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ISO 20121:2024

Event sustainability management systems

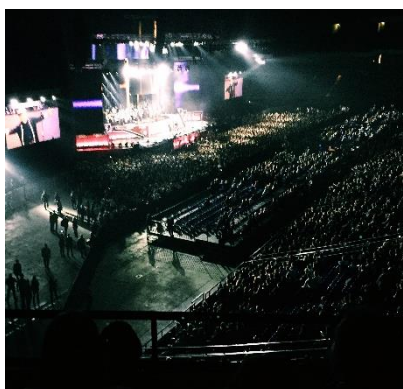
Transition Guideline Client version

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“ISO 20121:2024 standard for sustainable event management highlights this trend, providing a framework for integrating sustainability throughout the event planning process.”

This article explained into what ISO 20121 entails, its workings, target audience, certification process.



What is ISO 20121?

ISO 20121 is a shine for **sustainable event management**, guiding organizations to seamlessly **integrate sustainability into every facet of their event planning and execution**. With a keen eye on social, economic, and environmental impacts, this standard is pivotal for events that aspire to leave a lasting positive legacy. This standard applies to **events of all types and sizes**, encouraging organizations to manage social, economic, and environmental impacts responsibly.

Why is ISO 20121 important?

In today's event management, the push for sustainability is paramount. ISO 20121 emerges as a pivotal resource, guiding organizations toward **practices that are more ethical, eco-friendly, and socially conscious**. Highlighting new focuses on **human and children's rights**, along with **event legacies**, the standard showcases sustainability's transformative role in the industry. It offers **various conformity demonstration methods**, including self-declaration, supplier validation, and third-party certification, making sustainable practices attainable for all organizations, especially SMEs facing certification cost.



Benefits

- **Reduces environmental impact** of events
- Fosters a holistic approach to sustainability, considering **economic, environmental, and social impacts**
- Improves **stakeholder engagement and satisfaction**
- Strengthens **organizational reputation and brand value**
- Offers **versatile pathways for conformity assessment**, catering to organizations of all sizes



Who needs ISO 20121?

Any organization involved in event planning, management, or delivery, seeking to integrate sustainability into their operations.

How has ISO 20121 evolved in its latest version?

The 2024 update enriches the standard with a stronger emphasis on social legacies, inclusivity, and the diverse means of demonstrating compliance, fostering a more comprehensive and accessible approach to sustainable event management.



Does ISO 20121 apply to all types of events?

Yes, it's versatile and applicable to various events, from small gatherings to large-scale conferences and everything in between.

What makes ISO 20121 unique?

Beyond a checklist, it's a transformative framework that empowers organizations to lead with sustainability at the heart of event management, inviting a creative yet systematic approach to making a positive, enduring impact.



What is ISO 20121 Event sustainability management systems about?

The latest revision, ISO 20121:2024 aims to help organizations improve the sustainability of their events and event-related activities.

Who is ISO 20121 Event sustainability management systems for?

This standard is for all types and sizes of organizations involved in the design and delivery of events, and any organization that hosts or organizes events, both internal and external. Users will include:

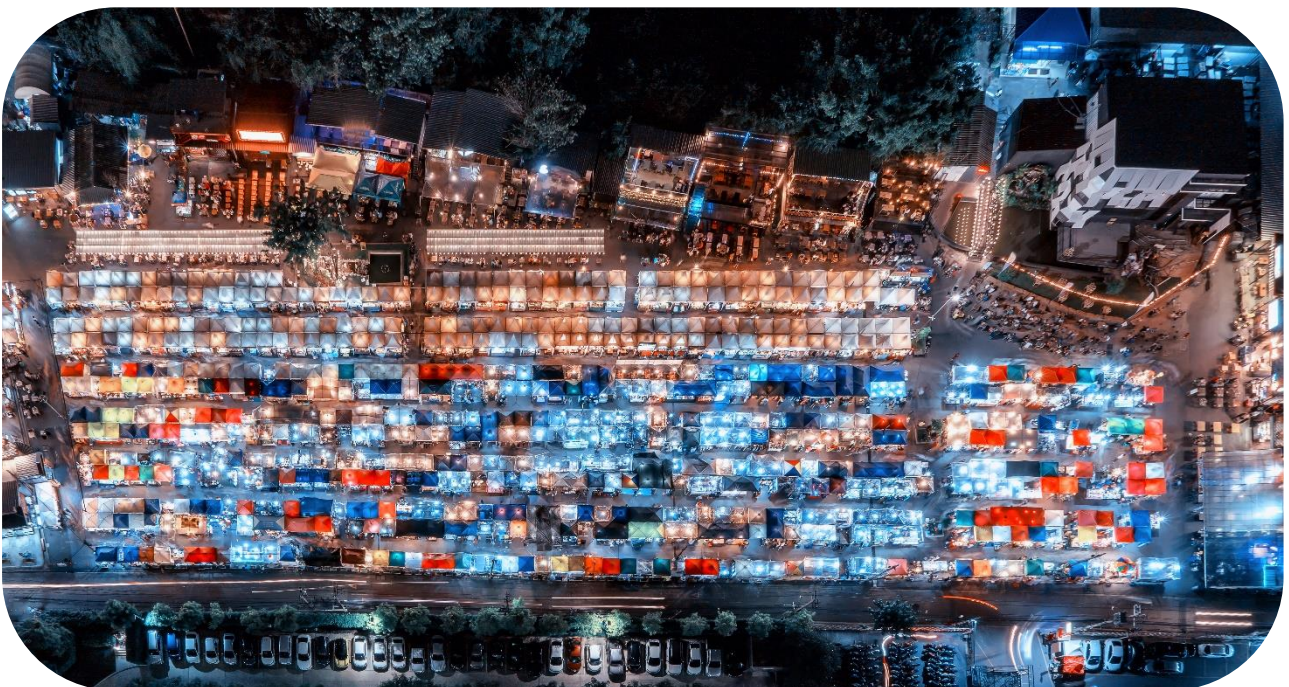
- Business consulting services and management consulting services
- Real estate agents and managers
- Business services
- Membership sports and recreational clubs
- Event organizations
- Event production companies
- Exhibition and convention centers
- Event professionals
- The meetings and event planner industry
- conference centres



What does ISO 20121 Event sustainability management systems cover?

It specifies requirements for an event sustainability management system for any type of event or event related activity and provides guidance on conforming to those requirements. ISO 20121:2024 applies to any organization that wishes to:

- Establish, implement, maintain, and improve an event sustainability management system.
- Ensure that it is in conformity with its stated sustainable development policy.
- Achieve the intended result(s) of its event sustainability management system.



Why should you use ISO 20121 Event sustainability management systems?

Sustainability: it helps organizations and individuals to improve the sustainability of their event related activities and supports organizations that have not formally addressed sustainable development to start to implement a sustainable event management system.

Comprehensiveness: it covers every aspect of running a sustainable event, including leadership, planning, communications, supply chain management and performance measurement. It also includes guidance and information to help an organization implement the standard effectively.

Impact: it helps organizations recognize their relationship with and impact on society; and society's expectations of events.

Performance: it challenges organizations to improve their processes and thinking, leading to continual performance improvement.

Flexibility: it allows and encourages organizations to be more flexible and creative about the delivery of event-related activities without detracting from the aim of the event.

Integration: organizations with existing management systems can integrate the requirements of ISO 20121 into their existing systems.

Current: the revision reflects innovations and developments in the events industry over the last decade including hybrid and virtual events.

Alignment: it aligns with current global sustainability frameworks, goals and reporting standards including the UN SDGs, UNFCCC.



What has changed?

ISO 20121:2024 supersedes ISO 20121:2012. The revision has been designed to address the management of improved sustainability throughout the entire event management cycle. Changes include:

- The text, clause sequence and relevant definitions have been aligned with the harmonized structure for management system standards.
- Requirements now consider the impact of specific issues including climate change when considering the context of the organization.
- An extended list of issues is introduced which can, where applicable, be identified and evaluated including human and child rights and social impacts.
- Additional examples of interested parties to be engaged with, where relevant, are introduced, including partners and sponsors.
- There are new commitments for the policy including reporting on achievements and lessons learnt.
- There is an increased focus on the supply chain demonstrating sustainability.
- Climate action

This standard contributes to Achieve climate neutrality: GHG emissions / mitigation; Carbon footprint; Integrate climate action in governance and management: GHG emission reduction and carbon removals projects.



Understanding ISO 20121: A Keystone for Sustainable Event Management

ISO 20121 is an international standard that provides guidelines for managing events in a sustainable manner. It emphasizes reducing the negative impacts on the environment, economy, and society, thereby promoting a positive legacy.

- **Framework for Sustainability:** Offers a structured approach for planning and delivering events sustainably.
- **Comprehensive Scope:** Applicable to all types and sizes of events.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Encourages organizations to improve efficiency and sustainability.

Key Updates to ISO 20121:2024

- Aligned text and clauses with standardized management systems.
- Enhanced focus on climate impact and organizational context.
- Broader issues like human rights and social impacts.
- Expanded stakeholder engagement including sponsors.
- Commitments to reporting achievements and sustainability in supply chains.



Mechanisms of Implementing Sustainable Event Practices

The ISO 20121 standard operates on a management systems approach, incorporating the **Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)** cycle to ensure continuous improvement.

- **Planning:** Establishing objectives and processes to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- **Doing:** Implementing the processes as planned.
- **Checking:** Monitoring and measuring processes against policies, objectives, and legal requirements.
- **Acting:** Taking actions to continually improve sustainability performance.

Identifying the Beneficiaries of Sustainable Event Management

ISO 20121 is designed for any organization involved in the event industry, from small firms to large enterprises, including:

- Event organizers
- Event management companies
- Suppliers and vendors
- Venues
- Clients seeking sustainable event solutions





Sustainable Event Certification: Steps to Attaining Certification for Sustainable Event Management

Achieving ISO 20121 certification involves several key steps, ensuring your event management practices meet global sustainability standards.

1. **Gap Analysis:** Assessing current practices against ISO 20121 requirements.
2. **Planning:** Developing a plan to address gaps and integrate sustainable practices.
3. **Implementation:** Rolling out the plan across the organization and its activities.
4. **Evaluation:** Conducting internal audits and reviews.
5. **Certification:** Undergoing an audit by **Gabriel Registrar**

ISO 20121:2024 provides a robust framework for sustainable event management. It is designed to ensure occasions ranging from COP climate conferences to sporting fixtures are conducted with a consideration for sustainability at every step to

ensure negative impacts are minimized and positive impacts are maximized. Revisions to the standard have been made to address emerging issues on climate change, legacy, supply chain measures and human and child rights areas. These include:

- An increased focus on the supply chain demonstrating sustainability.
- Requirements to consider the impact of specific issues including climate change when considering the context of the organization.
- An extended list of issues which can be identified and evaluated including human and child rights and social impacts.
- Additional examples of interested parties to be engaged with, including partners and sponsors.
- New commitments including reporting on achievements, lessons learnt and, where appropriate, legacy.

Its role as the National Standards Body, has published these revisions to reflect the evolving development and importance of key considerations such as reducing carbon emissions, promoting fair labour practices, and ensuring ethical sourcing throughout the supply chain. The updated standard, which includes hybrid and virtual events, also aligns with global sustainability frameworks, goals & reporting standards such as the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals.



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