



When Recognition Matters



THREE REASONS
WHY ISO 20121
IS A MUST

Sustainability event planning can be a complicated and challenging process. It is an approach that reduces the environmental impact, while trying to maintain equilibrium between the social, economic and financial point of view. Ensuring that you have reached the required level of all the three matters, a detailed implementation of ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Standard can be done, which provides step by step planning of each event regardless its size. There are many benefits that this management system will provide to your business, starting from increased income to environmental innovation.

It has been proven that every time a large number of people gather at an event, the possibility of a negative impact arises on the environment. Over a certain period of time, we have realized that our environment is deteriorating, and that we need to take proper actions to protect it, sadly protecting it from ourselves. Karma's principle "As you sow, so shall you reap" is also known as THE GREAT LAW or the "Law of Cause and Effect", meaning that the actions or deeds of a person repay in kind.

Knowing that our decisions and actions and their consequences will impact the people around us in the current or future generation, can change the state where we are in. We can apply SUSTAINABILITY in our decisions to meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In our own ways whenever we make a choice, let's ask ourselves two questions: "What are the consequences of this choice that we're making?" and "Will this choice bring us fulfillment and will the other parties be affected by this choice?"

Organizing an event can be a complicated process; from establishing your event goals and objectives, to the small details of the printing decisions, medium of the invitation, the type and color of the flowers, the souvenirs, etc. Now, imagine a massive event such as the Olympic Games. The enormous number of the visitors will leave an irreversible mark on their surroundings. Participants will consume natural resources such as materials, energy and water, generate waste, and create pollution. These effects make it clear that a sustainability planning is a priority above everything else and that it will not only minimize negative impacts, but also influence a change and leave a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved.

Sustainability event planning cannot only be viewed as an environmental subject, but also as a social, economic and financial matter. We are looking at increasing positive and decreasing negative impact such as facilitating economic benefit, reducing environmental footprints, and managing issues in consideration of the society human rights from the most privileged to the less privileged, across races, educations, and even gender sensitivities. So, basically sustainability is an approach that reduces the environmental impact, while trying to maintain equilibrium between the three principles. It runs well in the goal of sustainability of managing the events hoping for a positive holistic impact of events to give the event the best credibility possible.



HOW CAN ISO 20121 HELP?

Over the last couple of years, sustainability of events has gained a lot of attention. There is a need to measure the event outcomes and certify them, which has the market responding by developing a series of “green/sustainable event” labels and certifications.

ISO 20121 Event sustainability management systems is a comprehensive and systematic approach to embedding sustainability into the event planning cycle. This standard requires organizations to understand and manage sustainable development issues. However, it does not certify the event, but the management system of the organizations that sets up the event.

ISO 20121 is suitable for all sizes and types of events, no matter if the event is a concert with 100 fans or FIFA World Cup with millions of people. It includes guidance on operational planning and controlling, stakeholders’ engagement, and supply chain management.

With our event sustainability experience, we had to take into consideration the economic impact to the local community of the supply chain for the management of the events. Considerations along the benefit of reducing environmental footprint for managing the movement of logistics such as avoidance of air freight and use of local facilities along with balancing the impact that it may have socially, such as the perception of the international community and the effectiveness and reliability of the local logistics. Likewise, the cultural differences on food preferences, protection for biodiversity, including provisions for persons with disabilities have to be taken into consideration.

Agreeably then, Event Sustainability as a management system takes an integrated approach about the various stakeholder needs in and around the management of such events.

THE BENEFITS OF ISO 20121

Many organizations think that event sustainability planning has exclusively to do with the companies that provide event planning and support. Planning and organizing an event is difficult enough as it is, so why bother with the sustainable problem? Well, if you don’t care about the environment as much, you probably care about your business. The planning, staging and holding of events is a billion dollar industry.

Sustainability should be integrated with your CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) where CSR takes care of the impact of our current actions; event sustainability can set the perspective on the emerging concerns in the context of leaving a legacy, and it includes benefits such as:

- /// **Financial profit** - Applying sustainability principles, conserving energy, reducing waste, and purchasing local products among others can result in money saved. More efficient use of resources and easier access to credit lines and sponsors has a long term financial benefit. It will also create jobs and encourage investments involving Small and Medium Enterprises.
- /// **Positive reputation** - Promoting the fact that you are organizing or hosting a sustainable event will give off a positive image to clients locally and globally. It will appeal to potential consumers, and attract participants that are becoming increasingly aware of sustainability issues.
- /// **Environmental innovation** - When organizing a sustainable event, you demand for more sustainable products. This promotes innovative technologies and techniques that will help you use your resources more efficiently and increase your experience.



So, the next time you plan your own party or a corporate event think of the impact of your choices and actions. We can have a system that increases our goal achievement while reducing the negative effects as well along the process. We all are responsible for the sustainability consequences of our every action.

Let's all aspire that for any event that we become more socially responsible reduce its environmental footprint while achieving its objectives such as its economic impact.

PECB is continuously active in assisting organizations worldwide and society as a whole to achieve best practice using standards to provide structure and focus on training and development programs. PECB offers Training and Certification services for ISO 20121:2012, Event sustainability management systems – Requirements with guidance for us, which ensures that organizations will not only improve their event organization performance, but also have an international impact and independently validate their commitment to their employees through certification. For further information, please visit [ISO 20121 training courses](#).

AUTHORS:

Suzana Ajeti is an Account Manager for Health, Safety & Environment at PECB. She is in charge of conducting market research while developing and providing information related to HSE standards. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact: marketing.hse@pecb.com.

Mary Anne Concio a pioneer and authority for management systems consulting and training is the FOUNDER and CEO for the Powerhouse Development and Coaching Academy Inc. She has gained certifications as a Master on ISO 9001, ISO/TS 16949, Lean Master, Lean Sigma MBB, Six Sigma BB, Certified Lead Risk Manager and a Lead auditor for a host of various management systems. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact her: maryanne.concio@powerhouse-academy.com.