

NEW PROGRAMME MEANS 8901 WAYS TO GO BEYOND GREEN

Sustainable events came a step closer to reality today with the announcement of the UK's most comprehensive implementation programme for the new British Standard, BS 8901 on Sustainable Event Management. Ranging from large corporate companies through to small and medium sized enterprises, the ten organisations participating in the programme come from every part of the sector, from organisers to venues, suppliers and contractors. The BS 8901 Implementation Programme is managed by the specialist consultancy, the Sustainable Events Group (SEG). Experience and learning from the programme will feed directly into the BS 8901 review process which has just been initiated by BSI British Standards.

"Our programme gives the UK event industry a real chance to lead the world in the application of sustainability principles to their activities and events." said Tim Sunderland of SEG. "This is pretty important when you've got one of the biggest events of all time, the Olympics, less than four years away from its London touchdown."

The programme has the enthusiastic support of BSI British Standards. Anne Hayes, Head of Market Development - Sustainability & Risk at BSI who attended the kick-off workshop said "We are really pleased to see both so many companies wishing to take up the standard as well as the fact that these represent both large and small organizations from across the industry. We hope that their leadership will encourage others to look at the standard and follow in their footsteps."

Participants in the BS 8901 Implementation Programme include:

- 15Hatfields
- Close Circuit
- Eden Catering
- ExCel London
- innovision
- Limelight Sports
- Marylebone Cricket Club (Lord's Cricket Ground)
- Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA) Events
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Workers Beer Company

SEG are setting up further programmes to help organisations implement BS 8901. "Our initial programme was oversubscribed which shows that there is considerable interest from the industry in managing events more sustainably." says Sunderland. "We are therefore setting up additional programmes starting as early as next month and if organisations are interested in becoming involved, then it is not yet too late to let us know."

Craig Dews, Managing Director of Limelight Sports sees the programme as being critical to the success of their business. "Our clients are already talking about BS 8901 and we expect that conforming to this new standard will soon become a minimum requirement to do business in the events industry. We want to be well prepared to meet this eventuality and this programme provides us with the perfect opportunity to be amongst the leaders in achieving BS 8901."

Russell Seymour, Sustainability Manager at Lord's Cricket Ground said "BS 8901 is not just about the environment, important though that is. The event industry has to go beyond that and lead the way in contributing to and developing a sustainable society. This programme is helping us see the added value of our events, both to society and to all aspects of economic activity as well."

Hugh Walker, Managing Director of Eden Caterers is already seeing additional value from the programme "This project reflects Eden's ambition to plan strategically not only for the future of the company but its future within our communities and environment. We are confident that with the help of SEG and the already vibrant interaction of the participating organisations, we will be positioned not simply to achieve the BS8901 standard but to do so with an enviable level of understanding and commitment."

Colin Eade of the Workers Beer Company is also seeing the real business value of the programme. "We considered other management system standards but they didn't meet our needs. BS 8901 however is very different. It challenges the organisation on all fronts and asks the question 'what can we do to make our business more sustainable' which also means more successful. If we are not commercially successful then we are not sustainable."

At the heart of the programme are five workshops in which all the participating companies come together to learn and swap ideas. James Mark, Group Head of Event Management at ExCel London finds the collaborative workshops to be very effective. "The open nature of the workshops means that we are not only learning about sustainability and BS 8901 from the SEG trainers but we are also learning from each other and this in turn is providing real insight into how we can work more effectively and sustainably across the supply chain."

The SEG programme is designed to provide a cost effective route to achieve compliance with BS 8901. "Cost is an important factor in the events industry" comments Adam Conn, Managing Director of the event security firm Close Circuit. "This programme enables small businesses like mine to take the lead on sustainability and the tools provided by SEG are invaluable in providing a head start."

Some organisations see the programme as a continuation of their existing efforts to raise levels of sustainability within the live events industry. Claudia Douglass, Operations Director of innovision, said "Our work with the Sustainable Events Group is a natural extension of the progress that innovision and its clients have been making towards a more sustainable event management model. Through our involvement with SEG we will not only achieve BS 8901 certification but also actively contribute to the development of the standard itself and thereby improve the sustainability of the events industry as a whole."

The programme is being delivered at 15Hatfields, the new conference venue operated by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. The venue itself is also a participant in the programme. Catherine Horsfield, Director of 15Hatfields, feels the standard fits well with her venue's strong commitment to facilitating sustainable events and conferences. "At 15Hatfields we put sustainability at the centre of everything we do from developing a venue made from sustainable resources to purchasing products and services from ethical suppliers and supporting local businesses."

To find out more about the BS 8901 Implementation Programme visit
www.thesustainableeventsgroup.com

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About BS 8901 'Sustainable Event Management Systems'

BS 8901 specifies the requirements for a sustainable event management system and was launched in November 2007. BS 8901 has been designed to help the events industry conduct its business in a more sustainable way and establishes a framework of management best practice. The standard is applicable to event clients, organisers, venues, suppliers and contractors. BSI British Standards have just commenced a review of the standard with a view to updating the standard early in 2009.

The organisations involved in the programme will be looking at every aspect of event management including planning, delivery and auditing their own activities. Management of supply chains, procurement and legacy issues are also all included in the process, and participating organisation will be seeking external verification of the work they have undertaken.

About the Sustainable Events Group

SEG comprises of individuals with many years of experience in sustainability, event management, management systems and certification. The consultancy specialises in helping clients achieve conformance with BS 8901.

SEG's mission is to inspire leadership and change for a sustainable world and to provide the best advice and support to ensure the UK events industry is leading the world on sustainability. SEG also want to be instrumental in helping the event industry shape BS 8901 into a valuable tool.

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