

CASE STUDY

COCA-COLA GB GAINS ISO 20121 FOR LONDON 2012

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In June 2012 Coca-Cola Great Britain achieved ISO 20121:2012 Sustainable Management System (SMS) certification with SGS United Kingdom Ltd, ready for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The company's ISO 20121 certification, covers all its London 2012 operations, including the Olympic Torch Relay, Venue Operations, Showcasing, Hospitality and Licensed Merchandising activities.

Coca-Cola Great Britain's London head office is also certified to the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System.

SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

The Coca-Cola Company has long been involved and associated with the Olympic Games. This began more than 80 years ago, when it supported the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. As a Worldwide Partner of the Olympic Movement, Coca-Cola wanted its London 2012 activities to set a new global benchmark for major event sustainability and worked closely with the London Organising Committee of

the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) to meet their shared ambition of making London 2012 the most sustainable Games of modern times. In particular, Coca-Cola wanted its London 2012 activities to support LOCOG's zero-waste ambitions, to encourage exercise, health and wellbeing, and for its operations to be CO2 neutral. Olivia Knight-Adams, Coca-Cola's Sustainable Games Project Coordinator, says: "When we started planning for the Games, we recognised that a system like ISO 20121 would help us to meet our goals and systematically integrate sustainability into all areas of our London 2012 sponsorship."

NEW SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD

As a new international standard, ISO 20121 specifies requirements and provides guidance for an event or event-related sustainability management system. It aims to ensure that all events leave behind a positive legacy. ISO 20121 is relevant throughout the event industry supply chain, including for event

organisers and managers, caterers, stand builders and logistics suppliers.

The standard provides the framework needed to: measure, minimise and eliminate the negative environmental, social and economic impacts of events; optimise planning and processes; and maximise the benefits of events.

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

When preparing to be assessed against the requirements of ISO 20121, Coca-Cola:

- developed a new SMS manual, a new London 2012-specific sustainability policy and a guide for suppliers
- enhanced its procurement procedures to make sustainability a core part of its tendering process
- set function-specific targets to ensure managers and their teams contributed to overall sustainability plans
- developed function-specific sustainability training materials
- organised quarterly sustainability meetings to check progress against objectives

SGS ASSESSMENT

Coca-Cola selected SGS to carry out its ISO 20121 assessment. With more than 70,000 employees and a network of over 1,350 offices and laboratories globally, SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company.



The SGS logo, consisting of the letters 'SGS' in a bold, sans-serif font, with a vertical line to the right of the letters.

Olivia Knight-Adams says: "We chose SGS as it seemed to have a good understanding of, and pragmatic approach to, the new standard."

"The SGS assessment proved to be thorough, well organised and useful. Our auditor, Ana, was knowledgeable about the standard and sustainability, while seeking to be pragmatic and informative. She supported us in identifying potential areas for improvement – it all felt more like a strategic, and less like a tick-box, exercise than other audits I've experienced."

Ana Inacio, SGS Auditor and Tutor, says: "I found Coca-Cola's staff to be passionate about the brand and sustainability, and ensuring the company's activities have a positive, lasting impact."

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Implemented within its new ISO 20121 SMS framework, Coca-Cola's Games-related sustainability initiatives include:

- serving all Coca-Cola products in fully recyclable packaging, which itself contains 25% recycled plastic
- using biogas-powered vehicles to supply outlets and venues
- ensuring its on-site drinks coolers are free of hydrofluorocarbons
- using recycled materials wherever possible, in everything from staff uniforms to sales stands
- expecting its own suppliers to act and source sustainably, for example by using recycled materials and reducing packaging
- incorporating WWF (World Wildlife Fund) recommendations in its environmental strategy

THE BENEFITS OF ISO 20121

Olivia Knight-Adams says: "ISO 20121 has proved a highly effective tool for bringing our corporate sustainability strategy to bear on a specific major event, namely our sponsorship of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In particular it's helped us to more fully engage everyone involved so they're crystal clear about our sustainability objectives, and committed to their delivery."

"It's also helped us to articulate the importance of sustainability to our suppliers, which in turn has encouraged them to innovate and introduce new sustainability solutions."

NEXT STEPS

Olivia Knight-Adams is currently working on a London 2012 follow-up report and sustainable toolkit. This will be available for future Coca-Cola host-city teams and the wider events industry, with the hope that it will encourage other sponsors, event organisers and venues to adopt a more sustainable approach to event management in the future.

In addition, Coca-Cola hopes all its event-related suppliers will implement ISO 20121 themselves.

ADVICE TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

"I would recommend that other organisations adopt ISO 20121," says Olivia Knight-Adams. "Make the system simple and user-friendly, and make sure the person leading implementation is passionate about sustainability and has full senior management backing."

"It can take a bit of time and resource upfront but, once the systems are in place, it will provide a useful framework to join up, embed and enhance your sustainability performance."

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