ISO 20121: Sustainable Events

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

OUR PURPOSE

IS TO HELP CUSTOMERS DELIVER PRODUCTS THE WORLD CAN **TRUST**

NQA is a **world leading Certification and Verification body** with **global operations.**

NQA specialises in Certification and Verification in **construction, high technology and engineering sectors**.

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LONDON

BOSTON

SHANGHAI

BANGALORE

AMERICA'S NO.1
Certification body in **Aerospace** sector

TOP 3 IN THE UK
ISO 20121, ISO 14064-1, PAS 2060 / ISO 14068-1, PAS 2080, ISO 26000, ISO 9001, ISO 14001,ISO 45001, ISO 27001, ISO 50001 etc

CHINA'S NO.1
Certification body in **Automotive** sector

GLOBAL NO.1
Certification body in **telecommunications** and **Automotive** sector

GLOBAL NO.3
Certification body in **Aerospace** sector

UK'S NO.2
Certification body in **Aerospace** sector

INTRODUCTION TO STEPHEN BURT

Stephen Burt

Carbon & Sustainability Services Director

- Over 25 years' experience in carbon, energy and environmental management
- 15 years at NQA
- Extensive events management experience
- Chartered Environmentalist; BSc; MSc; PhD (net zero related, in progress)
- Lead GHG Verifier (ISO 14064-1, ISO 14068-1, PAS 2060, PAS 2080)
- Lead Auditor (ISO 20121, ISO 14001, ISO 50001, ISO 9001, ISO 45001)
- Member of SES/1/1 and SES/1/7, developing ISO standards for GHG and environmental schemes

Background to Event Sustainability

Fun Facts……

- The direct value of the events industry was £61.65 billion to the UK economy in 2023 (UKEvents Report 2024).

- The UK received 1.5m inbound business event visitors in 2023, spending £1.7bn: 38% more per trip than the average inbound visitor
  - On average, delegates from outside Europe spent £1,748; £990 for delegates from within Europe; £329 for UK delegates
  - Among those who extended their trip for leisure, the average spent £1,942. Without the extension they would have spent £991 on average
  - London, Edinburgh and Glasgow hosted the most meetings within the UK
  (International Passenger Survey, ONS)

- Influences on destination selection among global planners, showing that 'cost and value', 'safety and security', and 'equity and diversity' are most important for planners globally

- Sustainability and social impact is now becoming expected for venues

- The events industry can therefore have a very significant positive economic impact, but we need also to consider the negative impacts, in terms of economic, social and environmental considerations (sustainable development)

Background to Event Sustainability

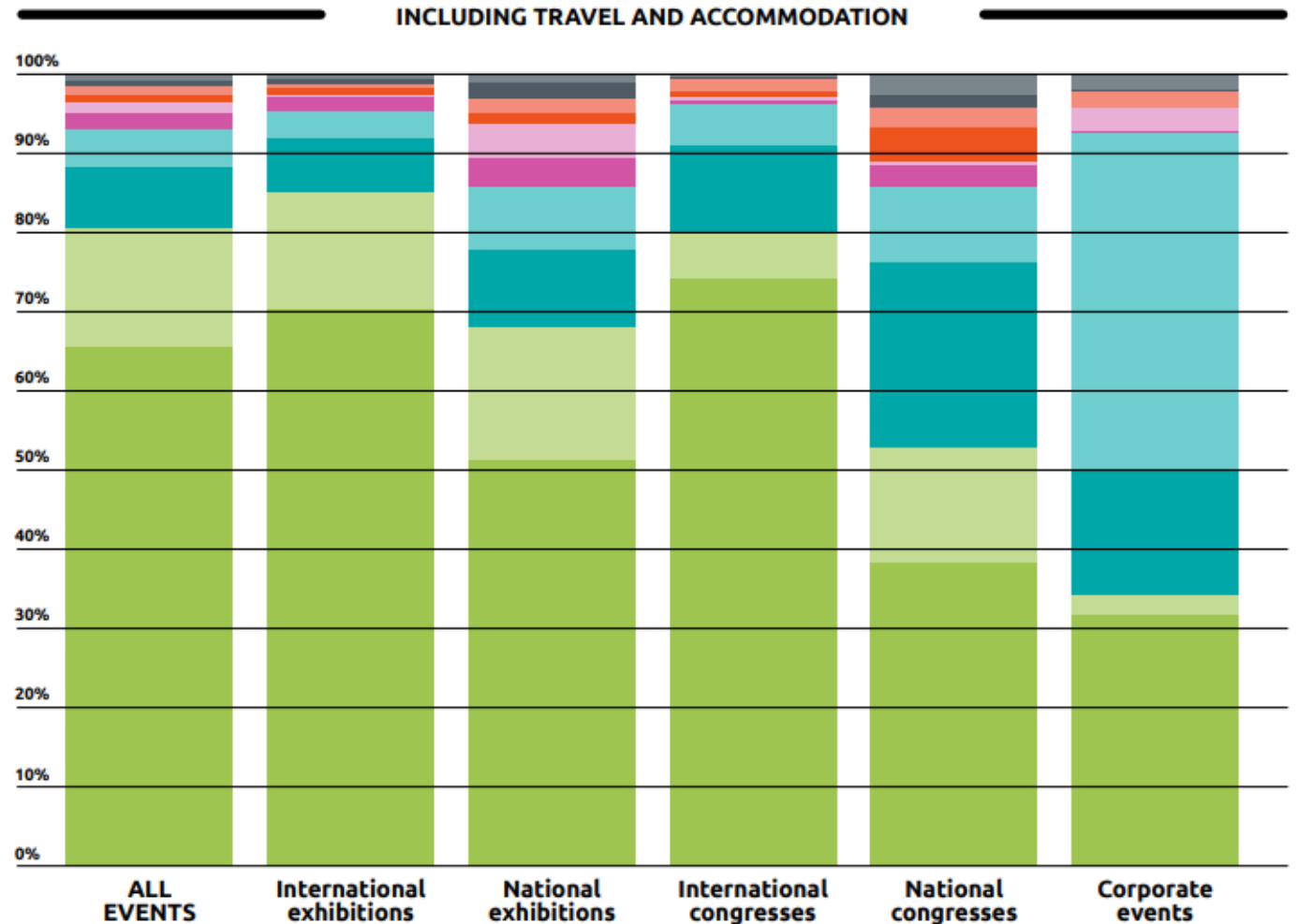**The events industry can have a significant impact in terms of sustainable development: ENVIRONMENTAL**

- A 2019 research study found that a three-day 800-person conference had a carbon footprint of 455 tCO_2e
- In context, NQA's UK & Ireland carbon footprint in 2023 was 367tCO_2e

- This may be made up of:
    - Delegate travel
    - Freight travel
    - Waste, including food
    - Space design and production (stands, AV, energy consumption)
    - Accommodation
    - Communications and marketing materials
    - Water use
    - Food and drink
    - Merch / freebies: a $64 billion industry comprising water bottles, stress balls, branded socks, screen cleaners, sleep masks, yoga mats etc.

Background to Event Sustainability

The events industry can have a significant impact in terms of sustainable development: ENVIRONMENTAL

Legend:
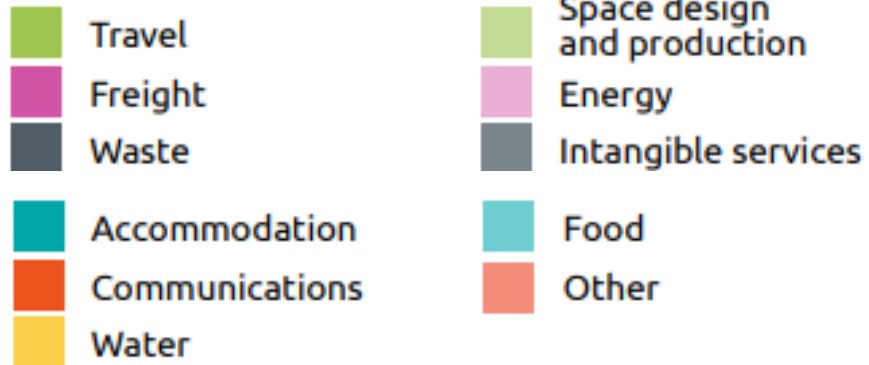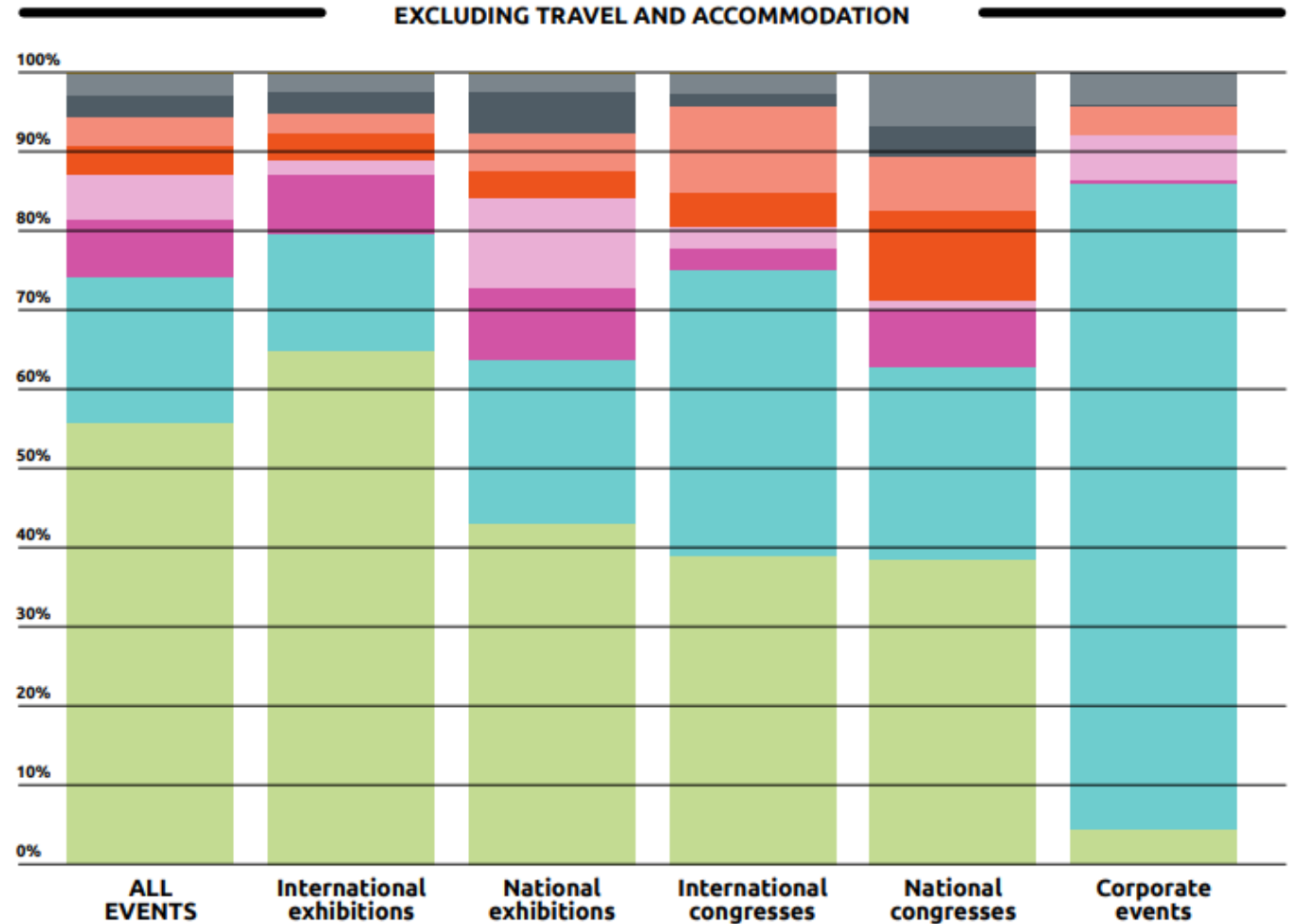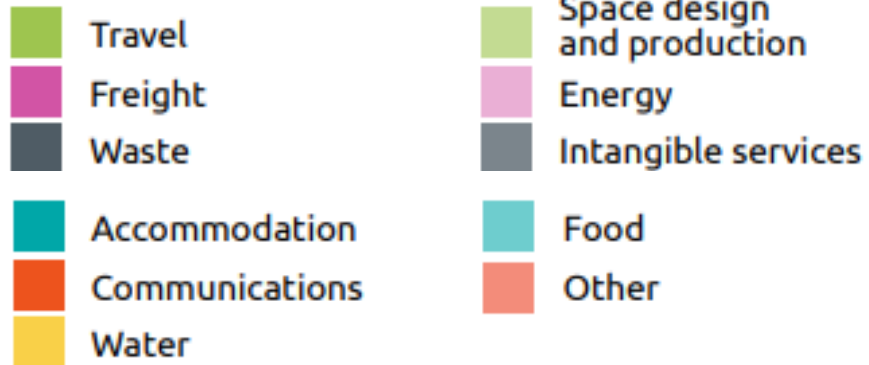- Travel
- Freight
- Waste
- Accommodation
- Communications
- Water
- Space design and production
- Energy
- Intangible services
- Food
- Other

INCLUDING TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Categories (x-axis): ALL EVENTS, International exhibitions, National exhibitions, International congresses, National congresses, Corporate events

Figure 1.1.3 The Carbon Emissions of Events in France Source: Unimev

nqa.
NEVER STOP IMPROVING

Background to Event Sustainability

The events industry can have a significant impact in terms of sustainable development: ENVIRONMENTAL

Legend:
- Travel
- Freight
- Waste
- Accommodation
- Communications
- Water
- Space design and production
- Energy
- Intangible services
- Food
- Other

EXCLUDING TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Categories (x-axis): ALL EVENTS, International exhibitions, National exhibitions, International congresses, National congresses, Corporate events

Figure 1.1.4 The Carbon Emissions of Events in France Source: Unimev

Background to Event Sustainability

The events industry can have a significant impact in terms of sustainable development: <u>ENVIRONMENTAL</u>

- Biodiversity
- Banned chemicals, eg those contained in materials used by the event
- Food and beverages, eg local sourcing, minimised packaging, waste minimisation
- Materials choice
- Noise
- Pollution incidents
- Resource consumption
- Sustainability credentials of venues and accommodation
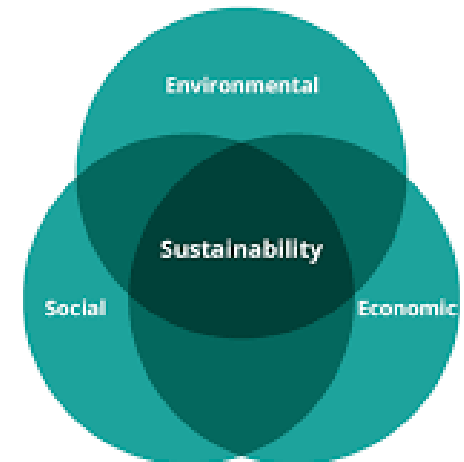- Transport and logistics
- Waste production
- Water use and sanitation

Background to Event Sustainability

The events industry can have a significant impact in terms of sustainable development: SOCIAL

- Accessibility
- Animal welfare
- Consumer / delegate choice, eg safety, information, freedom of choice, accessibility and usabilityImpacts of activities on communities, including entering, operating and exiting
- Discrimination and vulnerable groups
- Food and beverages, safety and hygiene
- Health & Safety
- Human rights, development and training in the workplace
- Illegal drugs and anti-doping
- International Labour Law issues, eg equal opportunity for a diverse workforce, rights to exercise freedom of association and collective bargaining, use of abusive labour practices
- Noise
- Security policies and processes
- Sourcing and procurement of products and services
- Sustainability credentials of venues and accommodation

Background to Event Sustainability

The events industry can have a significant impact in terms of sustainable development: ECONOMIC

- Anti-competitive behaviour, anti-trust and monopoly practices
- Anti-corruption, gifts and gratuities policies and processes
- Activities at significant risk of not providing factual and unbiased information and fair contractual practices
- Economic value generated and distributed
- Indirect economic impacts, eg the development of infrastructure and employment opportunities,
- Practices in relation to spending on locally-based suppliers and local hiring
- Sustainability credentials of venues and accommodation

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

## KEY CHANGES (2012 VS 2024 VERSIONS)

Relatively minor overall. Significant changes include…...

- Need to consider the organisation's social, economic and environmental impact, including climate change, when planning

- Addition to a very useful table providing a list of potential interested parties (table A.1)

- Policy wording changes

- Additional, very useful possible environmental, social and economic issues to consider when identifying SD Issues (table C.1)

- Addition of a new clause: Planning of Changes

- Significant addition to the Supply Chain Management clause, providing for greater supply chain controls
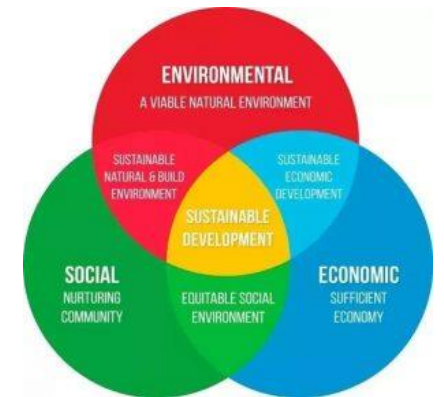
An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

PURPOSE OF ISO 20121

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

- Applicable for organisations of all types and sizes

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

- An event alone cannot claim conformance, 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

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

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

Examples of sustainable events and how to do it:

STATEMENT

When we first announced the Music Of The Spheres Tour in 2021, we pledged to reduce our direct carbon emissions (from show production, freight, band and crew travel) by at least 50%.

We're happy to report that direct CO2e emissions from the first two years of this tour are 59% less than our previous stadium tour (2016-17), on a show-by-show comparison. These figures have been verified by the MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative.

We'd like to say a huge thankyou to our incredible touring family and to all the brilliant people who've made this possible.

Most of all, we'd like to thank everyone who's come to a show and helped charge the show batteries on the arrived by foot, bike, ride share or public transport; everyone who's come with refillable water bottles or ret who's bought a ticket, which means you've planted one of 7 millior

As a band, and as an industry, we're a long way from where we need to be on this. But we're grateful for e making efforts to push things in the right direction.

With love

Coldplay

HIGHLIGHTS

Overall 59% reduction in direct CO2e emissions
compared to our previous tour (2016-17), on a show-by-show basis, across 2022 and 2023.

7 million trees planted
that will be supported to maturity via One Tree Planted - one for each concert goer. Approximately land restored across 24 countries and 48 planting projects

2 solar-powered The Ocean Cleanup River Interceptors deploy

86% = average return and re-use rate of LED wristbands

18 shows powered entirely using the tourable battery system in 2(
made from recycled BMW i3 batteries

23 partnerships with green travel providers
to help fans travel to shows via super-low carbon transport

17kWh average power per show
generated via in-venue solar installations, kinetic dance floors and power bikes - enough to power the band's C-stage performance each night

100% of shows
with free water refill stations for fans

Over 3,000 tCO2e saved
by purchasing Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) for flights

72% of all tour waste
diverted from landfill and sent for reuse, recycling and composting

9,625 meals + 90kg of toiletries donated
from tour catering to the unhoused and unsheltered

Financial support given to environmental organisations
including ClientEarth, The Ocean Cleanup, Climeworks, Project Seagrass, Sustainable Food Trust, Cleaner Seas Group, Food Forest Project, Knowledge Pele, Conservation Collective and others

33% reduction in freight impacts

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

Benefits of implementing ISO 20121 include:

- Easily adapted and integrated with other management systems standards (Annex SL)
- Identify cost savings through improved performance
- Transparency of performance
- Identify areas of risk and mitigate these
- Encourage continual improvement
- Achieve improved environmental, social and governance results
- Meet stakeholder expectations
- Brand enhancement

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)

In practice, sustainability management and 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 waste, energy, carbon, health, safety, discrimination, equality, accessibility, gender pay gaps, protected characteristics, etc)

- H&S controls during erection / dismantling / rigging works, H&S controls during the event

- Social and Governance controls, such as access, discrimination, labour standards, community considerations, noise, anti-bribery

- Improved communications with suppliers and delegates

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

In practice, sustainability management and improvement initiative for events may include:

- Improved supply chain management, eg:
    - Caterers (food sourcing, food waste, food options, food bank donations)
    - Venues (location, energy, carbon, transport)
    - Materials: carpets / stand shells / banners / graphics / digital vs printed / delegate apps / name badges (alternative / recyclable / reusable materials)
    - Transport: delegate travel, lighter materials such as stand shells, improved logistics for transport of materials, alternative fuels
    - Accommodation: hotel selection
    - Waste management / minimisation
    - Merchandise sourcing (or not….)
    - Health, safety and security: electrics, power supplies, security, AV / PA suppliers, security teams, delegate assistance teams, welfare arrangements

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

ISO 20121 Framework
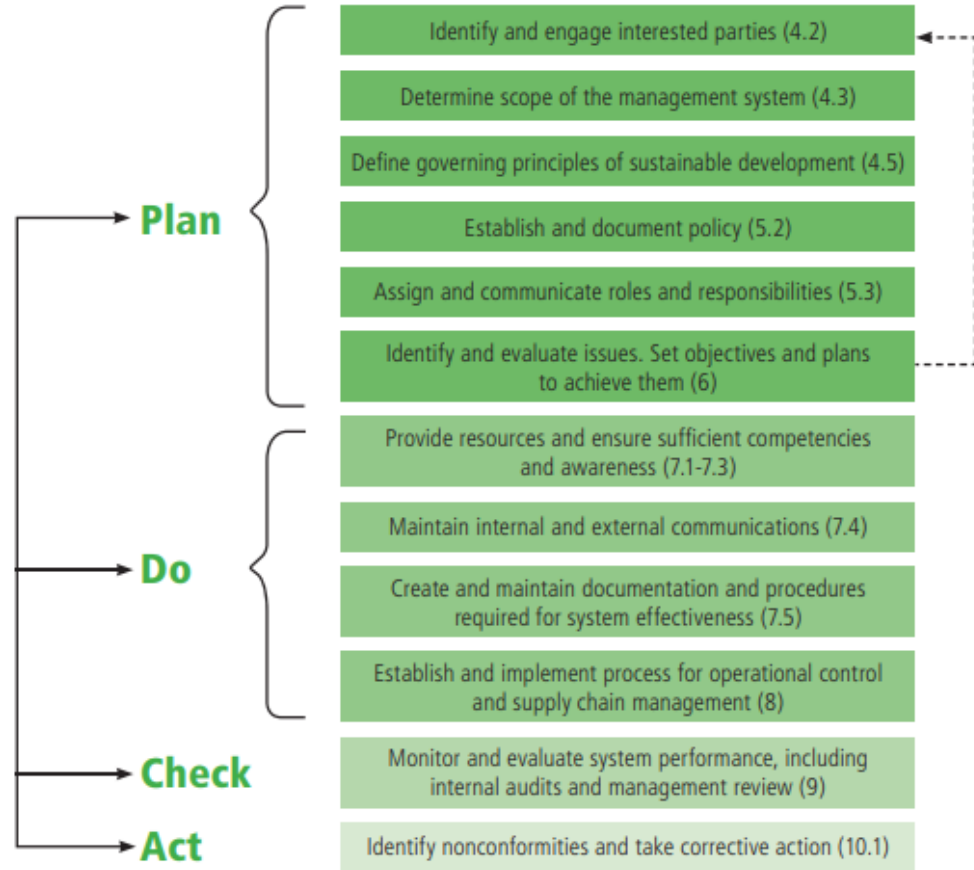
An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

CLAUSES 1 to 3

1 Scope (of the standard)

2 Normative references (none)

3 Terms and definitions

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 (table A.1)

4.3 Determining the scope of the event sustainability management system

4.4 Event sustainability management system

4.5 Sustainable development principles and mission statement (integration of stewardship, inclusivity, integrity and transparency into a Mission Statement – **table A.2)**

Context of Organization

Issues | **Interested Parties**

Internal Issues | External Issues | Customers | Suppliers | Regulatory

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Table A.1 — List of interested parties

Interested party	Role
Top management	Person or entity that has final responsibility for decision making.
Event manager	Person or entity that produces and/or manages all or some aspects of the event. The event manager is not necessarily the owner of the event.
Land or site owner	Individual, community or other entities that hold ownership of a property or land.
Partner and/or sponsor	Organization or individual that funds the event or provides products or services in place of funding.
Funder and/or investor	Organization or individual that funds the event, in agreement to the intentions of such event.
Workforce	Body of people working for the organization or event.
Employee	Person who is paid to work for an event.
Staff	Perso
Volunteer	Perso
Migrant workers	Perso... which... ment
Supply chain	Seque... to the
Supplier	Entity
Venue	Site w
Emergency services	Instit... event
Participants	Orga... of an
Attendee	Orga... mary
Regulatory body	Orga... and/c
Central government	Gove
Local authority (e.g. state, prefecture, city)	Orga
Community	Grou... terist
Local community	Those
Children	Indiv... ed pa
Indigenous peoples	Tradi... of loc
Sector interest organization (trade/industry bodies)	Indus
Relevant non-governmental organization	Non-... to the
Media	Orga... the p

Table A.2 — Governing principles of sustainable development relating to event management

Principles	Questions
Inclusion	How to identify those who could affect or be affected (interested parties) by decisions and actions?
	How do interested parties contribute their views, and how do they do so on a continual basis?
	How to help interested parties understand the reasons for the organization's decisions and the implications of its actions?
	How to be sure that no groups or individuals are disadvantaged or kept uninformed?
	Are there interests beyond the immediate interested parties that should be considered?
	How to take into account the interested parties' rights and interests?
	How are diversity, equity and inclusion encouraged and developed?
	Have equity deserving groups been identified?
	How is discrimination avoided?
	How will accommodations for people with disabilities be implemented as a standard practice?
Integrity	What values, principles and codes of ethics or integrity does the organization adhere to?
	How to identify, avoid, address, report and remedy negative impacts related to the activities and relationships?
	Examples can include, non-exclusively (see 6.1.2):
	— environmental and social impacts such as biodiversity destruction, pollution, traffic congestion, resettlement of local people, water access, suppression of human rights, crime;
	— economic and governance impacts, such as misuse of power, misuse of funds, lack of transparency, unregulated betting, bribery, corruption, complicity, conflicts of interest, cost of unused facilities once the event is over.
	How does the organization establish and manage the procedure to ensure it is compliant with all relevant laws and regulations?
	How to demonstrate accountability for action(s) in a way that is consistent with all other governing principles?
	How to ensure information security and data protection?
Stewardship	Will organizational decisions lead to significant environmental (including biodiversity) or societal change or loss? If so, have alternatives been evaluated?
	In any activity, will the use of resources and its consequential impact be considered and monitored?
	How are sustainable development management skills developed, shared, applied and recognized?
	How to account for decisions and activities in situations where the rule of law does not provide sufficient environmental, social and economic safeguards?
	How is top management informed of and involved in risk assessment and due diligence procedures?[a]
	How to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are applied throughout the supply chain?
Transparency	How to ensure that relevant and reliable information is available in an accessible, low-cost and comparable way?
	How are reasonable views or requests for further information considered and responded to in a timely manner?
	How are significant interests, influences or beneficiaries detailed in documented information, communicated and managed?
	How are decision makers identified and the reasons for decisions detailed in documented information and communicated, and to whom?
	How to ensure that information is accurately conveyed to interested parties?

[a] Due diligence refers to the process through which an organization identifies, prevents, mitigates, and accounts for how it addresses its actual and potential negative impacts on the economy, environment, and people, including impacts on human rights.

CLAUSE 5

5 Leadership

5.1 Leadership and Commitment

5.2 Policy (establish a Sustainable Development Policy)

5.3 Roles, responsibilities and authorities

COMMITTED, COMPETENT LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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 (**table C.1**)
- Also, to identify and plan for relevant legal and other requirements

6.2 Event sustainability objectives and planning to achieve them

Table C.1 — List of issues for organizations to consider in fulfilling issue identification and evaluation

Issue	Description and comments
Accessibility	Accessibility issues associated in the context of location, facilities, event content, services provided including marketing and communications, etc.
Accommodation	Location and sustainability credentials of accommodation.
Animal welfare	Activities at significant risk of impacting on animals/wildlife.
Anti-competitive behaviour	Activities at significant risk of anti-competitive behaviour, anti-trust and monopoly practices.
Bribery and corruption	Anti-corruption, gifts and gratuities policies and processes.
Communication	Activities at significant risk of not providing factual and unbiased information and fair contractual practices.
Local community	Impacts of activities on communities, including entering, operating and exiting.
Labour standards	Processes for interested parties to communicate complaints and grievances to be detailed in documented information and responded to.
Conditions of work and social protection	Activities at significant risk of breaching terms and conditions in International Labour Law, of not providing equal opportunity for a diverse workforce (i.e. gender, age, ethnicity, disability and other indicators of diversity), of not respecting rights to exercise freedom of association and collective bargaining and of the use of abusive labour practices such as forced, compulsory or child labour concerning contracted labour, volunteers and the supply chain.
Consumer practices	Activities at significant risk of not fulfilling needs of consumers/attendants regarding safety, information, freedom of choice, accessibility and usability (universal design concept), unfair terms and conditions, availability of effective consumer redress and education on impacts of consumer choice. This could also include considering health and safety risks of minors including protection from exposure to alcohol and other drugs.
Discrimination and vulnerable groups	Activities at significant risk of discriminating, or breaching the rights of, vulnerable groups, for example, children and youth at risk, LGBTQA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual) communities, racial and ethnic minority groups, persons with disability, refugees, migrant workers, forcibly displaced populations, women and indigenous people.
Economic performance	Direct economic value generated and distributed, including revenues, operating costs, donations and other community investments.
Materials choice	Efficient use of all materials in buying and use, considering the full life cycle.
Energy	Consideration for energy efficiency and sustainable energy supply will reduce the use of fossil fuels and their impacts.
Food and beverage	Catering services are accessible and offer choices that are balanced, safe and hygienic. Sourcing sustainably produced food, minimising packaging, and avoiding waste and spoilage are also issues to consider.
Health and safety at work	Activities at significant risk of impacting the health and safety for contracted labour, volunteers and the supply chain.
Human rights	Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which, without exception, all human beings are entitled from birth, without discrimination.
Human development and training in the workplace	Workforce by employment type, contract and region and programmes for skills management and support continued employability of workforce and supply chain.
Illegal drugs and anti-doping	Activities at significant risk of involving the use of illegal drugs and doping.
Indirect economic impacts	Indirect economic impacts including the development of any infrastructure, employment opportunities, services provided to the public and fair profit sharing.
Market presence	Practices in relation to spending on locally-based suppliers and local hiring.
Prevention of use of banned chemicals	Preventing the use of banned chemicals and, where possible, chemicals identified by scientific bodies or any other interested parties as being of concern. This should consider chemicals contained in materials used by the event.

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

CLAUSE 7

7 Support

    7.1 Resources

    7.2 Competence

    7.3 Awareness

    7.4 Communication

    7.5 Documented information

CLAUSE 8

8 Operation

8.1 Operational planning and control

8.2 Managing changes

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)

An Overview of ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability)

Why are supply chain 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:

- 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 workforce, 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)

CLAUSE 9

9 Performance evaluation

9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation

9.2 Internal audit

9.3 Management review

MEASURES OF
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

CLAUSE 10

10 Improvement

10.1 Continual improvement

10.2 Nonconformity and corrective action

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
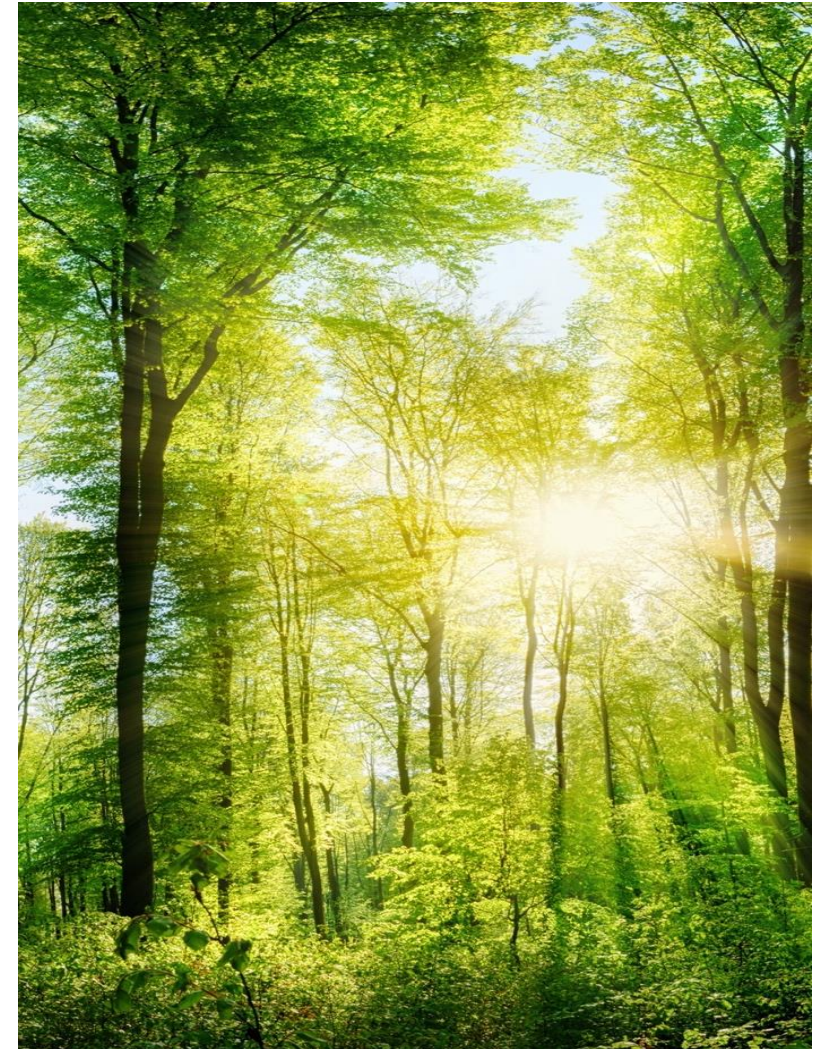
How NQA Can Support You in Achieving ISO 20121 Certification

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.

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SUSTAINABLE EVENTS
ISO 20121

THANK YOU
ANY QUESTIONS?

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