



ISO 20121 - SUSTAINABLE EVENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING ISO 20121

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

What is an ISO standard?

An ISO Standard is document that has been developed by standards bodies from various participating countries. Standards can be a management systems standards or technical standards.

The standards document consists of 'normative text' (the main text) and annexes which generally include guidance for implementing the standard.

ISO stands for the International Organization for Standardization (<http://www.iso.org/iso/home.html>). It is comprised of a network of the national standards institutes of member countries. Australia is represented by Standards Australia, the country's peak non-government Standards organization. International Standards are developed by ISO in response to identified needs by different sectors. In order for a Standard to be of international relevance it must meet certain criteria and be suitable for implementation on a broad worldwide basis.

Why is an ISO needed for the events and meetings industry?

It goes without saying that addressing sustainable development issues in the event industry is a must, yes we need to.

It is envisaged that it will become minimum accepted practice. There is increasing pressure to address sustainability in all sectors of society, industry and commerce. Those with stakeholders to report CSR performance to, will certainly benefit from implementing the management system.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

What is ISO 20121?

The purpose of the Standard is to provide a framework on how to implement a management system to manage sustainable development issues. – taking into account social, economic and environmental factors. Rather than being a checklist, it requires a systematic approach to addressing sustainable development issues in relation to event planning. It is aimed at the event organizer, rather than a single event. Successful implementation of an event sustainability management system will ensure continual performance improvement and management of issues rather than an ad-hoc approach.

Explain the ISO 20121: a systematic approach aimed at the event organizer rather than a single event, it addresses sustainable development issues throughout the event process: conceptualizing, planning, implementing, execution, and measuring

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Defined

‘A pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for future generations’

Principles of Sustainable Development

- Human Rights
- Environment
- Labour Standards
- Anti-Corruption
- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Transparency

WHAT DOES THE STANDARD INVOLVE?

PLAN

Define scope for
sustainability management

Define primary purpose
and values

Define policy for
sustainability

WHAT DOES THE STANDARD INVOLVE?

PLAN

Identify and evaluate issues

Set objectives and targets

Identify and engage
stakeholders/interested parties

WHAT DOES THE STANDARD INVOLVE?

DO

Provide resources and
competencies

Manage supply chain

Maintain
communications

WHAT DOES THE STANDARD INVOLVE?

CHECK

Performance

Monitoring and
measurement

Audit, Management
Review

WHAT DOES THE STANDARD INVOLVE?

ACT

Management Review

Nonconformity and
corrective action

Continual improvement,
evaluating compliance

BENEFITS OF USING ISO 20121

- ✓ It will put you ahead of the game if legislature comes into action regarding sustainable events or where sustainable requirements are part of a RFT
- ✓ Efficiency across all aspects of event planning can be achieved
- ✓ It demonstrates a systematic approach to sustainable development principles
- ✓ It makes tracking and recording your sustainable performance consistent and much easier
- ✓ The supply chain will inevitably become more sustainable for our industry and others.

Q. Is there such thing as a sustainable event?

- A. This term is an often used one and really does need to come with a caveat. One of the official definitions of sustainable development is: 'Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' So a truly 'sustainable event' needs to have every element of procurement and operating logistics in line with this definition.

Q. What is a sustainable policy?

- A. Represents the foundation for all event-related activities. The policy shall take into consideration; Supply chain, event management cycle, interested parties, needs of end users, legacy issues.

THINGS TO KNOW

Q. Is the standard for the organization or the event?

- **A.** The implementation of ISO 20121 is by the event organization, and therefore it is the event organizer (and its activities/events) which are compliant with the standard, rather than the single event.

Q. Is the Standard an accreditation program/system?

- **A.** The standard will be able to be 'certified' as 'first party', 'second party' and 'third party'. In the first one or two years after the standard is launched it is likely that the standard will only be first or second party verified. As the uptake of the standard matures, Third Party certification will be in place.

THINGS TO KNOW

Q. Is this standard mandatory?

- **A.** The standard is not mandatory, but likely to become minimum accepted practice.

Q. Will government ever regulate the standard?

- **A.** It is doubtful that government will regulate the standard.

THINGS TO KNOW

Q. Do my staff need training?

- A. Yes, your staff need a good understanding of sustainable development.
- The person in charge needs a thorough understanding of management systems, sustainability, and event planning.
- Some staff (eg: site manager, production manager, waste manager) need to understand practical application.
- Induction may be enough for lower level staff members.

THINGS TO KNOW

Q. What if my client doesn't care or does not have a sustainability policy in place?

- **A.** Lead by example!
- You can refer to client's CSR reporting requirements and remind the client that a sustainable event will meet these goals

Q. Will it cost more to organize an event that is consistent with the standard?

- **A.** Once you have introduced the management system, you may find either costs savings or investment required, depending on what actions you have to take to improve your sustainability performance.



THANK YOU

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT:
[HTTPS://WWW.SYSMACS.COM/](https://www.sysmacs.com/)