

# ISO to Develop Sustainable Event Standard in Run-up to 2012 Olympics

No one would deny that conferences, concerts, sports competitions and festivals have clear and unique social, economic and environmental benefits. At the same time, the organization of these events can generate considerable waste and have other negative impacts. To harmonize the event industry's global efforts to tackle this challenge, ISO (International Organization for Standardization) will develop an International Standard promoting the sustainable management of events.



The standard will be produced by a new ISO project committee, ISO/PC 250, Sustainability in event management. About 30 countries are already involved as participants or observers.

Fiona Pelham, Chair of ISO/PC 250, explains, “The future standard will provide a framework which event planners, venues and other members of the event supply chain can use to implement, maintain and improve sustainability within their way of working.”

The standard (ISO 20121) will take a management systems approach requiring identification of key sustainability issues like venue selection, operating procedures, supply chain management, procurement, communications, transport, and others.



“The future ISO standard will make a great difference to the event industry” says Ms. Pelham. “Just imagine the change in thinking that could follow as the international event industry starts to systematically address their negative social, economic and environmental impacts.”

Elizabeth Henderson, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at MPI (Meeting International Professionals)\* comments, “As sustainability is becoming increasingly important for the event industry, individuals, companies and countries are setting multiple and differing standards. ISO 20121 will be

developed with extensive stakeholder engagement so the industry can have one internationally recognized framework to implement sustainability.”

The standard will respond to the unique needs and nature of the events sector with an innovative and flexible approach geared to producing results. It will be applicable to any organization or individual (whether clients, suppliers or event managers) working with all types of events (exhibitions, sporting competitions, concerts, etc.).



“A great advantage is that the standard will act as a harmonized benchmark for the industry. It should also provide a powerful tool for demonstrating commitment to sustainability in a globally recognized manner, as well as for assisting companies who are looking to become more sustainable,” says Anne Hayes, BSI Head of Market Development.

It is expected that the standard will increase transparency through the event management industry.

The proposal for the development of ISO 20121 was jointly submitted by the ISO member for Brazil (ABNT) and for the United Kingdom (BSI). Following London’s original bid for the 2012 Olympics, which recognized the need for such a standard, BSI developed a national standard, BS 8901, which generated international interest. Among the organizations to have expressed support for an International Standard are the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, host of COP 15, the UN Climate Change Conference.

ISO 20121 is expected to be finalized in 2012 to coincide with the London Olympics.

The first meeting is scheduled for 18–21 January 2010.

\*) Meeting International Professionals (MPI) was the first to certify an event – MPI’s European Conference 2008 – to BS 8901, the BSI (ISO member for the UK) standard for sustainable event management.

[www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

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