

BS 8901 Pilot implementation programme finishes on a high

The Sustainable Events Group (SEG) delivered the final workshop in their groundbreaking BS 8901 Sustainable Event Management programme on the 5th of December, bringing to a close the first major implementation of the new standard. Ten organisations from across the industry participated in the programme which began in July of last year. David Stubbs, Head of Environment and Sustainability for LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympics Games) spoke congratulating the participants on their vision in embracing the standard. He went on to say that following the launch of the LOCOG Sustainability Sourcing Code, LOCOG will be seeking to be compliant with BS 8901 and will be actively encouraging suppliers to do the same.

Anne Hayes, Head of Market Development at BSI British Standards, who is responsible for the roll out of BS 8901, was also in attendance and expressed thanks to the member organisations for their commitment and leadership in taking up the standard and for the feedback that they had provided. "We focussed the programme on turning BS 8901 into a reality for all the organisations taking part", said Tim Sunderland from SEG. "By doing this we could understand what worked well and what didn't. The learning from our programme is being used by BSI to improve the standard with the intention of launching a new amended version early next year".

The participant organisations were reassured by Patrick Loy, Head of Events at the Greater London Authority (GLA), who explained that BS 8901 is referenced in their tender documents and that a hefty 10 per cent of points awarded in the tender process for GLA events is based upon sustainability performance. He went on to say that he felt it was only a matter of time until all major event clients referred to BS 8901 within their tender documents as it presented a measurable benchmark of competency and commitment to sustainability in the event industry.

The ten organisations involved are all on their way to third party certification. Hugh Walker of Eden Caterers welcomed the fact that third party certification was now available as it means that organisations really need to demonstrate that they are taking BS 8901 seriously. Hugh went on to say "Through the SEG programme we now understand what BS 8901 requires and the effort needed to achieve compliance. Third party certification will establish the credibility of those organisations that have really made the extra effort and are genuinely working to BS 8901".

The Sustainable Events Group is building on the success of this pilot programme and has a second programme beginning in January and a third due to commence in March. The January programme was made available to a number of Industry Bodies and is now fully booked. Ruth Rossington, Executive Director of PLASA said "We feel it is our duty as a representative body to ensure that we keep our members abreast of threats and opportunities in the industry that will impact future success. The SEG programme will enable PLASA Members to get ahead of the rest of the industry and to take a leadership position on the sustainability agenda. We are pleased to be working with SEG to help our members make the changes required to maintain or increase their competitive advantage in a busy marketplace."

Other bodies including ISES and NOEA are also acting as a conduit for their members to take part in future BS 8901 implementation programmes. Richard Limb of the National Outdoor Events

Association said “The industry is changing quickly and in the run up to 2012 we need to make sure that we give our members every opportunity to make themselves prime competitors in the race to win the business that will be on offer”.

The Sustainable Events Group would be interested to hear from anyone interested in attending their third programme.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About BS 8901 ‘Sustainable Event Management Systems’

BS 8901 specifies the requirements for a sustainable event management system and was published 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.

For more information on BS 8901 please visit www.bsigroup.com/bs8901

About the BS 8901 Sustainable Event Management programme

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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