Give your events the green light with ISO 20121
Event Sustainability Management Systems

Stephen Burt, October 2023

ISO 20121: Sustainable Events

- Introductions
- An Overview of NQA's Sustainability Services
- An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)
- How NQA Can Support You in Achieving ISO 20121 Certification
- Questions and Answers

Introductions

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Overview of NQA's Sustainability Services

ENVIRONMENTAL

- ISO 14001 – Environmental
- ISO 50001 – Energy
- PAS 2060 – Carbon Neutrality
- ISO 14064-1 – GHG Inventory
- ECOCAMPUS
- ISO 20121 – Sustainable Events
- ISO 14068 – Carbon Neutrality (GHG)

SOCIAL

- ISO 45001 – H&S
- ISO 45003 – Mental Health
- ISO 44001 – Collaborative Working
- ISO 37001 – Anti-bribery
- ISO 26000 – Social Responsibility
- NQA Training

GOVERNANCE

- ISO 9001 – Quality
- ISO 22301 – BCMS
- ISO 27001 / 27701 / 27017 / 27018 - IS
- ISO 55001 – Asset Management
- ISO 41001 – Facilities Management
- Industry specifics
  - Aerospace
  - Medical
  - Food
- SSIP

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

PURPOSE

To provide the framework necessary for improving the sustainability of events.

- Applicable for both organisations and individuals of all types and sizes

- Management system structure which can be integrated with other standards (Annex SL)

- An event alone cannot claim compliance, this standard relates to the management system of an event / events

- Claims of conformity must be reflective of what the management system represents i.e. all events / specific events

- Governing principles cover a range of sustainability topics, namely environmental, social, and economic issues

- Currently the 2012 version. BSI have recently requested interest in a revision and update

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

Examples of organisations operating event management systems certified to ISO 20121:

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

Why are sustainability improvement initiatives relevant to events?

The majority of event production activities are undertaken through the supply chain's provision of products, materials and contracted services (including workforce). Procurement, therefore, is a key area in which sustainability performance can be improved:

- Sustainable procurement practices can result in improved environmental performance (lower waste-disposal and training costs, fewer environmental-permitting fees, and, frequently, reduced materials costs), increased social awareness (child labour concerns, employment of people with disabilities, local sourcing), and economic returns (fair trade)

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Why are sustainability improvement initiatives relevant to events?

- Primarily through the tendering and contract management process we can aim to:

  - Minimise the negative impacts of products and/or services (e.g. impacts on health, air quality, generation of hazardous waste, social impacts)

  - Minimise the demand for resources (e.g. by using resource-efficient products such as energy efficient appliances, fuel-efficient vehicles and products incorporating recycled content)

  - Minimise the negative impacts of the supply chain itself, in particular the social aspects e.g. by giving preference to local suppliers and "sheltered workshops" (where the workforce includes a proportion of those with disabilities) and organizations that meet minimum ethical, human rights and employment standards, including equal opportunities

  - Ensure that fair contract terms are applied and respected

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

In practice, sustainability improvement initiative for events may include:

- Improved planning for compliance with legal and other requirements including Environmental, Health & Safety and Social (eg those relating to discrimination, equality, accessibility, gender pay gaps, protected characteristics, etc)

- Improved supply chain management: including supplier control and performance, eg caterers, venues, carpets, stand shells, banners, graphics, digital vs printed, electrics, power supplies, printing, security, transport and travel including of people and materials, accommodation, waste management, AV / PA suppliers, recyclable / reusable materials, lighter materials, H&S controls during erection / dismantling works, H&S controls during the event, contractual delivery social controls

- Improved communications with suppliers and delegates

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

Given that ISO 20121 covers not only the event organisers, supply chain, stakeholders, and more… there are many who benefit from its application:

- Event organizers
- Event owners
- Workforce
- Supply chain (such as caterers, stand constructors, transport companies)
- Participants
- Attendees
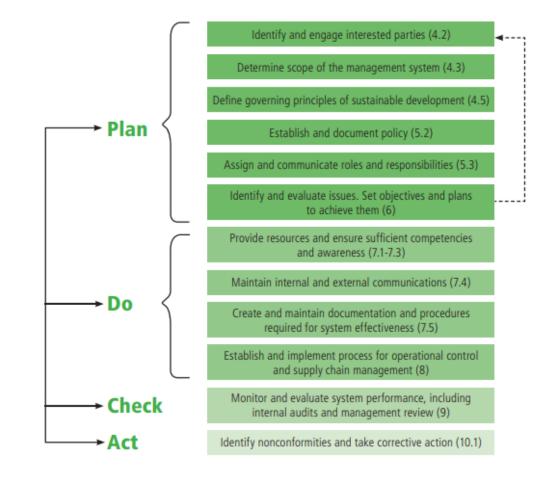- Regulatory bodies
- Communities

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

Benefits of implementing ISO 20121 include:

- Easily adapted and integrated with other management systems standards
- Identify cost savings through improved performance
- Transparency of performance
- Identify areas of risk and mitigate these
- Encourage continual improvement
- Achieve improved environmental results

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

ISO 20121 Framework

Plan
- Identify and engage interested parties (4.2)
- Determine scope of the management system (4.3)
- Define governing principles of sustainable development (4.5)
- Establish and document policy (5.2)
- Assign and communicate roles and responsibilities (5.3)
- Identify and evaluate issues. Set objectives and plans to achieve them (6)

Do
- Provide resources and ensure sufficient competencies and awareness (7.1-7.3)
- Maintain internal and external communications (7.4)
- Create and maintain documentation and procedures required for system effectiveness (7.5)
- Establish and implement process for operational control and supply chain management (8)

Check
- Monitor and evaluate system performance, including internal audits and management review (9)

Act
- Identify nonconformities and take corrective action (10.1)

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

CLAUSES 1 to 3

1 Scope (of the standard)

2 Normative references (none)

3 Terms and definitions

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

CLAUSE 4

4 Context of the Organisation

4.1 Understanding of the organization and its context (determine external and internal issues)

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

4.3 Determining the scope of the event sustainability management system

4.4 Event sustainability management system

4.5 Sustainable development principles, statement of purpose and values (define governing principles of sustainable development in the form of a statement of purpose and values. The organization's governing principles of sustainable development regarding event management shall include, at least, considerations for stewardship, inclusivity, integrity and transparency)

CLAUSE 5

5 Leadership

5.1 Leadership and Commitment

5.2 Policy (establish a Sustainable Development Policy)

5.3 Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities

CLAUSE 6

6 Planning

6.1 Actions to address risks and opportunities (using the internal and external issues identified in 4.1 and the needs of interested parties identified in 4.2 – identify and evaluate the significance of Sustainable Development issues against environmental, social and economic considerations. Also, to identify and plan for relevant legal and other requirements)

6.2 Event sustainability objectives and how to achieve them

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CLAUSE 7

7 Support

    7.1 Resources

    7.2 Competence

    7.3 Awareness

    7.4 Communication

    7.5 Documented information

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

CLAUSE 8

8 Operation

8.1 Operational planning and control

8.2 Dealing with modified activities, products or services

8.3 Supply chain management (critical: include sufficient information in the tender process and evaluate to enable suppliers to demonstrate their capability to support the event sustainability objectives)

CLAUSE 9

9 Performance evaluation

9.1 Performance against governing principles of sustainable development (evaluate current and target performance against the statement of purpose and values)

9.2 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation

9.3 Internal audit

9.4 Management review

CLAUSE 10

10 Improvement

    10.1 Nonconformity and corrective action
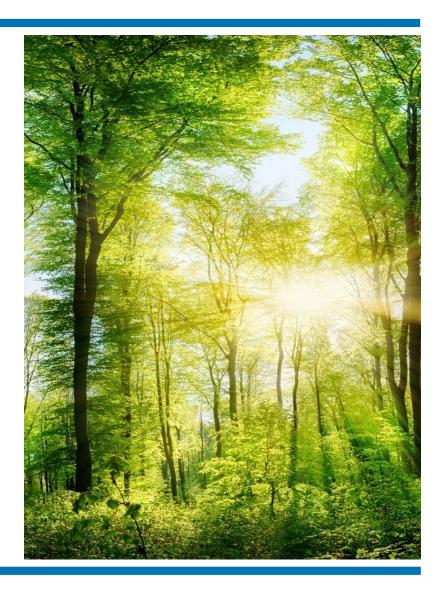
    10.2 Continual improvement

How NQA Can Support You in Achieving ISO 20121 Certification

Support

Tools and Resources:

❖ NQA sustainability microsite

❖ Blogs and quick reads

❖ Factsheets

❖ Webinars

❖ Case studies
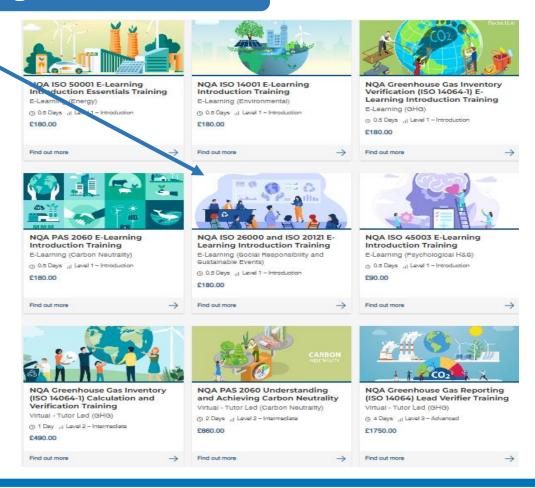
❖ Associate Partner Programme

How NQA Can Support You in Achieving ISO 20121 Certification

Training

How NQA Can Support You in Achieving ISO 20121 Certification

Certification

1 Step 1

Complete a Quote Request Form so we can understand you and your business. We will then use this to personally prepare a proposal for your certification and define what is known as your 'scope of assessment'.

2 Step 2

We will then contact you to book your assessment with an NQA assessor. It consists of two mandatory visits that form the Initial Certification Audit. Please note that you must be able to demonstrate that your management system has been operational for a minimum of three months and has been subject to a management review and a full cycle of internal audits.

3 Step 3

Following a successful stage two audit, a decision is made. If positive, your certification will be issued by NQA, with both a hard and soft copy of the certificate awarded. Certification is valid for three years and maintained through surveillance audits (years one and two) and a recertification audit in year three.

THANK YOU
ANY QUESTIONS?

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