



FORMULA E ACHIEVES DEMANDING EVENT SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATION

CASE STUDY

BE THE BENCHMARK

SGS

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The ABB FIA Formula E Championship – more commonly known as Formula E – has become the first category in motorsport to achieve ISO 20121, the world's most demanding certification for an Event Sustainability Management System. The street racing series represents the world's first fully-electric international single-seater category in motorsport, with events held in major cities around the world. The championship, which held its first event in Beijing in September 2014, also represents a competitive platform to test and develop road-relevant technologies, promoting the development and adoption of clean transportation on a global scale.

The audit was conducted by SGS, the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company, which examines a range of objectives including good governance, sound social responsibility strategies and activities and reduction of environmental footprint.

WHY DID FORMULA E SEEK ISO 20121 CERTIFICATION?

Formula E had already adopted a holistic approach to sustainable event management with the implementation of a waste management scheme and policy of sourcing from sustainable suppliers. In addition to taking its environmental responsibilities seriously, it has always operated a robust corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme – engaging with and generating revenues for communities around event locations and supporting local charitable activity.

“WHEN WE BEGAN THE PROCESS, I DID NOT REALISE EITHER HOW IMPORTANT OR HOW FRUITFUL IT WOULD BE”

The 2016 season finale held in London's Battersea Park was preceded by a lengthy protest by an action group that claimed motorsport would harm the environment and deprive local people of their tranquillity, in spite of the inherently-low emissions and noise levels of the cars participating. This was pivotal in Formula E's resolution to build on its established environmental management system by seeking official certification of its credentials with the voluntary global standard ISO 20121. The certification of the management system would demonstrate that the organisation had a complete identification and understanding of its impacts on the environment and local communities, demonstrate better controls leading to improved environmental performance and provide assurance to venues, communities and other stakeholders to enhance credibility and reputation. UEFA and the Olympic Games are amongst others who have taken the step.



WHY SGS?

SGS was selected as Formula E's ISO 20121 audit partner owing to its international coverage, excellent reputation and an ethos aligned to the organisation's own positioning.

THE PROCESS

Formula E Senior Sustainability Consultant Julia Palle says that the existing environmental management system opened the door to the certification process. The fact that it had the buy-in of everybody in the organisation was a major contributory factor to its success, together with the budget being readily signed off by the Chief Financial Officer, supported by founder & CEO of Formula E, Alejandro Agag.

Julia recalls: "Wanting to implement something this big with – in our case – 2½ years of working with a consultant – we needed to be certain that the budget would be available and the support would continue from the top."

She admits that the audit was a "challenging but enjoyable" process that impacted the whole organisation, examining the way everybody worked. Not only was there the documentation preparation and review and proof gathering, but the necessity for development of a Legal Register, which records all legislation directly or indirectly applicable to operations and activities, in every location an event is held. This is made more complex as, in many cases, events held from year to year may be in different locations within the same country, each with its various requirements and characteristics. Julia's team originally approached a large global consultancy but found that it did not have any superior knowledge or experience in this field than a local law firm, which was engaged to carry out the task.

"THEY ARE A GREAT TEAM, VERY INTELLIGENT. THEY WANTED TO MAKE CERTIFICATION HAPPEN FOR US, HELPING, NOT HINDERING"

Julia recalls: "Our auditor was very good, very professional. She understood events and in particular, what was valid or invalid to them.

"For the initial certification, we agreed on a sampling process, using two events on different sides of the Atlantic: in Berlin and New York. As part of the ongoing process, events in South America, Asia, Africa and Europe will be assessed."



ISO 20121

ISO 20121 is a management system standard that has been designed to help organisations in the events industry improve the sustainability of their event-related activities, products and services.

ISO 20121 is based on the earlier British Standard called 'BS 8901 Specification for a Sustainability Management System for Events', which was first developed in 2007. Due to the high-level interest

in BS 8901, it was decided to create an international version of the standard to coincide with the London 2012 Olympics.

In simple terms, ISO 20121 describes the building blocks of a management system that will help any event-related organisation to:

- Adopt good governance practices
- Become more socially responsible
- Reduce its environmental footprint

ISO 20121 applies to all types and sizes of organisation involved in the events industry – from caterers, lighting and sound engineers, security companies, stage builders and venues to independent event organisers and corporate and public sector event teams.

HOW CERTIFICATION HAS BENEFITTED THE ORGANISATION

It is very evident that internal processes have considerably more buy-in than before the process commenced. All employees are willingly contributing to re-certification, with some proactively approaching Julia's team asking what more they can do to help. It has bestowed a sense of achievement and pride throughout the organisation.

At the time of writing, Formula E is commencing preparation for ISO 45001 – the health and safety certification. "The fact that we have carried out the work for ISO 20121 will be really useful, with much common ground," says Julia.

She sums up with advice for other organisations with similar objectives. "When we began the process, I did not realise either how important or how fruitful it would be. But you must always be accompanied by an expert in ISO certification.

"I definitely recommend SGS. We have a good relationship – they are a great team, very intelligent. They wanted to make certification happen for us, helping, not hindering."

Lead Auditor Ana Inácio comments: "The integration of sustainability in all of the company's activities makes the whole difference. Every department is involved and actively participates in the development of the management system, with this involvement underpinned by a strong leadership commitment and robust internal communication processes".

Ana continues: "This engagement extends to external interested parties. For example, the local providers of the Berlin race were completely attuned to the sustainability requirements of Formula E. The activities put together by the organisation for the local population and student community has contributed to build a strong foundation for future sustainability leaders, essential to combat the sustainability challenges we face."



ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company with more than 95,000 employees operating in a network of 2,400 offices and laboratories around the world.

We provide competitive advantage, drive sustainability and deliver trust. At SGS we are continually pushing ourselves to deliver innovative services and solutions that help our customers move their businesses forward.

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