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ISO 20121

Event sustainability management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

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

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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.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

ISO draws attention to the possibility that the implementation of this document may involve the use of (a) patent(s). ISO takes no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of any claimed patent rights in respect thereof. As of the date of publication of this document, ISO had not received notice of (a) patent(s) which may be required to implement this document. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information, which may be obtained from the patent database available at www.iso.org/patents. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

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

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 20121:2012), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— the text, clause sequence and relevant definitions have been aligned with the harmonized structure for management system standards in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, 2022, Annex SL, Appendix 2;

— the text has been reviewed and improved to take into consideration: enhancement of environmental, social and governance (ESG) requirements; a reduction of negative impacts and maximization of positive ESG impacts; making the standard more user friendly and accessible.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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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 document has been drafted to help organizations and individuals to improve the sustainability of their event-related activities.

At the same time it requires organizations to recognize their relationship with and their impact on society and society's expectations of events.

This document 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. This document is not a checklist or a reporting framework or a method of evaluating event sustainability performance. This document is intended to be applied flexibly and allows organizations that have not formally addressed sustainable development to start to implement an event sustainability management system. Organizations with existing management systems can integrate the requirements of this document into their existing systems. All organizations can benefit from the process of continual improvement over time (see Figure 1).

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

Additional guidance and information is provided in Annexes A to C to support its implementation.

The complexity of the system and the extent of documentation and the resources devoted to it are 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 should 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 should extend throughout the supply chain, as well as the identified interested parties.

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

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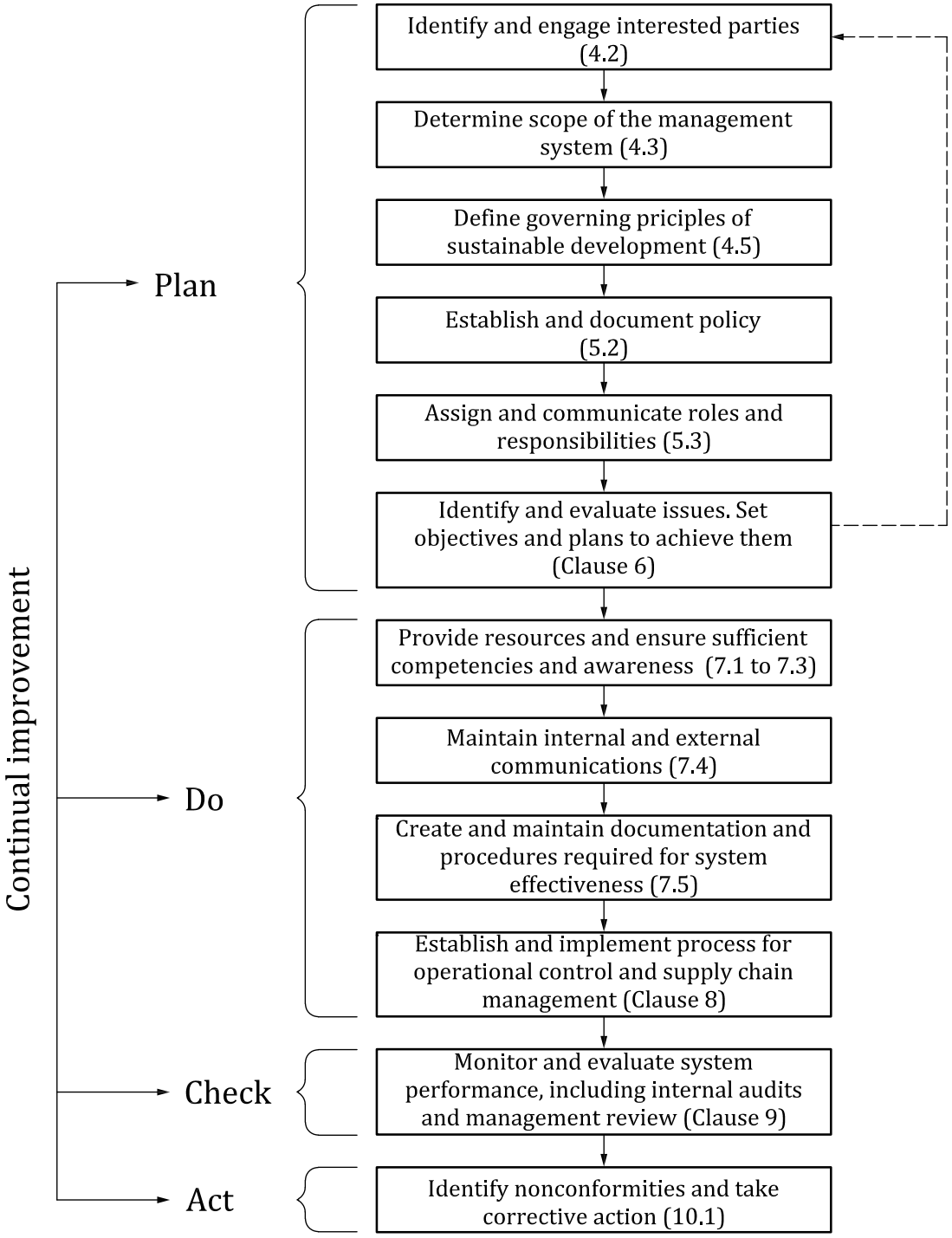


Figure 1 — Event sustainability management system model for this document

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Event sustainability management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

1 Scope

This document 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 document is applicable to any organization that wishes to:

a) establish, implement, maintain and improve an event sustainability management system;

b) ensure that it is in conformity with its stated sustainable development policy;

c) achieve the intended result(s) of its event sustainability management system;

d) demonstrate voluntary conformity with this document 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);

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

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

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

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org

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, enterprise, authority, partnership, charity, institution, associations, non-governmental organizations or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

Note 2 to entry: If the organization is part of a larger entity, the term "organization" refers only to the part of the larger entity that is within the scope of the *event* (3.7) *sustainability* (3.2) *management system* (3.22). For organizations with more than one operating unit, a single operating unit may be defined as an organization.

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