 Overall quality of sessions

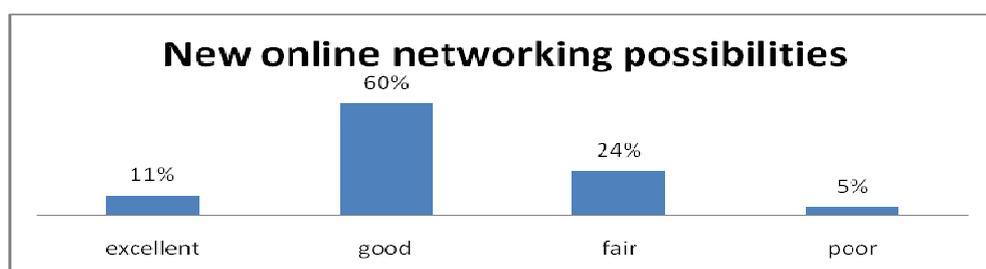
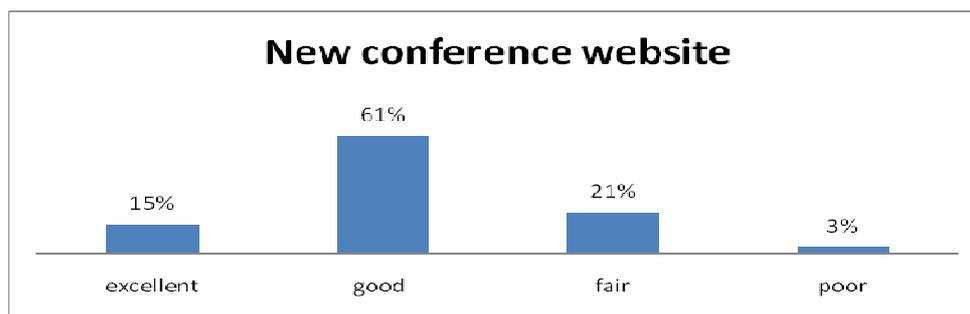
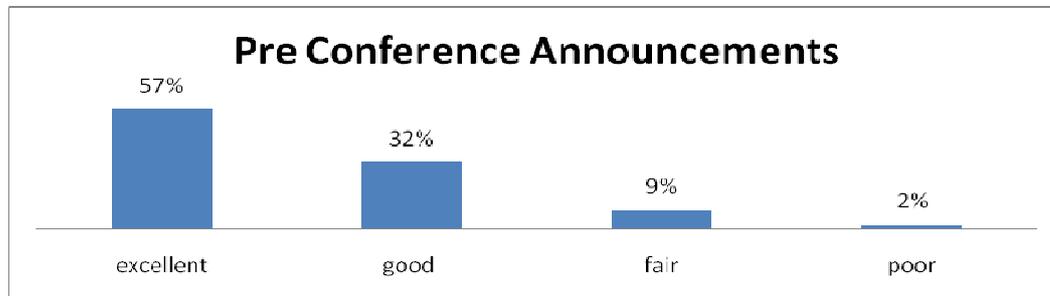
The delegates were asked to rate the sessions on the following aspects: relevance of topics, diversity of topics and quality of the keynote speakers. Here are their views:

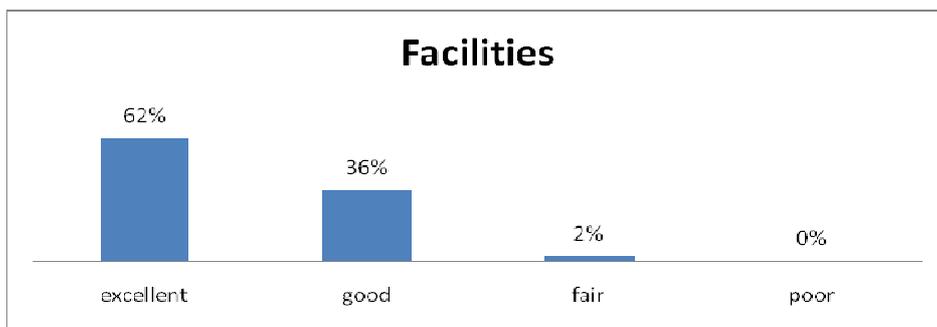
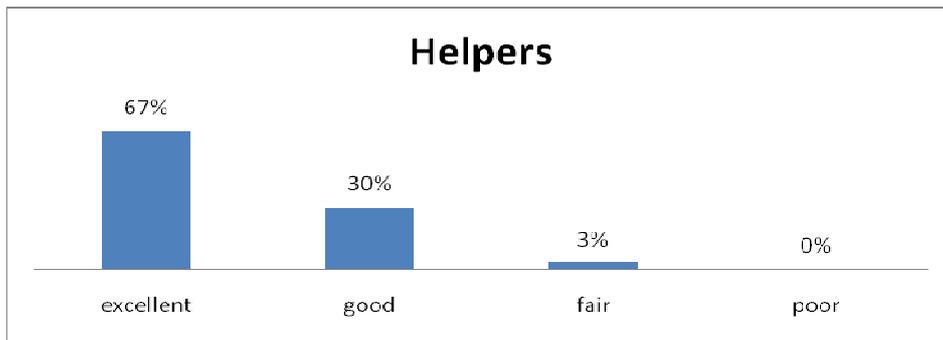
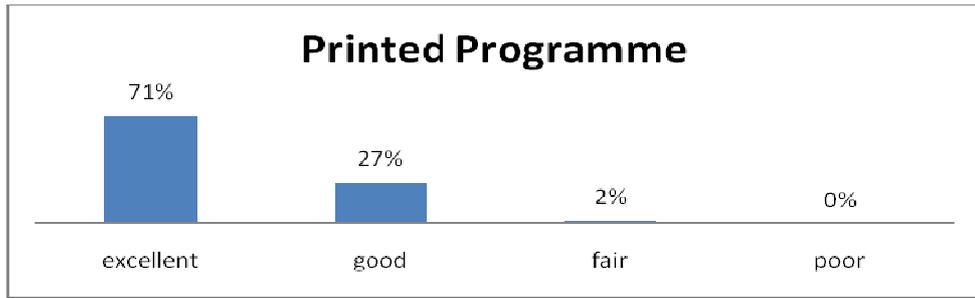


Each of these aspects got a better score than in past ecsite conferences.

3.3 Organisation

Participants were asked to rate the different services of Ecsite during the preparation of the conference and while the conference was running. Here are the delegates' answers in detail.





The overall feedback was very positive with the majority of responses waving always on the positive part of the scale for each question. Nevertheless, the following aspects: the online registration form and the registration desk were rated less positively than in the past two ecsite annual conferences. The rest of the aspects were more positive than in the past.

Furthermore delegates rated the coffee breaks : 90% of the people answering this question gave a positive rating, while 10% gave a negative answer. This percentage is the most positive response we have received in an ecsite conference for the coffee breaks.

The rating on the lunches was very positive, notably increased from 2010, with 94% of the people answering positively ranking the lunches , and only 6% giving a negative answer.

93% of the people felt that the Business Bistro was successful, one more aspect of the conference highly increased comparing with the past.

Delegates were also very satisfied with the social programme of the AC2011. 92% of the people responding the questionnaire found the Gala Dinner successful while 97% gave a positive rating to the Nocturne. 81% of the participants attending the Farewell Party rated it positively still a very high mark but lower comparing with the other social events.

3.4 Recommendations for next year's conference from the participants

3.4.1 Recommendations for different aspects of the conference by the delegates

The delegates also gave their recommendations for the different aspects of the conference for which they feel improvement is needed. Their answers are put into categories. Here are the most popular recommendations received for each category.

Sessions

- Better quality of speakers (relevance to the topic, avoid self promotion, deeper content in their talks, avoid repetition of the speakers, better presentation skills etc): 12 people
- Content (build on sessions from year to year, discuss relevant topics, etc): 10 people
- Formats (more workshops, less speakers in panel sessions etc): 12 people

Social Programme

- Better quality of vegetarian and vegan food in all events: 6 people
- More food at the farewell party: 3 people

Registration

- make administration work more smoothly: 3 people
- Send invoices on time in advance: 1 person

Networking

- Meeting facilities onsite: 1 person
- Special activities for newcomers: 1 person

4. Conclusions from the conference

The conference as a whole was rated positively by the participants in terms of content of the conference sessions, networking opportunities and organisation. All figures were very similar to the ones appearing in past Ecsite annual conferences feedback forms. The figures that appeared higher than in any past conference were the ones concerning the social programme, the opening ceremony and the closing event, and the overall organization

More specifically regarding the different aspects of the conference:

4.1 Sessions

- ❖ All issues that people were asked to comment on regarding the conference sessions were rated very positively from the participants.

The main complaints of the participants are on the quality of some speakers in terms of the content. The mismatch of what people describe in their abstracts and what they bring in the session is also a problem. Parallel sessions overlap and language skills of some speakers were also a problem in some cases as well the large number of speakers in some sessions. A few proposals were made regarding inviting new, external people in the sessions.

- ❖ Once again many participants enjoyed the interactive format of some sessions (pecha kucha sessions were still very popular), and the sessions that brought lessons to learn.

Note: all the points above are similar to the points made by participants in 2010 feedback from Dortmund, Germany AC2010.

4.2 Networking opportunities

- ❖ This is the best aspect of the conference. The networking opportunities, the informal atmosphere of the conference, the rich social activities are highly appreciated by the delegates and remain a strong asset of the success of the Ecsite annual conference.

4.3 Facilities

- ❖ In general the feedback for the museum facilities was positive
- ❖ There were some complaints on the quality of two session rooms (blue room that was too dark and big and purple room that had too bad acoustics)

4.4 Food

- ❖ Food was rated very positively except the vegetarian and vegan options and the lack of food at the farewell party. In addition to this not enough beverages were served during lunch times.

Annex

1. Conference Feedback Form

Please rate the following aspects of the conference:

poor fair good excellent

Announcements of the conference

Online registration procedure and follow-up

New conference website

New online networking possibilities

Registration desk

Printed conference programme

Helpers on-site

Facilities of the conference venue

Coffee breaks

Lunches

Opening event

Closing session

Business Bistro

Gala Dinner

Nocturne

Farewell Party

2 - Sessions and speeches

Please rate the following aspects of the conference:

poor fair good excellent

Sessions: relevance of topics

Sessions: variety of topics

Quality of Keynote speeches

Do you have any suggestions regarding sessions and speeches?:

3 Conference experience

What three words would you use to sum up your experience at the Conference this year?

4 - Topics

What topics would you like to see covered more in next year's sessions

- Science communication theory
- Science in society issues
- Exhibits
- Visitors
- Management
- Communication
- Evaluation
- Education

5 - Suggestions

Do you have any suggestions on themes for the focus of future Conferences?:

Do you have any suggestions or improvements that we could make in any area? :

6 - Next Conference

Will you attend the Conference next year?:

	yes	no	don't know
Conference participation			

In case you will not attend, please explain why:

2. Session Feedback Form

Session Title:

Time and date:

Please indicate your reason(s) for choosing this session by circling the responses

To learn new techniques and skills

Yes	no	not applicable
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To hear speakers' views

To be entertained

To learn new content (eg theory or approaches)

I work on this particular topic

Other (please give details)

Please rate this session in matters of the following aspects:

Please rate by circling on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is poor and 4 is excellent

Content	Poor	1	2	3	4	Excellent	
Clarity	Poor	1		2	3	4	Excellent
Interactivity	Poor	1		2	3	4	Excellent
Usefulness	Poor	1		2	3	4	Excellent
Time for Q&A	Poor	1		2	3	4	Excellent
Convenor	Poor	1		2	3	4	Excellent
Speakers	Poor	1		2	3	4	Excellent

Other comments (please comment on any particularly good speakers, or aspects of the session that will help us in planning future conferences. Thank you for your time