

ISO 20121:2024

Event Sustainability Management

What has changed, the opportunity and next steps

1) What are the changes in the updated version of the standard?

Key Changes in this revision:

- 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 change allows easier integration with other standards.
- The text has been 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.
- The revision has also included the addition of Climate Change considerations to Management Systems Standards.

Specific Changes to the requirements:

- New / revised "Note" explaining clause requirements are provided in various clauses.
- Additional Terms and Definitions on "Best Practice"; "Mission Statement"; "SWOT"; "PESTLE"; "Materiality Assessment" and "Double Materiality Assessment".
- Additional example of interested parties is provided in clause 4.2.
- Governing body has been considered in Section 5 as the "Leadership" of the organization.
- Additional requirements on Policy statement such as commitments, vision on long-term sustainable development objectives, and signatory requirements.
- Revision of clause 6.1.2 requires the organization to include issues such as climate change, environmental resilience, digital responsibility, human and child rights, mental health, wellbeing social impacts and diversity when identifying its sustainable development issues and to evaluate the significance associated with its event-related activities, products and services, within the defined scope of the event sustainability management system.
- Newly included clause 6.3 requires the organization to carry out proper planning for changes.
- Newly included Communication requirements in clause 7.3.
- Newly included clause 8.2 regarding Managing Changes and clause 8.3 regarding Supply Chain Management.



- Newly included clause 9.3.4 for performance evaluation.
- Updated Annex A regarding Interested Parties engagement.
- Updated Annex C regarding Guidance for organization to reporting.
- Newly inclusion of Annex D – informative section on Human and child rights.

Editorial Changes:

- “International standard” replaced with “document” throughout.
- Rephrases of sentences to allow for easier translation.

2) What are the opportunities of these changes?

The impact of the changes to the standard is significant, as it contains critical changes needed to ensure your Event Sustainability Management System is aligned with your current business practices and the associated risk particularly on interested parties’ engagement and opportunities to be responsible to human and child rights.

The impact of implementation will differ among organizations. Therefore, it is important to understand the detail of these changes and evaluate the impact on your organization to enable you to assess the risk you hold, and the effort required to implement the changes as soon as possible. This will enable you to plan your implementation in a controlled way prioritized by risk and effort.

3) What will the transition period be?

There will be a transition period of 3 years commencing from 3rd April 2024 to 31st March 2027. Initial certification and recertifications will be to the 2024 version from 1st April 2025 and all certificates must be transitioned no later than 31st March 2027. However, to ensure your business is suitably protected and you have a smooth transition, you need to understand the changes and the impact on your organization as soon as possible. See questions number seven and eight for more details.

4) I am not ready to transition yet. What should I do?

To ensure you protect your business effectively and have a smooth transition, it is important to understand the scope of the changes and the opportunities to your organization as soon as possible. You can then plan your implementation of the changes prioritized by risk, scheduling your transition at a time that best suits your organization and giving you plenty of time to prepare effectively.

5) We would like to train our staff prior to working on the transition.

To ensure you protect your business and have a smooth transition, it is important to understand the scope of the changes and their impact on your organization as soon as possible. BSI has



incorporated changes in our ISO 20121 Implementation Course and Introductory Course. We recommend you contact your local BSI Office to schedule a training.

6) We are interested in transitioning. Can we just combine with our next surveillance visits?

Yes absolutely, but you first need to understand the changes and the opportunities to your business so you can be sure you are ready in suitable time for a smooth transition and protecting your business effectively in the meantime.

7) Are there other ways to complete the Transition Audit?

You could perform the transition audit during the routine surveillance audit, during the recertification audit or a special audit. Please refer to question 3 for the transition timeline.

8) Why should I do anything now if I have until March 2027?

There is potentially a lot of work to do to become compliant. More importantly, by ignoring the fact that global best practice has been updated to reflect current risks, you could be exposing your business to unnecessary risk. All organizations should understand the changes and the impact on their organization as soon as possible. They can then plan the implementation of the changes in a controlled way prioritizing based on risk and effort. See questions number one and two for further information.

9) What's the value of transitioning in the short term? _____

Although the number of changes to the clauses may seem small, they could result in a significant amount of work, starting from the context of the organization, determining all the necessary processes and their interactions. Furthermore, a significant improvement of the standard requires organizers to consider the social impact of their activities such as their responsibility to respect human and child rights. This update requires organization to identify and evaluate human and child rights issues which may take significant time to address the compliant.

10) We need to identify what are the gaps before moving forward to transitioning. Can BSI help with this?

Yes, we can provide a gap assessment. We can help you identify the gaps and provide you with suitable general training to allow you to fill the gaps yourselves and maintain a high level of confidence in the system going forward.

11) What is the process to transition and update our certificate?

Your Certification Body must conduct a transition audit to assess whether your organization have implemented the changes effectively. However, a successful transition requires a thorough understanding of the changes and their impact on your organization together with effective implementation. BSI strongly recommends that you read the standard, take the training, and go through a readiness review first to ensure an effective and successful transition.