

focus on decision-making in a broad conservation context. Specifically, the course themes became:

- values-based decision-making;
- communication skills in decision-making;
- interdisciplinary dialogue;
- the identification and the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making;
- the influence of context on decision-making;
- concepts and tools for decision-making.

An interactive teaching style was used, aimed at engaging the experienced participants and building on their contributions. For these reasons teacher-led lectures were always balanced with opportunities for group work, discussions and debates, site visits, practical exercises and other participant centred forums, such as the presentation of case studies or the leadership of specific sessions.

In terms of educational modes, the course aimed to be very practical, looking at real situations. While this exposed the participants to many exciting projects, the programme in 2002 ended up with too many site visits, to the point that it became a kind of ‘behind the scenes’ study tour, i.e. more focused on understanding past decision-making rather than actually doing it. This aspect would substantially evolve through subsequent courses.

Goals and expectations of the participants

Prior to each course, successful applicants were required to write up to 500 words in answer to the question “What are your goals and expectations for the course?” These responses have been summarized in Table 1.

The number one goal of the participants was not related to decision-making *per se* but rather to the characteristic of ICCROM courses in general – the opportunity for interdisciplinary, international and multicultural exchange with professional colleagues.

While it is no surprise that a course named Sharing Conservation Decisions would elicit an expectation of “an enhanced understanding of conservation decision-making”, (see Table 1) other expectations mentioned repeatedly were a better understanding of the role of the conservation professional in interdisciplinary decision-making, and stakeholder involvement in decision-making. Furthermore, participants wanted the course to include practical work in conjunction with case studies.

Participants’ goals were the acquisition of skills and tools that could then be applied to their own working realities, to become better advocates, managers, practitioners, planners, etc.