Modern Zoo and Aquarium Management Strategies Training Course



14 - 18 Dec 2026

Lisbon

4500 € (Per Person)

Ref: #EL8561_98061

Course Introduction / Overview:

The management of modern zoological and aquarium facilities has evolved into a complex, multidisciplinary field that extends far beyond traditional animal husbandry. Today's leaders must navigate the intricate balance between conservation, public education, scientific research, and sustainable business operations. This course provides a comprehensive framework for mastering the strategic challenges inherent in running these vital institutions. Drawing upon principles outlined in seminal works like "Management of Wild and Zoo Animals" and the philosophies of conservation pioneers, participants will explore a holistic approach to facility management. BIG BEN Training Center has designed this program to equip professionals with the advanced skills needed to ensure the highest standards of animal welfare, create impactful visitor experiences, and lead effective conservation initiatives. This training delves into critical areas such as strategic collection planning, ethical governance, financial stewardship, and innovative public engagement, preparing participants to lead their organizations toward a future of excellence and global conservation impact.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Zoo Directors and Assistant Directors.
- Aquarium Curators and Managers.
- Operations Managers in zoological facilities.
- Animal Care Supervisors and Head Keepers.
- Conservation Program Managers.
- Veterinary Department Heads.
- Education and Visitor Experience Managers.
- Senior Biologists and Zoologists.
- Aspiring leaders in the zoo and aquarium sector.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Zoological Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- Public and Private Aquariums.
- Marine Mammal Parks and Rescue Centers.
- Conservation and Breeding Centers.
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities.
- Governmental agencies overseeing wildlife and conservation.
- Non-profit organizations focused on animal welfare and conservation.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Executive Leadership and Administration.
- Animal Husbandry and Curatorial Departments.
- Operations and Facilities Management.
- Veterinary Services and Animal Health.
- Conservation and Research Programs.
- Education and Public Engagement.
- Guest Services and Visitor Experience.
- Marketing and Communications.
- Finance and Development.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for a zoological or aquarium facility.
- Implement international best practices for animal welfare and enrichment.
- Master the principles of strategic collection planning and species management.
- Design and manage state-of-the-art exhibits and life support systems.
- Create robust emergency preparedness and crisis management protocols.
- Lead effective educational and community outreach programs.
- Manage budgets, fundraising, and financial resources for long-term sustainability.
- Enhance the visitor experience to promote conservation messaging.
- Navigate complex ethical dilemmas and regulatory compliance issues.
- Foster a culture of safety, innovation, and continuous improvement within their teams.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, immersive, and practical, ensuring that participants can immediately apply their learning in a professional context. We move beyond traditional lectures to foster a dynamic learning environment built on collaborative problem-solving and real-world application. The course heavily utilizes case studies from leading international zoological institutions, allowing participants to analyze successful strategies and learn from complex operational challenges. Interactive workshops will focus on practical skills such as developing an emergency response plan, designing an educational program, and creating a collection plan. Group discussions and debates will encourage participants to explore diverse perspectives on ethical considerations and modern management dilemmas. Ample time is allocated for peer-to-peer learning, feedback sessions, and direct engagement with the instructor, creating a rich, supportive, and professionally stimulating experience that builds both knowledge and leadership confidence.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of Modern Zoological and Aquarium Management

- The Evolving Role of Zoos and Aquariums in Global Conservation.
- Ethical Frameworks and Animal Welfare Philosophies.
- Key Regulatory Bodies and Accreditation Standards (WAZA, AZA, EAZA).
- Governance, Mission, and Strategic Vision Development.
- The Science of Animal Husbandry and Preventative Medicine.
- Introduction to Collection Planning and Genetics Management.
- Public Perception and Stakeholder Communication.

Unit Two: Advanced Animal Welfare and Collection Management

- Behavioral Enrichment Program Design and Evaluation.
- Advanced Nutrition and Dietary Management Strategies.
- Evidence-Based Habitat and Exhibit Design Principles.
- Population Management and Species Survival Plans (SSPs).
- Animal Records Management Systems (ZIMS).
- Proactive Veterinary Care and Wellness Programs.
- Ethical Considerations in Animal Training and Handling.

Unit Three: Strategic Operations and Facility Management

- Master Planning for Sustainable Infrastructure Development.
- Life Support Systems (LSS) for Aquatic Environments.
- Daily Operations, Staffing Models, and Workflow Optimization.
- Comprehensive Risk Management and Safety Protocols.
- Emergency Preparedness for Natural Disasters and Facility Crises.
- Sustainable Practices and Green Operations.
- Procurement and Management of Zoological Supplies.

Unit Four: Visitor Experience, Education, and Community Engagement

- The Psychology of Visitor Engagement and Exhibit Interpretation.
- Developing and Evaluating Conservation Education Programs.
- Marketing, Branding, and Public Relations Strategies.
- Managing Guest Services and Enhancing Visitor Flow.
- Volunteer Program Management and Community Outreach.
- Leveraging Technology for Immersive Visitor Experiences.
- Fundraising, Membership Programs, and Donor Relations.

Unit Five: Leadership, Finance, and Future-Proofing

- Strategic Financial Management and Budgeting for Non-Profits.
- Human Resources Management and Staff Development in a Zoo Setting.
- Leadership Skills for Managing Multidisciplinary Teams.
- Navigating Crises and Managing Institutional Reputation.
- The Role of Research and Scientific Contribution.
- Adapting to Global Challenges like Climate Change and Pandemics.
- Capstone Project: Developing a Five-Year Strategic Plan for a Model Institution.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How can zoological institutions ethically balance the commercial necessity of visitor entertainment with their core mission of conservation and animal welfare in an increasingly critical society?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by adopting a holistic, strategic leadership perspective on zoo and aquarium management, moving beyond siloed operational training. While other programs may focus narrowly on animal husbandry or exhibit design, this curriculum integrates these essential components with high-level business acumen, ethical governance, and forward-thinking strategy. We emphasize the interconnectedness of animal welfare, conservation impact, visitor experience, and financial sustainability. The content is built around real-world, complex case studies that challenge participants to make executive-level decisions, rather than simply learning procedural steps. It delves deeply into the "why" behind the "what," exploring the philosophical and ethical underpinnings of modern zoological work. By focusing on developing versatile leaders who can navigate the multifaceted challenges of the industry from public perception crises to the financial realities of conservation funding this course prepares participants not just to manage a facility, but to lead it with vision, integrity, and a profound commitment to its mission.