Making Events More Sustainable
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A Guide to BS 8901

Phil Cumming and Fiona Pelham
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Given it was his chance conversation that made BS 8901 a reality, it seemed only fitting that David Stubbs of LOCOG should write the foreword.

We hope we have acknowledged everyone that needed thanking by name but if we’ve forgotten anyone it’s not intentional!
We hope you find this book useful and it helps you to adopt more sustainable ways of doing business and planning your event. We wish you all the very best in your BS 8901 journey.

Thanks all!

Phil and Fiona
Foreword

It all started with a chance encounter over a glass of red wine. The occasion was a London 2012 bid promotion to business leaders in the City of London at the Mansion House one day in 2004. Seb Coe and Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, were up front making the pitch. Other bid team colleagues and I were working the rest of the room.

And so I came across Arnold Pinder of the BSI. Well what do you say to a standards man about bidding for the Olympic and Paralympic Games? If it had been any of my other colleagues, probably not a great deal. However, I had a bee in my bonnet about making events more sustainable, but I was stymied by the then lack of any formal systems or standards that applied in this field.

The concept of sustainability applied to the Games was relatively new. The London bid team felt this was a potential area of differentiation, going beyond the basic notion of ‘Green Games’. We were determined to find innovative ways to make the distinction against rival bids. But competition aside, the essential point at the time was that there was no official framework for addressing sustainability in its full sense for events.

Yet it was pretty obvious that events – especially mega events such as the Olympic Games – engender significant environmental, social and economic impacts. They require bespoke, accessible venues; people have to travel to them; they need entertaining, accommodation, food and security; that requires energy and other resources; waste is produced and local communities are affected. At the same time events attract attention – from the media, from sponsors and the visiting public.

So, on the one hand we have some pretty heft potential impacts, while on the other we have a special platform from which to communicate about sustainability to new audiences. That is an important opportunity to be seized. Most conventional sustainability campaigns do not have such reach.

However, it is not just an issue for big events. When you think about it, the difference between large and small events is simply a matter of scale. They all broadly involve the same activities and processes and therefore have similar types of issues and impacts as well as opportunities for promoting sustainability and creating positive legacies at their respective scales.
Collectively, the event industry is huge. It is a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide. And while high-profile events (sporting or cultural) may be hugely popular, with large crowds and TV and press coverage disseminating to a wider fan base, it does not absolve organizers from delivering the events in a responsible way. Indeed, the larger events have arguably an even greater responsibility in this respect.

There is also a strong business case for managing events sustainably. The efficiencies and cost savings derived from a sustainable approach are significant. In addition, most events seek sponsorship and the commercial world is increasingly sensitive to brand reputation issues associated with sponsorship. If done well, an event can secure important additional revenue through sustainability partnerships.

The supply chain is a vital part of this. We are already seeing ample evidence of event industry companies adopting sustainability as part of their business model. This is making them more competitive and able to win business in difficult market conditions.

Of course this does not happen by itself. To achieve proper recognition for genuine sustainable initiatives, you need to have a credible basis for demonstrating your performance in this area. This is where a good management system comes in.

The cyclical nature of events presents a particular challenge. Unlike a steady-state operation (for which most conventional management systems have been developed), the world of events is all peaks and troughs. An organizing committee will generally start from scratch. It will build up slowly at first and then grow rapidly over a short time before the event. Decommissioning is brutally quick. There is no scope in this life cycle for continual improvement – not until the next event, if there is one. Nor is there much chance of knowledge transfer and spreading best practices.

My musings about sustainable events that night at the Mansion House obviously struck a chord with Arnold and the BSI. After we won the bid to host the 2012 Games, my dialogue with the BSI continued and I was obviously delighted with their interest in this field, which led to the subsequent development and launch of BS 8901, in November 2007.

I am even more pleased that Phil Cumming, a pivotal member of my team at London 2012, and Fiona Pelham, Chair of BS 8901, have come together to write these supporting guidelines to the 2009 revised version of BS 8901. They are a
formidable team, two experts in this emerging field, and in this document they have captured the essence of the standard and presented a thorough and accessible step-by-step guide to its implementation.

The clear guidance and supporting case studies offer a first-class insight into how to comply with the standard and how to make positive sustainable choices.

At London 2012 we are proud to have inspired BS 8901. We also look forward to its international successor, ISO 20121. But standards alone are one thing. People implementing them and making a positive difference is the real goal. These guidelines are part of making that a reality.

David Stubbs
Head of Sustainability, London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG)
July 2010
About the authors

Both authors are members of the Technical Committee that produced the new BSI standard for developing a sustainability management system for events, BS 8901, and are working on the development of the standard at an international level.

**Phil Cumming** is the Corporate Sustainability Manager for the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), the privately funded body responsible for preparing and staging the 2012 Games. He is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of the sustainability management system for the Games and programme managing all sustainability-specific and cross-functional sustainability work streams. His programme responsibilities have also included managing the development and planning for two major Games operational areas: Cleaning & Waste Management and Catering & Food Services.

Prior to joining LOCOG in June 2006, Phil spent nearly 10 years working in the environmental consultancy sector. After a brief spell at Schumacher College in 2001 he developed a passion for finding more sustainable business solutions. A Chartered Environmentalist, a Chartered Waste Manager and an IEMA Registered Environmental Auditor, as a consultant he provided the complete delivery of a range of projects, within the sustainability field including compliance, management systems and audit, waste management, and appraisals of policies and projects, across a diverse number of industrial sectors for major private and public sector organizations, at home and overseas.

Phil is a member of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Working Group responsible for developing the Event Organizers Sector Supplement and since January 2010 he has been Head of the UK Delegation to the ISO committee responsible for developing ISO 20121.

**Fiona Pelham** is the managing director of Sustainable Events Ltd, a company which provides expertise on the implementation, measurement and monitoring of sustainability within the event industry.

In 2004 Fiona launched Organise This (www.organisethis.co.uk), a Manchester-based event management company. Organise This was the first event management company to be third party certified compliant to BS 8901 in September 2008.
About the authors

The Organise This team and client base continues to grow and all events are delivered in a way which is BS 8901 compliant and where sustainability is a key focus.

In 2005 Fiona was part of a group which set up the not-for-profit education project Positive Impact (www.positiveimpactevents.co.uk) which now delivers education on sustainability to the event industry across the world through in-house, online and open education workshops.

As the growth of sustainability within the event industry continued Fiona and her team launched Sustainable Events Ltd to provide unique support for the implementation of sustainability within the event industry (www.sustainableeventsLtd.com). The Sustainable Events Ltd team have worked on the implementation and measurement of sustainability within large-scale international events and strategies including Google EMEA Conference, England 2018 World Cup bid and GRI for the Event Organizers Sector Supplement. Since June 2009 Fiona has been the technical adviser for the environment for the England 2018 World Cup Bid.

Since January 2010, Fiona has been Co-Chair of the ISO committee for the development of ISO 20121.

Author income

Phil was a panel member and Fiona was Chair of BS 8901. Phil and Fiona have approached the writing of this guidance with the aim of communicating in a clear and practical way how to implement BS 8901. They are donating 100 per cent of any author income from the sale of this book to be split equally between the following two charities:

- The British Olympic Foundation (BOF), which aims to create learning opportunities for young people through sport and education to encourage personal development, fair play and personal excellence. With a variety of initiatives from sports camps, workshops, conferences, international exchanges to education packs, the BOF aims to touch the lives of young people, from primary through to university level students, with the Olympic dream.
- The British Paralympic Association (BPA), brand name ParalympicsGB, is a registered charity which is responsible for selecting, preparing, entering, funding and managing the United Kingdom’s team at the Paralympic Games and Paralympic Winter Games.
1. Introduction

The story of BS 8901

In July 2005 it was announced that London would be Host City for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Sustainability was a key theme throughout the bid but it was clear to the London 2012 Sustainability team that a management system framework, which supported the consideration of sustainability at every stage of the event, did not exist. A chance conversation with a representative from BSI set in motion the idea for a bespoke sustainability standard for the events sector.

Existing management systems were not suitable because of their focus on environmental concerns rather than sustainability and the fact that they did not necessarily reflect the unique cyclical nature of events.

In 2006 a panel of volunteers from the event industry, standard industry and certification industry was brought together to work on the development of a management system standard which would be suitable for the event industry. The panel drew on existing resources and best practice in this area for the event industry.

The standard was created to be suitable for all types of event – from a village fête to the Olympic and Paralympic Games and for all types of event supplier – from a venue to an audio-visual (AV) supplier. As a management system the standard does not provide a list of steps which should be taken but instead, when implemented, provides a framework which allows the person implementing it to address their own significant issues.

There are pros and cons to a checklist approach and the BS 8901 framework can be used to support the implementation of a checklist style standard but it is important to recognize that BS 8901 provides flexibility to allow users to address their own issues and rigour to ensure the issues addressed are relevant to its business and its stakeholders.

Originally launched in November 2007, the uptake and interest in the standard was high from the start and within months there were examples of best practice case studies from companies who were implementing the standard.
Introduction

Within a year there was evidence of the standard being implemented globally and in September 2009 the revised version of BS 8901 was published and the process started for it to become an international standard. The standard was also awarded the London 2012 Inspire mark.

Over the next few years as sustainability becomes an inherent factor in all industries, not just the event industry, this standard will provide the event industry with an opportunity to lead.

On an individual level, at a time when numerous standards are entering the marketplace, BS 8901 is an independent standard which provides a framework which can be used by all members of the event industry. As a management system standard this means BS 8901 does not and should not cut across other standards and schemes (e.g. BREEAM In Use, Green Tourism Business Scheme, Industry Green, Investors in People, or Diversity Works for London), quite the opposite; if correctly implemented it will serve to complement their delivery. Indeed such schemes could serve as objectives to address specific issues identified as part of implementing BS 8901.

Every step, however small, which you take towards the implementation of a more sustainable way of working will make a great difference. BS 8901 is a framework which can help you with those small steps in terms of understanding what to do, when and how.

Sustainability is about more than just BS 8901 but if you are looking for a framework to use for a business within the event industry this one is suitable.

If you are interested in the creative, economic and personal opportunity which sustainability brings then this guide is for you. It draws from experiences of organizations specifying and using the standard – several of the examples are from the original version of the standard which was published in 2007.

About this book

This is a guide to support your implementation of a sustainability management system for events; it can be read alongside the standard but should not be read instead of the standard. This guidance is suitable for those who will be working to implement BS 8901 either in your business as a supplier to the event industry or for a specific event.
**Introduction**

**What is this guidance?** The idea for this book came from the BS 8901 panel who recognized that the language of standards may be unfamiliar to the event industry and it could be a good idea to write guidance which would provide some translation on the standard in the form of case studies, examples and best practice advice.

**Who should read this guidance?** If you work in the event industry or supply to the event industry and are interested in implementing the BS 8901 framework and would like advice and ideas of the steps to take, this book is for you.

**What is sustainability?** The definition that BS 8900 uses for sustainable development is derived from the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) but sees a broader scope. It is:

> An enduring and balanced approach to economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress.

Simply put, sustainability is about making positive and lasting changes in the way we use natural and human resources to improve quality of life for all; now and in the future.

**What do we mean by sustainability in the context of an event?** Depending on the event context there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer to this however by a taking a more sustainable approach it would typically:

- provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all
- provide a safe and secure atmosphere
- have minimal negative impacts on the environment
- encourage healthy living
- promote responsible sourcing
- leave a positive legacy
- deliver excellent customer experience and
- encourage more sustainable behaviour.

**Why should I be thinking about sustainability?** It could be said that staging an event is inherently un-sustainable. However, with the right framework in place you can control and influence your resource use and make changes to your business practices to reduce your impacts. For example, with accelerating landfill costs, cutting down on resources also means cutting down on financial overheads. Clients are beginning to expect sustainability credentials from their suppliers. It is essential to stay ahead of the game and exploit sustainability
advantages in a demanding market. An event is also often a great platform to communicate sustainability to a new audience and change behaviour. Finally, as this issue becomes more important to individuals, staff engagement, motivation and retention will be recognized as closely linked to the business’ sustainability credentials.

**Do I need to implement BS 8901 to implement sustainability?** There are many steps which can be taken to become more sustainable and each step no matter how small is valuable. BS 8901 provides a framework to support the event industry with the implementation of sustainability but there are other schemes and tools which may be useful for you, some of which are identified in Appendix A.

**How is BS 8901 different from these frameworks?** BS 8901 is concerned with sustainability and the organization of events. Many of the current frameworks that exist have a strong environmental focus.

BS 8901 is a management system; this means that it provides a framework to influence your way of working. It is not a list of things which must be done, instead it provides a set of requirements which if implemented will support you in understanding what your key sustainability issues are and how to address them. It is quite possible that BS 8901 will complement the delivery of other schemes and tools. For example, such schemes and tools could serve as objectives to address specific issues identified as part of implementing BS 8901.

**What is a management system?** A management system is a term used to describe the framework of policies, procedures and processes used to ensure that an organization can fulfil all tasks required to achieve its objectives. Most organizations will have a management system otherwise they would not be in business; it just might not be written down or thought of in these terms.

**Who developed BS 8901?** A panel of people including individuals from the event, certification and standards industry worked together to create the standard. The development of the standard included a period of public consultation so that members of the event industry could contribute their feedback to shape the standard.

**My organization is already certified to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and/or BS OHSAS 18001, why should I also consider BS 8901?** Organizations that already have ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and/or BS OHSAS 18001 are well positioned to achieve BS 8901. All management system standards follow a similar
framework and organizations with ISO 9001/ISO 14001/BS OHSAS 18001 will have a number of elements in place such as a clearly defined organizational structure, operational controls, auditing and management review processes which can be used to meet the requirements of BS 8901. The opportunity is to build upon the existing systems in order to achieve BS 8901, rather than develop separate stand-alone systems.

However, it is important to note that BS 8901 goes beyond these traditional management system standards in that BS 8901 requires clarity of purpose and values, more extensive stakeholder engagement and a clear business strategy.

**How long will it take for my organization to put in place a management system which satisfies the requirements of BS 8901?** This is a tough question to answer because it really depends on a number of factors. These factors include whether the organization already has ISO 9001 or other similar management system certification, the size and complexity of the organization, the internal resource and commitment devoted to implementing the system, access to the right expertise and of course the nature of the environmental, social and economic issues.

For example, if an organization already has ISO 9001 or even ISO 14001 for the same scope then they probably have 80 per cent of the system elements in place already. The organization will then need to build the additional requirements for BS 8901. This could be done within a relatively short timescale. However, if an organization has no experience of formalized management systems and have identified a significant number of issues to address it could take longer.

**I think we are already behaving in a sustainable way, do I still need to read this?** This guidance is about the implementation of BS 8901. If you consider your company to already be operating as sustainably as it can and you are a company whose main work is related to events, you may want to consider implementing BS 8901 as a way to communicate to your client and supply chain that sustainability is of genuine importance to you.

This guidance does not tell you how to be sustainable. This guidance demonstrates how to implement a framework which will mean you have a process to understand the steps you need to take to continually improve your sustainability performance.

**I have no idea where to start, will this guidance be too difficult to implement?** This guidance is suitable for those who are just starting on the journey with...
sustainability and those who are looking for ways to take steps to further their commitment.

I run a small business, won’t implementing BS 8901 be too much for me to bear and require lots of paperwork? An organization wishing to implement BS 8901 will need to have the full buy-in and support of top management. As a result, it is much easier for small and medium sized organizations to adopt and implement BS 8901 than larger ones (contrary to popular belief). It is also important to note that the standard talks about ‘appropriate documentation’. This does not mean that everything should be written down and filed away but rather that you learn to decide what is appropriate to document and how it is documented.

Is BS 8901 for planning and implementing large-scale outdoor events only? BS 8901 is suitable for events of any size (it has been tested on events as small as a local barbeque). It is also suitable for suppliers to the event industry, for example venues, caterers and AV suppliers. If you are a supplier who mainly supplies to the event industry then this is a suitable standard for you.

How does BS 8901 compare with other standards such as Green Tourism Business Scheme or the APEX/ASTM standard for meetings? BS 8901 is a management system which provides a framework for your way of working to support the implementation of sustainability. There are a number of standards including Green Tourism Business Scheme and the APEX/ASTM standard for meetings which provide you with the steps which must be taken. A management system provides you with a framework for ‘how’ you should work and a checklist standard provides you with information on ‘what’ you should do. It is worth remembering that all events are different so it is impossible to find a checklist approach which suits every event. Adoption of initiatives like Green Tourism Business Scheme or APEX/ASTM standard should not be seen as conflicting with BS 8901 but as complementary to it – as mentioned previously, initiatives like Green Tourism Business Scheme could be one of your BS 8901 objectives.

What is ISO 20121? By 2009, BS 8901 was being used in several countries around the world. At this time a proposal was put forward to standards bodies across the world to ask if they would like to identify experts and create mirror committees to work on the creation of an international standard using BS 8901 as the starting draft. Over 30 countries and four liaison bodies decided to get involved in the development of the international standard.
What is the difference between ISO 20121 and BS 8901? BS 8901 was used as the starting draft for ISO 20121. Contributions from the mirror committees from each country and liaison body will amend the standard. ISO 20121 is currently in creation as this book is being written so the exact differences between the standards will not be known until it is completed. However, as BS 8901 was the starting draft it is likely that there will still be a strong similarity between the standards.

Why should I implement BS 8901 now – why not wait until ISO 20121 is published? It is not known exactly when ISO 20121 will be published. Any small step which you can take to implement sustainability as soon as possible will make a difference. If you start implementing BS 8901 now you will be in a good position to implement ISO 20121 in the future. There is usually a transitional period when an international standard is introduced and the national equivalent is withdrawn, typically one to two years.

What is the Global Reporting Initiative Event Organizers Sector Supplement? The Global Reporting Initiative is a multi-stakeholder non-profit organization that develops and publishes guidelines for reporting on sustainability performance. The Event Organizers Sector Supplement is the creation of a sustainability reporting framework specifically for the event sector and is due to launch in 2011. Chapter 5 of this book provides further information on this.
2. First steps

Getting started

BS 8901 specifies the requirements of a management system to improve the sustainability of events. This means it outlines the steps which must be taken to implement a way of working to improve the level of sustainability. It has been written to be applicable to all types and sizes of organizations involved in the design and delivery of events.

In keeping with modern management system standards, BS 8901 utilizes the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle for developing, implementing and improving the effectiveness of an organization’s sustainability management system. The elements of the PDCA cycle as it relates to BS 8901 are set out in Figure 1.

The success of the system depends on commitment from all parts of the organization, especially from top management. Their involvement is required from the outset and their ongoing support is essential if BS 8901 is to be taken seriously by the organization as a whole.

It is important that as the process is developed and embedded in the organization, appropriate evidence of decisions, activities and processes are retained for compliance auditing or appropriate certification against BS 8901 (more will be covered on this later).

Whilst getting started in implementing the requirements of the standard may seem a little daunting, there are number of steps that can be followed to make things a bit easier. These steps are not a mandatory requirement of the standard but are highly advisable and are considered ‘good practice’. These steps are as follows:

- Obtain commitment from top management.
- Establish an implementation team (people that can champion sustainability internally).
- Carry out an initial review.
- Develop a draft sustainability policy.
- Develop an implementation plan to include the actions which will be taken and the date and ownership.
First steps

Define scope for sustainability management system (3.2)

Define primary purpose and values (3.3)

Define policy for sustainability (3.4)

PLAN: (3.5: Interactive process)
Evaluate issues and set objectives and targets

Identify and engage stakeholders (including supply chain) as part of the planning process

DO: provide resources and competencies, manage the supply chain and maintain communications, document the system (3.7)

CHECK: monitor and evaluate (3.8)

ACT: Management review and feed forward (3.9)

Figure 1 – Road map for implementation of BS 8901
Obtain commitment from top management

In order for the management system to be successful it has to be flexible and integrated into the event management process and not just regarded as an ‘add-on’ component. In other words – the business should drive the management system, not the other way around!

Top management commitment is absolutely key to achieving this. This is because you will need to ensure that sustainability is central to any business decisions being taken in the organization. This is often easier said than done. Even in the smallest of organizations a consistent approach will be needed.

Consider the initial drivers that could influence your organization to establish a management system. This may relate to driving cost efficiencies in the business, improving the chances of winning work, or pressure from stakeholders.

When commitment from the top has been secured, make sure everyone appreciates the benefits and successes that come from establishing a management system. Use language and terms that everyone can understand – however remember ‘sustainability’ is not a posh word for the ‘environment’.

innovision, UK

At innovision, the decision to implement a BS 8901 compliant management system came from top-level management. Sustainability was viewed as something which flowed naturally from its respectful and caring company culture.

Shortly before implementation of their BS 8901 compliant management system, it had obtained certification to the ISO 9001 Quality Management Standard. Consequently obtaining commitment from staff throughout the organization was considerably easier than it might otherwise have been. Team members already understood the benefits of operating an effective management system and therefore viewed the additional sustainability management processes as minor tweaks and a formalization of existing processes, rather than a major change in the way they worked.
First steps

Establish an implementation team

The major challenge facing the internal team who implemented the sustainability management system was ensuring that staff understood the underlying principles of operating sustainably, not just the processes of being BS 8901 compliant. Its sustainability champions were keen to embed a genuine passion for sustainability throughout the innovision team. The process of achieving this buy-in is an ongoing process and part of the company’s continual improvement. However, a series of workshops, encouraging staff members to think intelligently and creatively about sustainability issues has yielded impressive results and staff are consistently praised for their understanding of broader sustainability issues.

With the profile of sustainability being raised throughout the events industry by London 2012 and the forthcoming release of the ISO 20121 Standard, innovision is excited about the potential for sustainable event management. Its desire is to see clients, suppliers, stakeholders and its internal team increasingly challenged to maximize the positive impact of the events they produce today on current and future generations.

Establish an implementation team

It is not all about top management; involving individuals across the organization at all phases in implementation will help identify opportunities to drive the management system forward.

It is advisable to establish a representative, cross-functional implementation team which will require some time and effort from key members of staff – this is good to do in a smaller company too. Keep the team manageable and focused – however if you have a large number of individuals involved then sub-groups or task-specific groups can be established to support the implementation team.

At this early stage, begin to outline the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the management system implementation, particularly those in top management and the implementation team. Look at the resources you may need to establish the management system and ensure that this is communicated to and agreed with top management – this does not necessarily mean hiring a consultant to help (although this might be a factor to consider). It is a good
idea to document this in some way, including producing some preliminary organization charts.

**Manchester United Old Trafford Stadium, UK**

Before starting the implementation of BS 8901, at their Old Trafford Stadium, Manchester United paid significant attention to planning the work required.

The Health, Safety and Environmental Manager took a lead with creating a team across the company who attended an education session to learn about the implementation of BS 8901. This enabled the team to understand the content of the standard, the different clauses of the standard which would require action and the variety of actions which would be taking place at similar times. It also gave the team the chance to identify parts of the standard already being delivered and potential owners for elements which were not.

**Initial review**

It is highly advisable to carry out a thorough review of your existing management practices and sustainability performance. Think about how your business works and how it interacts with its stakeholders and the supply chain. Whilst you may not have an ISO 9001, ISO 14001, or BS OHSAS 18001 management system in place, most companies will have a management system – it just may not be too formalized or documented. If you are aware of any applicable legal or other obligations, be they environmental or health and safety, make a note of them too. You may even be aware of stakeholder views in respect to sustainability – make sure these are captured as well.

Identify whether there are any initiatives already in place – include all informal or ‘ad-hoc’ things that are done (e.g. some things you have done for an event at the request of a particular client and some things that may already be a matter of company policy). Many companies are surprised at how much is already in place although it may not always have been seen as contributing to the ‘sustainability agenda’.
First steps

Identify those business activities that you can control and those you can only influence. These might not always be immediately apparent, so utilize the expertise and knowledge in the implementation team and top management through one-to-one engagement and workshops. This will also help you in setting the scope of your eventual management system and identifying the key business practice ‘interventions’ that need to be made in the organization. Do not worry if you do not identify everything at this stage, this will be picked up during the actual implementation of the standard.

Look through the requirements of the standard and identify any immediate gaps. Whilst a lot of things may be happening, a lot of things may not be. It is a good idea to develop a simple way of capturing the outputs of the initial review and key gaps that have been identified.

A thorough initial review will provide a good foundation for the management system development and should save time. Try to involve people as much as possible in the assessment. Use of the sustainable development maturity matrix may also help this initial assessment (see Appendix C). However, do not overcomplicate things. Think of this stage as a bit of a ‘helicopter view’ of the organization – stick to the big issues.

Develop a draft Sustainability Policy

Organizations that undertake an initial review will find it easier to define their Sustainability Policy. At this stage, however, a draft policy simply helps to provide a focus for the further development of your management system and the document does not have to be seen by anyone outside the organization although it might be a good idea to do this.

You should have identified whether your organization already has policies in place (e.g. Environmental, Health and Safety, Quality, etc.) and made certain commitments as part of the initial review. Remember the Sustainability Policy is an overarching policy but does not necessarily replace other policies that exist. Ensure that there are no potential conflicts and consider whether current commitments are still valid.

At this early stage, begin to think about what the commitments mean to your organization, as these will be the focus for your management system and will need to be upheld through demonstrable actions. Remember the finalized policy (which comes later) will need to be endorsed by top management.
Develop an implementation plan

A structured implementation plan not only helps to bring together a potentially large project in one place, it also helps to maintain the original objectives that were agreed with top management.

Drawing on research from the steps outlined above, develop a list of everything that needs to be done – this sounds obvious but can often be overlooked. Identify the actions required to implement a full management system, including any timescales, targets or aspirations for the management system (e.g. obtain third party certification by a certain point in time).

Develop an outline plan showing tasks and timescales and identify any individual roles and responsibilities. It is a good idea to establish any resource and time needs together with an estimation of any costs. The plan should be able to be used in a practical way for managing the management system implementation.

Remember it may take a reasonable amount of time to develop a management system which meets all the requirements of BS 8901. Having a clear and
documented plan will also help to communicate how long it will take and how far along you are on the process of implementation. This will be useful for top management and your stakeholders, including prospective clients.

Small steps

It might be that you decide that to go straight into implementing BS 8901 is too much to take on at this stage. Do not be disheartened – there are things that can be done to help you take steps towards implementing BS 8901. For example, it might be helpful to adopt a staged process as follows:

1. Before the event
   a. identify stakeholders
   b. identify potential impacts and issues
   c. define targets, develop action plan and
   d. deliver actions and record progress.
2. During the event
   a. measure outcomes and
   b. communicate achievements.
3. After the event
   a. document outcomes and
   b. feedback for continual improvement.

Adopting a staged approach will help you towards establishing a BS 8901 compliant management system. However, this does not mean that full compliance will be achieved so be careful on any claims you make (see Chapter 4). There are also a number of proprietary online tools available which may assist in the process (see Appendix A).

London 2012, UK

London 2012’s commitment to sustainability applies throughout London’s Olympiad. This means it is working to ensure that all its events and related activities hosted by or associated with London 2012 are positive examples of sustainability in practice.

The Games in 2012 are subject to a full sustainability management system developed by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and
Paralympic Games (LOCOG) for compliance with BS 8901, which is in turn encouraging (and in some cases requiring) its suppliers to also be compliant. However, throughout the period leading up to the Games there will be numerous corporate and public events associated with London 2012 bearing its identity.

These events will be a conspicuous part of its communications and outreach and will play a major part in projecting its vision for sustainable Games. Therefore LOCOG developed some Sustainability Guidelines for Corporate and Public Events for its organizers of corporate and public events. They are equally relevant to organizations putting on events associated with London 2012.

The types of events the guidelines are intended for include:

- conferences and seminars
- workshops
- road shows
- cultural events
- promotional launches
- open days and
- London 2012 Inspire programme.

The guidelines do not comprise an exhaustive checklist or manual. Every event has its particular circumstances and it is important for organizers to consider the key sustainability issues specific to their event. However, the guidelines include the ten key topic areas which LOCOG consider most relevant to the types of events it will be organizing in the lead up to the Games, as follows:

1. venue and accommodation selection
2. impacts on venue and local area
3. transport and travel
4. sourcing products and services
5. health, safety and security
6. energy consumption
7. catering provision
8. waste and cleaning
9. communications
10. give-aways.
First steps

The guidelines aim to help companies and organizations take the first steps towards establishing a BS 8901 compliant management system. However, adoption of the guidelines in isolation does not mean that full compliance with BS 8901 will be achieved.

The guidelines have recently been updated to include knowledge gained so far and include case studies to illustrate how specific aspects of the guidelines have been implemented.