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Event sustainability management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

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National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of ISO 20121:2012.
It supersedes BS 8901:2009, which will be withdrawn on 15 December 2012.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to SDS/1/-/2, Sustainable events by Technical Committee SDS/1, Sustainable development co-ordination committee.

A list of organizations represented on these committees can be obtained on request to its secretary.

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 20121

First edition
2012-06-15

Event sustainability management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

Systèmes de management responsable appliqués à l'activité événementielle — Exigences et recommandations de mise en œuvre

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ISO copyright office
Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 20121 was prepared by Project Committee ISO/PC 250, *Sustainability in event management*.

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Introduction

Events are sometimes, by their nature, high profile and transient, with both positive and negative social, economic and environmental impacts. This International Standard has been drafted to help organizations and individuals improve the sustainability of their event-related activities.

This International Standard specifies the requirements of an event sustainability management system to improve the sustainability of events. It is applicable to all types and sizes of organizations involved in the design and delivery of events and accommodates diverse geographical, cultural and social conditions. At the same time it requires organizations to recognize their relationship with and impact on society and society's expectations of events.

A management system standard challenges an organization to improve its process and thinking to lead to continual performance improvement and allows the organization the flexibility to be more creative about the delivery of event-related activities without detracting from the aim of the event. A management system standard is not a checklist or a reporting framework or a method of evaluating event sustainability performance.

This International Standard is intended to be applied flexibly and will allow organizations that have not formally addressed sustainable development to start to implement an event sustainability management system. Organizations with existing management systems will be able to integrate the requirements of this International Standard into their existing systems. All organizations will benefit from the process of continual improvement over time.

The complexity of the system and the extent of documentation and the resources devoted to it will be proportional to its defined scope, the size of the organization and the nature of the organization's activities, products and services. This is particularly the case for small and medium sized enterprises.

The success of the system depends on commitment from all levels and functions, especially from top management. In addition, in order for such a management system to be successful, it needs to be flexible and integrated within the event management process and not just regarded as a component to be added on. For maximum effectiveness, its influence needs to extend throughout the supply chain, as well as the identified stakeholders. Figure 1 provides an overview of the event sustainability management system model for this International Standard.

This International Standard can be used to prove compliance, as detailed in the Scope.

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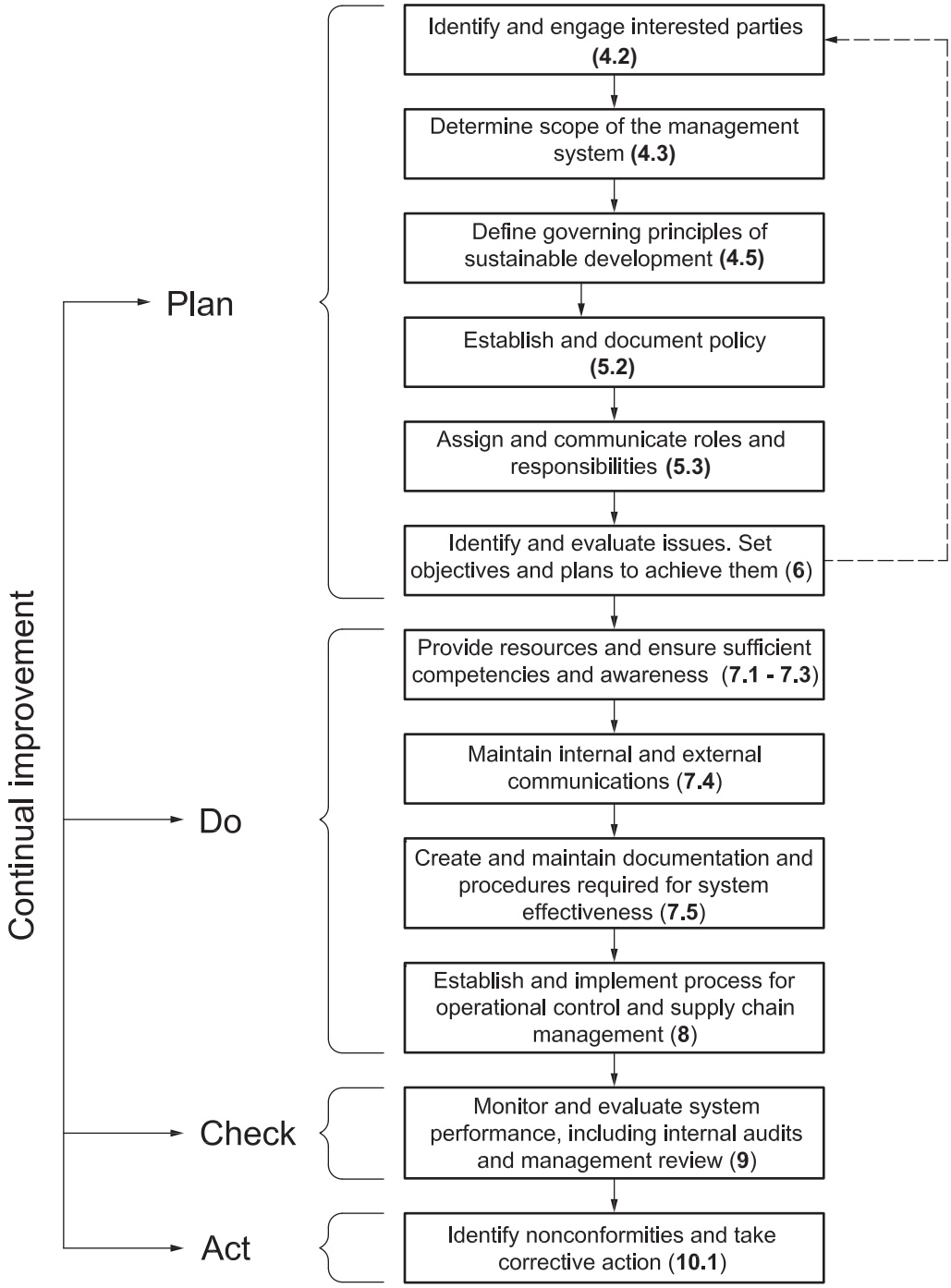

Figure 1 — Event sustainability management system model for this International Standard

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ISO 20121:2012(E)

Event sustainability management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

1 Scope

This International Standard 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.

This International Standard is applicable 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;

— demonstrate voluntary conformity with this International Standard by

  — first party (self-determination and self-declaration),

  — second party (confirmation of conformance by parties having an interest in the organization, such as clients, or by other persons on their behalf), or

  — an independent third party (e.g. a certification body).

This International Standard has been designed to address the management of improved sustainability throughout the entire event management cycle.

Additional guidance and information is provided in the annexes to support its implementation.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1
organization
person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its **objectives** (3.6)

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

Note 2 to entry: For organizations with more than one operating unit, a single operating unit may be defined as an organization.

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3.2
sustainability
degree of **sustainable development** (3.3) in the context of the **organization** (3.1) or **event** (3.8)

3.3
sustainable development
development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The process provides an enduring, balanced approach to economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainable development is about integrating the goals of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with social justice and maintaining the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. These social, economic and environmental goals are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Sustainable development can be treated as a way of expressing the broader expectations of society as a whole.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.23, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.4
risk
effect of uncertainty

Note 1 to entry: An effect is a deviation from the expected — positive or negative.

Note 2 to entry: Uncertainty is the state, even partial, of deficiency of information related to, understanding or knowledge of, an event, its consequence, or likelihood.

Note 3 to entry: Risk is often characterized by reference to potential “events” (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.5.1.3) and “consequences” (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.3), or a combination of events and consequences.

Note 4 to entry: Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated “likelihood” (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.1) of occurrence.

Note 5 to entry: In Notes 3 and 4 to entry, the term “event” does not refer to the term “event” as defined in 3.8.

3.5
policy
intentions and direction of an **organization** (3.1) as formally expressed by its **top management** (3.25)

3.6
objective
result to be achieved

Note 1 to entry: An objective can be strategic, tactical, or operational.

Note 2 to entry: Objectives can relate to different disciplines (such as financial, health and safety, and environmental goals) and can apply at different levels [such as strategic, organization-wide, project, product and **process** (3.27)]. An objective can be expressed in other ways, e.g. as an intended outcome, a purpose, an operational criterion, as an event sustainability objective or by the use of other words with similar meaning (e.g. aim, goal, or target).

Note 3 to entry: An objective can be expressed in other ways, e.g. as an intended outcome, a purpose, an operational criterion, as an event sustainability objective or by the use of other words with similar meaning (e.g. aim, goal, or target).

Note 4 to entry: In the context of event sustainability management systems standards, event sustainability objectives are set by the organization, consistent with the event sustainability policy, to achieve specific results.

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3.7
target
detailed performance requirement, applicable to the organization, that arises from the **objectives** (3.6) and that needs to be set and met in order to achieve those objectives

Note 1 to entry: Targets may apply to an organization's activities, products or services. They may also apply to **events** (3.8) in whole or in part.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2004, 3.12, modified — Term has been shortened from “environmental target”; Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.8
event
planned gathering with respect to time and a place where an experience is created and/or a message is communicated

3.9
event management cycle
stages and activities of an **event** (3.8) (including products and services involved), from research, conception and planning through to implementation, review and post-event activities

3.10
event organizer
entity that produces and/or manages all or some aspects of an **event** (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: An event organizer can be a company, a body or an **organization** (3.1).

Note 2 to entry: The event organizer is not necessarily the **event owner** (3.11).

3.11
event owner
entity that commissions the **event** (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this International Standard, the event owner could be the **event organizer** (3.10).

3.12
end user
user taking the role of consumer

EXAMPLE Being at the end of a value or delivery chain.

3.13
attendee
organization and/or individual that takes part in an **event** (3.8) for the primary purpose of receiving services or content

3.14
participant
organization (3.1) and/or individual that takes an active part in the contents of an **event** (3.8)

3.15
accessibility
usability of a product, service, environment or facility by people with the widest range of capabilities

Note 1 to entry: This definition is related to the fundamental principle of universal accessibility in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[13], which outlines the requirements to be fulfilled by environments, processes, goods, products and services, objects, instruments, tools and devices in order to be understandable, usable and viable for all people in safe and comfortable conditions, and as independently and naturally as possible.

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Note 2 to entry: This definition also refers to ISO 26800, which states the extent to which products, systems, services, environments and facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of characteristics and capabilities to achieve a specified goal in a specified context of use.

3.16
interested party
stakeholder
person or **organization** (3.1) that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity

Note 1 to entry: This can be an individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization.

3.17
inclusivity
practice of fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all **interested parties** (3.16)

Note 1 to entry: Inclusivity refers to all interested parties, regardless of race, age, gender, colour, religion, sexual orientation, culture, national origin, income, disability (mental, intellectual, sensorial and physical) or any other form of discrimination.

3.18
integrity
adherence to ethical principles

Note 1 to entry: Behaviour that is in accordance with accepted principles of right or good conduct in the context of a particular situation and is consistent with international norms of behaviour.

3.19
legacy
resulting remains of an **event** (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: Legacy includes the enduring physical, economic, social and environmental impacts of an event or events.

Note 2 to entry: Legacy also includes non-material elements, including new capacities acquired as a consequence of events, e.g. new knowledge, training, standards, best practices, skills, **organizations** (3.1), systems, relationships, partnerships and innovations.

3.20
stewardship
responsibility for **sustainable development** (3.3) shared by all those whose actions affect environmental performance, economic activity, and social progress, reflected as both a value and a practice by individuals, **organizations** (3.1), communities, and competent authorities

3.21
transparency
openness about decisions and activities that affect society, the economy and the environment, and willingness to communicate these in clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete manner

Note 1 to entry: Transparency also includes openness about the outcomes of decisions and activities.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.24, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.22
supplier
organization (3.1) providing products, services or facilities

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3.23
supply chain
sequence of activities or parties that provides products or services to the **organization** (3.1)

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.22, modified — Note has been deleted.]

3.24
management system
set of interrelated or interacting elements of an **organization** (3.1) to establish **policies** (3.5) and **objectives** (3.6) and **processes** (3.27) to achieve those objectives

Note 1 to entry: A management system can address a single discipline or several disciplines.

Note 2 to entry: The system elements include the organization's structure, roles and responsibilities, planning, operation, etc.

Note 3 to entry: The scope of a management system may include the whole of the organization, specific and identified functions of the organization, specific and identified sections of the organization, or one or more functions across a group of organizations.

3.25
top management
person or group of people who directs and controls an **organization** (3.1) at the highest level

Note 1 to entry: Top management has the power to delegate authority and provide resources within the organization.

Note 2 to entry: If the scope of the **management system** (3.24) covers only part of an organization then top management refers to those who direct and control that part of the organization.

3.26
requirement
need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory

Note 1 to entry: “Generally implied” means that it is customary or common practice for the organization and interested parties that the need or expectation under consideration is implied.

Note 2 to entry: A specified requirement is one that is stated, for example in documented information.

3.27
process
set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs

3.28
procedure
specified way to carry out an activity or a **process** (3.27)

Note 1 to entry: A procedure may not always be formally documented.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2005, 3.4.5, modified — Note 1 to entry has replaced the two original notes.]

3.29
best practice
documented process or product developed by the user community, consisting of suppliers and customers, teaming for the purpose of establishing industry guidelines

[SOURCE: ISO 14621-1:2003, 2.1.1]

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3.30
competence
ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results

3.31
documented information
information required to be controlled and maintained by an **organization** (3.1) and the medium on which it is contained

Note 1 to entry: Documented information can be in any format and media and from any source.

Note 2 to entry: Documented information can refer to

— the **management system** (3.24), including related **processes** (3.27)

— information created in order for the organization to operate (documentation);

— evidence of results achieved (records).

3.32
performance
measurable result

Note 1 to entry: Performance can relate either to quantitative or qualitative findings.

Note 2 to entry: Performance can relate to the management of activities, **processes** (3.27), products (including services), systems or **organizations** (3.1).

3.33
outsource (verb)
make an arrangement where an external **organization** (3.1) performs part of an organization's function or **process** (3.27)

Note 1 to entry: An external organization is outside the scope of the **management system** (3.24), although the outsourced function or process is within the scope.

3.34
monitoring
determining the status of a system, a **process** (3.27) or an activity

Note 1 to entry: To determine the status, there may be a need to check, supervise or critically observe.

3.35
measurement
process (3.27) to determine a value

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this International Standard, “value” may be taken to mean numerical or ethical values.

3.36
audit
systematic, independent and documented **process** (3.27) for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled

Note 1 to entry: An audit can be an internal audit (first party) or an external audit (second party or third party), and it can be a combined audit (combining two or more disciplines).

Note 2 to entry: “Audit evidence” and “audit criteria” are defined in ISO 19011.

3.37
effectiveness
extent to which planned activities are realized and planned results achieved

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3.38
conformity
fulfilment of a **requirement** (3.26)

3.39
nonconformity
non-fulfilment of a **requirement** (3.26)

3.40
corrective action
action to eliminate the cause of a **nonconformity** (3.39) and to prevent recurrence

Note 1 to entry: In the case of other undesirable outcomes, action is necessary to minimize or eliminate the causes and to reduce the impact or prevent recurrence. Such actions fall outside the concept of "corrective action" in the sense of this definition.

3.41
continual improvement
recurring activity to enhance **performance** (3.32)

3.42
context
environment in which the **organization** (3.1) seeks to achieve its **objectives** (3.6)

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.2, modified]

Note 1 to entry: Context can be external or internal. See Clause A.3.

3.43
preventive action
action to eliminate the cause of a potential **nonconformity** (3.39)

3.44
impact
positive or negative change to society, economy or the environment, wholly or partially resulting from past and present decisions and activities

4 Context of the organization

4.1 Understanding of the organization and its context

The organization shall determine external and internal issues that are relevant to its purpose and that affect its ability to achieve the intended outcome(s) of its event sustainability management system.

NOTE 1 The term "issue" in this subclause is synonymous with "context" as defined in 3.42.

NOTE 2 The organization is as outlined in 4.3 and 4.4.

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

The organization shall determine:

— the interested parties that are relevant to the event sustainability management system;

— the requirements of these interested parties (i.e. their needs and expectations whether stated, implied or obligatory).

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The organization shall establish, implement and maintain a procedure for the identification of and engagement with interested parties on the identified and emerging sustainable development issues relating to its role in the value chain of events. The organization shall document the outputs from its engagement with interested parties.

The identification of interested parties shall, where applicable, encompass the following:

a) event organizer;

b) event owner;

c) workforce;

d) supply chain;

e) participants;

f) attendees;

g) regulatory bodies;

h) community.

4.3 Determining the scope of the event sustainability management system

The organization shall determine the boundaries and applicability of the event sustainability management system to establish its scope.

When determining this scope, the organization shall consider

— the external and internal issues referred to in 4.1, and

— the requirements referred to in 4.2.

The scope shall be available as documented information.

4.4 Event sustainability management system

The organization shall establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an event sustainability management system, including the processes needed and their interactions, in accordance with the requirements of this International Standard.

4.5 Sustainable development principles, statement of purpose and values

The organization shall define its 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. The organization shall define and document its primary purpose and values with respect to its activities, products and services that relate specifically to events.

The principles, purpose and values of the organization shall provide a framework for setting its policies, objectives and targets, as defined within the scope of its event sustainability management system.

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5 Leadership

5.1 Leadership and commitment

Top management shall demonstrate leadership and commitment with respect to the event sustainability management system by:

— ensuring that policies and objectives are established for the event sustainability management system and are compatible with the strategic direction of the organization;

— ensuring the integration of the event sustainability management system requirements into the organization's business processes;

— ensuring that the resources needed for the event sustainability management system are available;

— communicating the importance of effective event sustainability management and conforming to the event sustainability management system requirements;

— ensuring that the event sustainability management system achieves its intended outcome(s);

— directing and supporting persons to contribute to the effectiveness of the event sustainability management system;

— promoting continual improvement;

— supporting other relevant management roles to demonstrate their leadership as it applies to their areas of responsibility.

NOTE Reference to “business” in this International Standard is intended to be interpreted broadly to mean those activities that are core to the purposes of the organization's existence.

5.2 Policy

5.2.1 Top management shall establish a sustainable development policy that:

a) is appropriate to the purpose of the organization;

b) provides a framework for setting sustainable development objectives;

c) includes a commitment to satisfy applicable requirements;

d) includes a commitment to continual improvement of the event sustainability management system.

The sustainable development policy shall:

— be available as documented information;

— be communicated within the organization;

— be available to interested parties, as appropriate;

— include a commitment to leadership within the field of event sustainability management;

— reference its statement of purpose and values;

— include the organization's commitment to its governing sustainable development principles within its defined scope.

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