**What Is EsMS?**

***(Event Sustainability Management System, that is!)***

This summer, masses of people will descend on London to watch the 2012 Olympics, creating both an opportunity and a challenge for the international city.

London will be able to showcase its exquisite culture and history, but it also faces several challenges involved in hosting events that draw scores of tourists. Will the city be able to provide enough transportation for those in attendance, while London residents go about their daily routines? What about waste disposal for the large crowds? Will London be able to supply enough food and beverages for spectators without creating a gigantic environmental footprint in the city?

The Olympic organizing committees have been at work looking for solutions to those concerns and finding at least one solution in event sustainability management practice leaving with us a memorable legacy… ISO 20121:2012 – Event Sustainability Management System (EsMS) is expected to be officially introduced to the world early 2012 in time for the Summer Olympic Games in 2012.

When published, the international standard – ISO 20121:2012 – will for the first time in our history provide a common management system framework for the event industry, allowing this sector to align its current environmental practices with the value, purpose, and the principles of sustainability, as stipulated in the standard.

Furthermore, ISO 20121:2012 sets forth a roadmap for organizations to incorporate sustainability management in their day-to-day operations. Applying the same time-validated Plan-Do-Check-Act management model as we have seen in other international standards, ISO 20121:2012 is designed to work for all organizations in any event setting – from conventions and exhibitions to private gathering. Embedded in the ISO 20121 framework is a process of continual improvement, like what we have seen in other ISO standards, such as ISO 9001 for quality issues or 14001 for environmental matters, so that event sustainability performance may be compared objectively on the same footing.

Beyond the upcoming Olympic Games, ISO 20121 will help organizations identify their value and purpose, establish their sustainability policies, and align their actions with the four principles of sustainability in event management. The new standard defines the four principles of sustainability as **inclusivity, integrity, stewardship, and transparency**.

By setting specific objectives and targets, the EsMS gives event planners the tool needed to align their practices with the four principles of sustainability and, most importantly, allow event organizers and sponsors to best captivate target attendees and other interested parties in an engaging and transparent fashion!

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