



## TRAINING MODULE 1

# HOW TO ORGANISE SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL EVENTS BASED ON ISO STANDARDS (ISO-20121)



CYPRUS  
SUSTAINABLE  
TOURISM  
INITIATIVE



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## Executive Summary

### EN

The “Training Module 1: How to Organise Sustainable Cultural Events Based on ISO Standards (ISO 20121)” introduces a practical approach to planning and delivering cultural events in a more sustainable way. It is based on the ISO 20121 framework and the principles of sustainable cultural tourism and helps participants understand how sustainability applies in real cultural contexts, not only in environmental terms but also in relation to communities, local economies and cultural heritage. Through a combination of explanations, case studies and interactive activities, the module supports learners in building both knowledge and practical skills that can be applied in their own work.

The module is designed for cultural event organisers, local authorities and professionals involved in cultural tourism. It is structured around three main stages of the event lifecycle: (i) understanding key sustainability concepts, (ii) planning sustainable cultural events and (iii) monitoring and improving their performance over time. Participants learn how to set clear goals, define relevant KPIs, engage stakeholders and apply responsible practices in areas such as accessibility, communication and resource management. By linking planning with continuous evaluation, the module supports the organisation of sustainable cultural events that create lasting value for communities while respecting cultural identity and local context.

### EL

Η «Εκπαιδευτική Ενότητα 1: Πώς να οργανώσετε βιώσιμες πολιτιστικές εκδηλώσεις βάσει προτύπων ISO (ISO 20121)» εισάγει μια πρακτική προσέγγιση στον σχεδιασμό και την υλοποίηση πολιτιστικών εκδηλώσεων με πιο βιώσιμο τρόπο. Βασίζεται στο πλαίσιο ISO 20121 και στις αρχές του βιώσιμου πολιτιστικού τουρισμού και βοηθά τους συμμετέχοντες να κατανοήσουν πώς εφαρμόζεται η βιωσιμότητα σε πραγματικά πολιτιστικά περιβάλλοντα, όχι μόνο σε περιβαλλοντικό επίπεδο αλλά και σε σχέση με τις κοινότητες, τις τοπικές οικονομίες και την πολιτιστική κληρονομιά. Μέσα από έναν συνδυασμό επεξηγήσεων, μελετών περίπτωσης και διαδραστικών δραστηριοτήτων, η ενότητα υποστηρίζει τους εκπαιδευόμενους στην ανάπτυξη τόσο γνώσεων όσο και πρακτικών δεξιοτήτων που μπορούν να εφαρμοστούν στην επαγγελματική τους δραστηριότητα.

Η ενότητα απευθύνεται σε διοργανωτές πολιτιστικών εκδηλώσεων, τοπικές αρχές και επαγγελματίες που δραστηριοποιούνται στον τομέα του πολιτιστικού τουρισμού. Είναι δομημένη γύρω από τρία βασικά στάδια του κύκλου ζωής μιας εκδήλωσης: (i) κατανόηση βασικών εννοιών βιωσιμότητας, (ii) σχεδιασμός βιώσιμων πολιτιστικών εκδηλώσεων και (iii) παρακολούθηση και βελτίωση της απόδοσής τους με την πάροδο του χρόνου. Οι συμμετέχοντες μαθαίνουν πώς να θέτουν σαφείς στόχους, να ορίζουν σχετικούς δείκτες απόδοσης (KPIs), να εμπλέκουν τα ενδιαφερόμενα μέρη και να εφαρμόζουν υπεύθυνες πρακτικές σε τομείς όπως η προσβασιμότητα, η επικοινωνία και η διαχείριση πόρων. Μέσω της σύνδεσης του σχεδιασμού με τη συνεχή αξιολόγηση, η ενότητα υποστηρίζει την οργάνωση βιώσιμων πολιτιστικών εκδηλώσεων που δημιουργούν διαρκή αξία για τις κοινότητες, με σεβασμό στην πολιτιστική ταυτότητα και το τοπικό πλαίσιο.

### IT

Il “Modulo Formativo 1: Come Organizzare Eventi Culturali Sostenibili Basati sugli Standard ISO (ISO 20121)” presenta un approccio pratico per la pianificazione e l’erogazione di eventi culturali in modo più sostenibile. Si basa sul quadro operativo ISO 20121 e sui principi del turismo culturale



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sostenibile e aiuta i partecipanti a comprendere in che modo la sostenibilità si applica ai contesti culturali reali, non solo in termini ambientali, ma anche in relazione alle comunità, alle economie locali e al patrimonio culturale. Attraverso una commistione di spiegazioni, casi di studio e attività interattive, il modulo supporta gli studenti nell'acquisizione sia di nozioni che di competenze pratiche che possono essere applicate al proprio lavoro.

Il modulo è pensato per organizzatori di eventi culturali, autorità locali e professionisti impegnati nel turismo culturale. Si struttura in seno alle tre fasi principali del ciclo di vita dell'evento: (i) comprensione dei concetti chiave della sostenibilità, (ii) pianificazione di eventi culturali sostenibili e (iii) supervisione e perfezionamento della propria prestazione nel corso del tempo. I partecipanti imparano in che modo fissare degli obiettivi chiari, stabilire Indicatori Chiave di Prestazione (ICP) adeguati, coinvolgere i portatori di interesse e applicare delle procedure affidabili ad ambiti quali l'accessibilità, la comunicazione e la gestione delle risorse. Unendo la pianificazione a una valutazione continua, il modulo supporta l'organizzazione di eventi culturali sostenibili che generano un valore duraturo per le comunità rispettando l'identità culturale e il contesto locale.

## ES

El «Módulo de formación 1: Cómo organizar eventos culturales sostenibles basados en las normas ISO (ISO 20121)» presenta un enfoque práctico para planificar y llevar a cabo eventos culturales de una manera más sostenible. Se basa en el marco de la norma ISO 20121 y en los principios del turismo cultural sostenible, y ayuda a los participantes a comprender cómo se aplica la sostenibilidad en contextos culturales reales, no solo en términos medioambientales, sino también en relación con las comunidades, las economías locales y el patrimonio cultural. Mediante una combinación de explicaciones, casos prácticos y actividades interactivas, el módulo ayuda a los alumnos a adquirir tanto conocimientos como habilidades prácticas que pueden aplicar en su propio trabajo.

El módulo está diseñado para organizadores de eventos culturales, autoridades locales y profesionales del turismo cultural. Se estructura en torno a tres etapas principales del ciclo de vida de un evento: (i) comprensión de los conceptos clave de la sostenibilidad, (ii) planificación de eventos culturales sostenibles y (iii) seguimiento y mejora de su rendimiento a lo largo del tiempo. Los participantes aprenden a establecer objetivos claros, definir indicadores clave de rendimiento (KPI) relevantes, involucrar a las partes interesadas y aplicar prácticas responsables en ámbitos como la accesibilidad, la comunicación y la gestión de recursos. Al vincular la planificación con la evaluación continua, el módulo apoya la organización de eventos culturales sostenibles que crean un valor duradero para las comunidades, respetando al mismo tiempo la identidad cultural y el contexto local.

## PT

O «Módulo de Formação 1: Como Organizar Eventos Culturais Sustentáveis com Base nas Normas ISO (ISO 20121)» apresenta uma abordagem prática para planejar e realizar eventos culturais de forma mais sustentável. Baseia-se no quadro da norma ISO 20121 e nos princípios do turismo cultural sustentável, ajudando os participantes a compreender como a sustentabilidade se aplica em contextos culturais reais, não só em termos ambientais, mas também em relação às comunidades, às economias locais e ao património cultural. Através de uma combinação de explicações, estudos de caso e atividades interativas, o módulo apoia os formandos na aquisição de conhecimentos e competências práticas que podem ser aplicadas no seu próprio trabalho.

O módulo foi concebido para organizadores de eventos culturais, autoridades locais e

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profissionais envolvidos no turismo cultural. Está estruturado em torno de três fases principais do ciclo de vida do evento: (i) compreensão dos conceitos-chave de sustentabilidade, (ii) planeamento de eventos culturais sustentáveis e (iii) monitorização e melhoria do seu desempenho ao longo do tempo. Os participantes aprendem a definir objetivos claros, a estabelecer indicadores-chave de desempenho (KPI) relevantes, a envolver as partes interessadas e a aplicar práticas responsáveis em áreas como a acessibilidade, à comunicação e a gestão de recursos. Ao associar o planeamento à avaliação contínua, o módulo apoia a organização de eventos culturais sustentáveis que criam valor duradouro para as comunidades, respeitando simultaneamente a identidade cultural e o contexto local.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**Sustainable event management** refers to planning and delivering cultural events in ways that reduce environmental impact, support local communities and strengthen cultural value. Cultural events (i.e. festivals, performances, exhibitions) often generate waste, consume resources and place pressures on local areas, making sustainability increasingly essential.

This module introduces the principles of **ISO 20121: Sustainable Event Management**, offering a clear, practical framework for integrating sustainability into every stage of an event.

Developed within the **CultMed – Sustainable Cultural Tourism on the Mediterranean** project (Creative Europe Programme), the module aims to equip cultural event organisers, local authorities and stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to design more responsible and community-oriented events.

Training is delivered through a **blended methodology**, including short instructional videos, practical templates, case studies, quizzes and a gamification activity. Through this learning process, participants will gain both an understanding of sustainability concepts and the ability to apply ISO 20121 in real cultural event settings.

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this module is to equip participants with the knowledge and practical tools needed to integrate sustainability into the planning, organisation and evaluation of cultural events. By introducing the principles of **ISO 20121: Sustainable Event Management**, the module supports event organisers, cultural organisations and local authorities in adopting responsible practices that minimise environmental impact, enhance social value and strengthen local economies.

Aligned with the broader goals of the **CultMed** project, this module contributes to the transition toward more sustainable cultural tourism models across the Mediterranean. It promotes approaches that reduce resource consumption, support inclusivity and accessibility and encourage active collaboration with local communities and stakeholders.

Through practical examples, templates, videos, quizzes and interactive learning activities, this training module aims to help participants:

- understand how sustainability applies to cultural events
- apply ISO 20121 principles in real event contexts
- design measurable sustainability objectives, and
- embed responsible practices throughout the event lifecycle.

Ultimately, the purpose of this module is to empower learners to organise cultural events that are not only successful and meaningful, but also aligned with long-term sustainability goals and the values of community-centred cultural tourism.

### 1.2 Methodological Approach

The development of this training module follows the shared WP3 methodology, grounded in CultMed's participatory, competence-based and practice-oriented approach. The training uses a **blended learning format**, combining traditional materials with digital and interactive tools to support flexibility and practical engagement.

Learners will interact with:

- clear explanations of ISO 20121 and sustainability concepts
- case studies

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- practical templates and planning tools
- short instructional videos
- gamified activities
- mini-quizzes and reflection questions

The written module forms the basis for the audiovisual materials and for the piloting activities under WP3. During the piloting phase and the WP4 capacity-building workshops in all partner countries, a **flipped and challenge-based learning approach** will be used. Specifically, participants will review materials in advance and use workshop time for practical exercises, collaborative tasks and real-life problem-solving.

A comprehensive set of interactive activities and games supporting all training modules is provided in **Annex 6: Interactive activities**.

## 1.3 Target Groups

This training module is designed for professionals and organisations involved in the planning, management and delivery of cultural events across the Mediterranean. It supports both **piloting activities under WP3** and the broader **capacity-building workshops under WP4**, which will be implemented in all partner countries, each focusing on a specific module.

The **primary target groups** of this particular training module include:

- **Cultural event organisers** (festivals, performances, community events, cultural fairs)
- **Local and regional authorities** involved in cultural planning or tourism development
- **Tourism boards and destination management organisations (DMOs)**
- **Event management companies and cultural SMEs**
- **Managers of cultural venues, heritage sites and public cultural spaces**

The **secondary target groups** of this particular training module include:

- **NGOs and community groups** active in cultural or environmental initiatives
- **Professionals from creative and cultural industries**
- **Students and early-career practitioners** in culture, tourism or event management
- **Volunteers or support staff** involved in cultural event delivery

## 1.4 Structure of the Module:

This training module is structured around the ISO 20121 Sustainable Event Management System and the European Commission's GreenComp Framework, which together provide the conceptual, managerial and competence-based backbone of the learning process.

ISO 20121 offers the *process logic* for the module, following the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, while GreenComp provides the *competence orientation*, emphasising systems thinking, responsibility, futures thinking and collaborative problem-solving. These frameworks ensure that participants do not only learn *what* sustainable cultural events are, but also *how* to think, plan, collaborate and evaluate sustainability in practice.

The module is organised into three Units, each aligned with a stage of the sustainability management process:

- **Unit 1 – Understanding Sustainable Event Management (PDCA: conceptual foundation):** Introduces sustainability in cultural events, the Four Pillars (environmental, social, economic and cultural), and the relevance of ISO 20121, GreenComp, and Cultural Identity & Community Participation. This Unit sets the strategic groundwork for all later activities.
- **Unit 2 – Planning a Sustainable Cultural Event (PDCA: Plan–Do):** Translates the concepts

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of Unit 1 into practical planning tools: goal-setting, SMART objectives, KPI development, stakeholder engagement strategies and responsible budgeting. This is the “applied” planning stage where participants practise the competences required by ISO 20121 and GreenComp.

- **Unit 3 – Implementing, Monitoring and Improving Sustainability (PDCA: Check–Act):** Focuses on monitoring sustainability performance and identifying improvement actions. A real case study (TIFF Festival) is used for applied learning, allowing participants to experience how evaluation informs continuous improvement.

## 2. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- **Understand** the core principles of sustainable cultural event management and how ISO 20121 and the PDCA cycle support continuous improvement.
- **Set measurable sustainability goals** and **define KPIs** tailored to cultural events in Mediterranean contexts.
- **Identify and engage stakeholders** using simple mapping tools and collaborative problem-solving methods.
- **Plan sustainability actions** related to budgeting, procurement, accessibility and communication.
- **Monitor and evaluate performance**, using case-based evidence to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Apply practical tools** to real or fictional cultural event scenarios.

## 3. MODULE SUBTOPICS (UNITS)

### 3.1 Unit 1 - Understanding Sustainable Event Management

#### 3.1.1 Learning Objective

Learners will understand the foundational principles of sustainable event management, including the three pillars of sustainability, the ISO 20121 Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, and the GreenComp competences that support systems thinking, responsible decision-making, and stakeholder collaboration. By the end of the unit, participants will be able to recognise the value of applying sustainability frameworks to cultural events and identify opportunities for improvement in their local context.

#### 3.1.2 Key Concepts

##### 3.1.2.1 The Three Pillars of Sustainability

Sustainable event management is grounded in the well-established framework of the Three Pillars of Sustainability: environmental, social and economic responsibility. These pillars provide an integrated way to evaluate how cultural events influence local communities, heritage environments and long-term development. They are widely used in sustainability education and event management practice, offering organisers a practical structure for designing events that are both responsible and meaningful. This model (i.e. Three Pillars of Sustainability) are widely recognised across international sustainability frameworks, including **ISO 20121** and the **UN 2030 Agenda** and provides a clear and integrated foundation for understanding the impacts of cultural events and the long-term value they can create.<sup>1 2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Enel Group. *The Three Pillars of Sustainability: Environmental, Social and Economic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.enel.com/learning-hub/sustainable-development/three-pillars-sustainability>

<sup>2</sup> Auaha. *Sustainability in Events: The Three Pillars of Sustainability*. Retrieved from: <https://www.auaha.co.nz/sustainability-in-events/>

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Figure 1: Three (3) pillars of sustainability, Enel Group<sup>3</sup>

To fully understand this framework, it is useful to explore how each pillar contributes to a balanced and responsible approach to event planning:

Environmental Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmentally sustainable cultural events integrate measures such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> implementing environmentally preferred procurement and resource-efficient infrastructure,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> adopting circular economy principles (reuse, recycling, reduction),</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ensuring the protection of natural and heritage-sensitive sites,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> promoting low-carbon mobility solutions for participants and visitors, and</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> monitoring environmental indicators throughout the event lifecycle.</li></ul></li></ul>
Social Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A socially sustainable cultural event:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> ensures accessibility and inclusivity for all social groups, including marginalised or vulnerable populations,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> engages local stakeholders through participatory planning processes,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> respects and promotes local cultural traditions and identities,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> fosters safe, welcoming environments that encourage social cohesion, and</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> generates opportunities for learning, volunteerism, and civic engagement.</li></ul></li></ul>
Economic Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economically sustainable cultural events:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> adopt transparent and responsible financial planning aligned with sustainability goals,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> strengthen local value chains and prioritise local procurement,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> create stable opportunities for local employment and skills development,</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> contribute to year-round economic resilience rather than seasonal peaks, and</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ensure that financial decisions support the preservation of cultural and environmental assets.</li></ul></li></ul>

Thus, the three pillars of sustainability are mutually reinforcing and must be addressed holistically. ***A cultural event cannot be considered sustainable if it achieves environmental gains while excluding local communities, nor can it generate economic value at the expense of cultural heritage or social trust.*** Sustainable cultural events integrate environmental protection, community wellbeing and economic resilience in equal measure.



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This integrated approach aligns directly with the vision of the CultMed project, which promotes cultural tourism that is authentic, community-centred, environmentally responsible and future-oriented across the Mediterranean.

### 3.1.2.2 Cultural Sustainability: The Emerging Fourth Pillar

In addition to the well-established environmental, social and economic pillars, contemporary sustainability frameworks increasingly recognise **culture as a fourth pillar of sustainable development**. Cultural sustainability refers to the protection, transmission and enhancement of cultural heritage, creative expression, identity and community values, ensuring that development does not erode the cultural foundations that give meaning and cohesion to societies.

This perspective is widely supported in international policy. The global organization United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) formally declared **culture the fourth pillar of sustainable development** in 2010, arguing that sustainable development models must include cultural rights, heritage safeguarding and support for creativity alongside environmental and socio-economic goals.<sup>4</sup> UNESCO similarly emphasises that culture is a driver and enabler of sustainability, essential for community resilience, social inclusion and responsible tourism.

For cultural events, this means that sustainability is not only about minimising environmental impacts or strengthening local economies, but it also requires:

- **safeguarding local cultural heritage and traditions,**
- **ensuring respectful and ethical cultural representation,**
- **fostering intergenerational knowledge exchange, and**
- **enabling communities to shape how their culture is shared with visitors.**

*To help learners consolidate the four pillars of sustainability before moving into real examples, a short matching activity is provided.*

Participants are invited to complete the **Pillar Matching Exercise** (see **Annex 2: Matching Pillars**), where they match short real-life situations with the correct sustainability pillar. This quick activity serves as a warm-up that enables learners to distinguish between different sustainability dimensions.

### 3.1.2.3 Cultural Identity & Community Participation

Cultural events are deeply connected to the identity, memory and social fabric of the communities that host them. For this reason, **cultural identity and community participation** form a central component of sustainable event management. In the Mediterranean context, where heritage, traditions and local narratives play a defining role, these elements are not only desirable but essential for ensuring that events are meaningful, respectful and beneficial.<sup>5 6</sup>

**Cultural identity** encompasses the traditions, values creative expressions and heritage that shape how communities understand themselves. Events such as festivals, exhibitions and local celebrations act as platforms where identity is performed, shared and transmitted across generations. Sustainable event management therefore requires that organisers consider how

<sup>4</sup> UCLG (2010). *Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development*. United Cities and Local Governments.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO. *Culture & Sustainable Development*. Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/culture>

<sup>6</sup> UNWTO. *Sustainable Development of Tourism*. Available at: <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>

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event design, programming and communication influence the preservation and expression of cultural identity. This includes acknowledging the cultural significance of event venues, respecting traditional practices and ensuring that heritage elements are presented accurately and ethically.

**Community participation** is equally fundamental. Sustainable cultural events cannot be designed in isolation; they require the active involvement of the people who live, work and hold cultural connections in the area. Participatory approaches (i.e. stakeholder consultations, community workshops, co-creation sessions and volunteer engagement) strengthen legitimacy, improve cultural relevance and foster a sense of shared ownership.

When communities are involved in decision-making, events become more inclusive, context-sensitive and aligned with local expectations.<sup>7</sup>

In practical terms, community participation contributes to sustainability in several ways:

- **Cultural relevance**
  - Local knowledge helps ensure that the event reflects authentic cultural values rather than externally imposed narratives.
- **Social cohesion**
  - Community involvement fosters trust, dialogue, and collaboration among residents.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion**
  - Local stakeholders can identify barriers faced by diverse groups and propose appropriate solutions.
- **Environmental stewardship**
  - Residents often possess valuable knowledge about heritage-sensitive areas and local ecosystems.
- **Fair economic distribution**
  - Engaging local businesses, artisans and creative professionals supports economic sustainability.

For cultural events, the interplay between identity and participation creates a strong foundation for long-term sustainability. Events rooted in local cultural realities and shaped collaboratively with the community contribute to the preservation of heritage, strengthen social bonds and enrich the visitor experience in ways that are respectful and authentic.

### 3.1.2.3 ISO 20121: Sustainable Event Management System

**ISO 20121** is an **international standard** that provides organisations with a structured management system for integrating sustainability across all stages of event planning, delivery, and legacy. Rather than serving as a checklist, it functions as a holistic framework that helps event organisers identify, manage and continuously improve the social, environmental and economic impacts of their events.<sup>8</sup>

The standard applies to **all types and scales** of events (*i.e. from small cultural gatherings and community festivals to international mega-events*) making it highly relevant for Mediterranean

<sup>7</sup> European Commission. *European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage*. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5a9c3144-80f1-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1>

<sup>8</sup> ISO (2024). *ISO 20121 – Sustainable Events – Specification with guidance for use*. International Organization for Standardization. <https://www.iso.org/standard/86389.html>

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cultural tourism contexts.

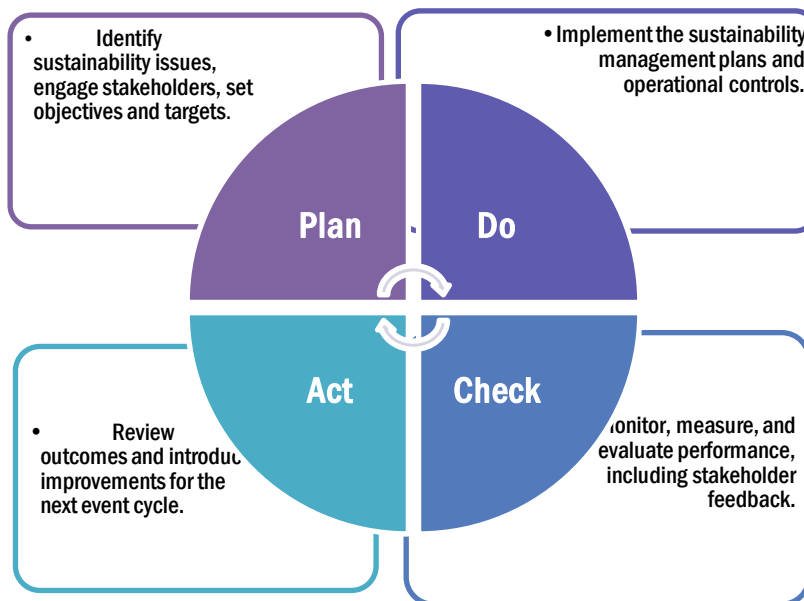
Cultural events operate at the intersection of heritage, community identity and local economies.

ISO 20121 supports organisers in:

- embedding sustainability into decision-making and governance structures,
- managing resource use (energy, water, materials) responsibly,
- strengthening stakeholder participation, including local communities,
- ensuring accessibility, inclusion and ethical practices,
- leaving a positive social and cultural legacy, and,
- ensuring accountability through transparent reporting and improvement cycles.

With the **2024 revision**, the standard places even greater emphasis on *social legacy, inclusivity and diverse means of demonstrating conformity*, making it more accessible for smaller cultural organisations that may not pursue full third-party certification.

ISO 20121 is grounded in a continuous improvement logic structured around a cycle comparable to the **“Plan–Do–Check–Act” (PDCA) model**<sup>9</sup> used in other ISO management:



<sup>9</sup> Malik, A. (2024) *Mastering sustainable event management: Your complete guide to ISO 20121:2024 certification in the Middle East*, SGSCorp. Available at: <https://www.sgs.com/en-ae/news/2024/04/mastering-sustainable-event-management-your-complete-guide-to-iso-20121-2024-certification> (Accessed: 01 December 2025).



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***This approach encourages cultural event organisers to move beyond isolated “green actions” (e.g., recycling, switch to LED lights) and instead embed sustainability within governance, procurement, logistics, communication and community relations.***

By adopting ISO 20121 principles, whether through full certification, self-declaration or progressive alignment, organisers can:

- **Reduce environmental impacts**, including waste, energy use and emissions.
- **Improve community relations** by involving residents, cultural groups and local SMEs.
- **Enhance visitor experiences** through inclusive and responsible event design.
- **Strengthen credibility and transparency**, contributing to greater trust among stakeholders.
- **Contribute to local economic resilience** through fair procurement and legacy planning.

For cultural tourism specifically, applying ISO 20121 helps preserve cultural identity, safeguard community interests and build long-term sustainability into events that attract both local and international audiences.

#### 3.1.2.4 GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework

The **GreenComp framework**<sup>10</sup>, developed by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC), provides a shared set of sustainability competences that support individuals in making responsible, future-oriented decisions across different professional contexts. Although not specific to event management, GreenComp aligns closely with the skills needed to design and deliver sustainable cultural events and complements the ISO 20121 management approach.

GreenComp is structured around **four competence areas**, all of which reinforce the principles introduced in this module:

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<sup>10</sup> European Commission, Joint Research Centre (2022). *GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework*. Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en)

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## Embodying Sustainability Values

Encourages ethical decision-making, cultural respect, inclusion, and awareness of environmental and social responsibility, essential for organising events that respect local communities and cultural identity.

## Embracing Complexity in Sustainability

Supports systems thinking and the ability to analyse how environmental, social and economic impacts interact across an event's lifecycle. This strengthens understanding of the sustainability challenges addressed through ISO 20121.

## Envisioning Sustainable Futures

Promotes creativity, long-term visioning and innovative planning. This helps event organisers imagine alternative ways of delivering cultural events (e.g., circular practices, inclusive formats) that generate long-term benefits.

## Acting for Sustainability

Focuses on collaboration, stakeholder engagement and the capacity to turn sustainability goals into action. These support responsible procurement, communication, and continuous improvement, core components of ISO 20121.

By integrating GreenComp into this module, learners are not only introduced to the technical requirements of sustainable event management but also develop the broader values, behaviours and problem-solving capacities needed to apply sustainability in real cultural tourism contexts. This supports CultMed's mission to promote cultural events that are environmentally responsible, socially inclusive and economically meaningful.

To support learners in visualising the challenges and opportunities of sustainable cultural tourism, this unit includes a **short video**. The video illustrates real examples from cultural events in Mediterranean destinations where poor planning has caused cultural, social or environmental pressures and contrasts them with successful sustainable practices.

The video is available on the CULTMED platform and can be accessed at the following link:  
<https://cultmed.eu/digital-library/>

For ease of access, especially in case of printed versions of the module, a QR code is also provided below.





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### 3.1.3 Case Studies

#### Case Study – London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games

*The first mega-event certified under ISO 20121*

##### Why it matters:

London 2012 was the **first global event** to implement and receive certification under ISO 20121, becoming a landmark example of sustainable event management.

##### Key Achievements Enabled by ISO 20121

- **Clear Sustainability Governance**  
The organising committee (LOCOG) adopted a formal sustainability management system aligned with ISO 20121, ensuring coordinated planning, monitoring and continuous improvement.
- **Environmental Performance**
  - 60% of Games-time waste was reused, recycled or composted
  - Low-carbon construction and temporary venues reduced environmental footprint
  - Responsible water, energy and materials management across all sites
- **Social & Community Benefits**
  - Strong focus on accessibility and inclusion (venues, services, mobility)
  - Volunteer engagement programme (>70,000 volunteers)
  - Community participation in planning and legacy initiatives
- **Economic & Legacy Impact**
  - Efficient resource use reduced operational costs
  - New long-term local jobs and skills development
  - Transformation of East London into a regenerated cultural & recreational hub.

#### Why this Case Study helps trainees/learners:

London 2012 demonstrates how ISO 20121 can be applied **at any scale**, using the same principles to:

- reduce negative impacts,
- maximise social and economic benefits, and
- build a positive legacy for communities.<sup>11 12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (2012). *London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Sustainability Report*. Available at: [https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/Official%20Past%20Games%20Reports/Summer/2012/ENG/2012-RO-S-London\\_V3\\_eng.pdf](https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/Official%20Past%20Games%20Reports/Summer/2012/ENG/2012-RO-S-London_V3_eng.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Institution of Environmental Sciences (2013). *Environmental Scientist: Sustainability of the London 2012 Games*. Available at: [https://www.the-ies.org/sites/default/files/journals/env\\_sci\\_feb\\_13.pdf](https://www.the-ies.org/sites/default/files/journals/env_sci_feb_13.pdf)



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### Case Study – FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022

*The first FIFA World Cup certified under ISO 20121*

#### Why it matters:

The 2022 FIFA World Cup was the first in history to be certified under ISO 20121, showcasing how a mega-event can apply structured sustainability management to minimise impacts and create long-term benefits. FIFA has confirmed it will continue applying ISO 20121 for future World Cups, including 2026.

#### Key Achievements Enabled by ISO 20121

##### ○ Sustainability Governance

- Comprehensive Sustainability Management System with clear planning, audits and monitoring.
- Multiple conformity pathways (self-assessment, supplier validation, external certification).

##### ○ Environmental Performance

- Energy-efficient stadium technologies and low-carbon operations.
- Waste reduction through segregation, recycling initiatives and awareness campaigns.
- Sustainable procurement (recycled uniforms, compostable packaging).

##### ○ Social & Community Benefits

- Strong accessibility measures (inclusive seating, mobility services, audio description).
- Human rights due diligence and supplier labour audits.
- Volunteer and community engagement programs.

##### ○ Economic & Legacy Impacts

- Improved operational efficiency and process standardisation.
- Skill development for thousands of volunteers and staff.
- Stadiums and infrastructure designed for long-term community use.

#### Why this Case Study helps trainees/learners:

- Demonstrates how sustainability principles can be applied even in **large, complex, high-pressure events**.
- Provides practical examples relevant to **event organisers of any size**, showing that ISO 20121 is scalable and flexible.
- Shows the link between **sustainable event management, community engagement, human rights** and long-term legacy planning.
- Helps learners visualise how structured systems (Plan–Do–Check–Act) translate into real



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operational improvements.<sup>13 14</sup>

After reviewing the case studies, learners are invited to reflect on how different cultural events demonstrate the principles of sustainable event management. The questions below guide participants to analyse real situations, identify patterns and connect theoretical concepts with practical realities.

*“What can small/local cultural events could learn from the case studies?”*  
*“What sustainability principles are already present in your local events?”*

Complementary interactive activities and practical exercises related to this unit are available in **Annex 6: Interactive activities.**

### 3.1.6 Key Takeaways

- Sustainable event management is based on balancing **environmental, social and economic** considerations.
- Cultural events become sustainable when they **respect local identity, engage communities and benefit local stakeholders.**
- ISO 20121 provides a **structured framework** that helps organisers plan, implement and continuously improve sustainability practices.
- Even small actions (i.e. reducing waste, improving accessibility, or supporting local suppliers) can significantly increase the long-term impact of an event.
- Sustainability is an **ongoing process**, not a one-time effort. Learning, monitoring and adapting are essential parts of improving event management.

## 3.2 Unit 2- Planning a Sustainable Cultural Event

### 3.2.1 Learning Objective

At the end of this unit, learners will be able to **plan a sustainable cultural event** in line with ISO 20121 principles and the realities of Mediterranean cultural tourism.

More specifically, they will be able to:

- **Define clear and measurable sustainability goals (KPIs)** that respond to environmental, social and economic priorities commonly found in Mediterranean cultural destinations (e.g. seasonality, local heritage protection, community wellbeing etc).
- **Map and engage key stakeholders**, including local authorities, cultural associations, community groups, SMEs and artisans, reflecting the high community involvement typical of Mediterranean cultural events.
- **Design a sustainable event plan**, including responsible budgeting, socially inclusive practices and procurement choices that support local economies and cultural identity.
- **Integrate sustainability into the planning process**, ensuring events enhance local heritage, minimise environmental impacts and strengthen community participation across Mediterranean contexts.

<sup>13</sup> FIFA (2023). *Sustainability at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 – Sustainability Targets*. Retrieved from: <https://inside.fifa.com/tournament-organisation/world-cup-2022-sustainability-report/sustainability-at-the-fifa-world-cup-2022/sustainability-targets>

<sup>14</sup> FIFA (2023). *Sustainability Performance Monitoring*. Retrieved from: <https://inside.fifa.com/tournament-organisation/world-cup-2022-sustainability-report/governance/transparency-and-accountability/sustainability-performance-monitoring>



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This unit focuses on transforming sustainability concepts into **practical planning tools** suitable for cultural events across the Mediterranean region.

### 3.2.2 Key Concepts

#### 3.2.2.1 Setting Measurable Sustainability Goals & KPIs

Planning a sustainable cultural event begins with defining **clear sustainability goals and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**. According to recognised good practice in sustainable event management<sup>15 16 17</sup>, early goal-setting provides direction, ensures accountability and allows organisers to monitor the environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of the event.

Within the ISO 20121 Sustainable Event Management framework<sup>18</sup>, goal-setting forms part of the “**Plan**” phase of the **Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA)** cycle. ISO 20121 emphasises that sustainability objectives must be *measurable, evidence-based* and *linked to continuous improvement*. This approach helps event organisers move beyond broad intentions (“reduce waste”, “support the community”) toward practical, trackable outcomes.

In the Mediterranean region, where cultural events often take place in fragile natural landscapes or heritage-rich settings, measurable goals are essential. Research on sustainable cultural tourism conducted in WP2 of CultMed shows that community involvement, resource management and the protection of cultural identity are critical success factors. Measurable KPIs allow organisers to demonstrate progress in these areas, particularly in contexts affected by seasonality, overtourism, limited public transport, or high cultural sensitivity.

To support structured goal-setting, this unit uses a **5-Step Framework** (see Table 1). During the workshop, participants will identify sustainability issues, draft goals and link them to KPIs. This exercise strengthens the GreenComp competences “*Systems Thinking*” and “*Promoting Sustainable Practices*”.

#### **A 5-Step Framework for Setting Sustainability Goals in Cultural Events**

Across all sustainability guidelines reviewed, the following steps consistently appear:

*Table 1: A 5-Step Framework for Setting Sustainability Goals in Cultural Events*

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Identify the event’s material sustainability issues	Translate issues into SMART goals	Link each goal to a measurable KPI	Identify & map key stakeholders	Communicate the goals internally and externally

<sup>15</sup> Creative Structures Worldwide. *Planning a Sustainable Event*.

<https://creativestructuresworldwide.com/planning-a-sustainable-event/>

<sup>16</sup> University of Gloucestershire. *ISO 20121: Essential for the Future Success of Event Venues*.

<https://uniofglos.blog/eventsglos/2015/03/09/iso20121-essential-for-the-future-success-of-event-venues/>

<sup>17</sup> ICLEI – Sustainable Event Guidelines.

<https://e-lib.iclei.org/ICLEI%20SUSTAINABLE%20EVENT%20GUIDELINES.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> ISO 20121 Standard. <https://www.iso.org/standard/86389.html>

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<p>The first step is determining <i>what matters most</i> for sustainability in the specific cultural context.</p> <p>Relevant issues for Mediterranean cultural events include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>waste from food stalls and single-use items</li> <li>impact on historic sites or local traditions</li> <li>noise, traffic or congestion affecting residents</li> <li>accessibility barriers</li> <li>carbon emissions from travel</li> <li>low local economic benefit</li> </ul>	<p>SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound</p> <p>Example (Mediterranean village cultural festival):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Reduce mixed waste by 40% compared to last year by introducing compostable packaging and recycling stations.</i></li> </ul> <p>This step develops the “<b>Plan</b>” phase of the ISO PDCA cycle and aligns with GreenComp’s strategic competence.</p>	<p>The KPI shows whether progress is happening. Examples of <b>event-appropriate KPIs</b> from international practice can be found in <b>Annex 3: List of KPIs (examples)</b>.</p>	<p>Sustainable event planning requires identifying all individuals, groups and organisations affected by or are able to influence the event.</p> <p>Mapping stakeholders (influence/interest) helps organisers prioritise engagement and supports ISO 20121 principles of inclusiveness, transparency and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>ISO 20121 and ICLEI guidelines both emphasise that sustainability goals must be known by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staff</li> <li>volunteers</li> <li>suppliers</li> <li>attendees</li> <li>community members</li> </ul> <p>Clear communication strengthens trust, accountability, and community ownership, central to sustainable cultural tourism.</p>
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While the 5-Step Framework provides a clear process for designing and monitoring sustainability within cultural events, several thematic areas require additional emphasis to fully reflect the realities of event planning in Mediterranean contexts. In particular, effective stakeholder engagement, responsible budgeting and procurement, and accessible, inclusive communication are essential dimensions of sustainable event management. These areas are strongly aligned with ISO 20121 requirements for transparency, inclusiveness and continuous improvement, and they are especially relevant in Mediterranean cultural settings where events rely heavily on community participation, local economic networks, and sensitive heritage environments.

For this reason, the unit explores these themes in dedicated sections before applying the full framework. Stakeholder engagement strategies help organisers build trust and co-create solutions with community actors. Sustainable budgeting and procurement ensure that resources are used efficiently and that local suppliers, artisans and cultural practitioners benefit equitably. Communication and accessibility inclusion guarantee that diverse audiences can understand, access and meaningfully participate in the event. Together, these themes reinforce the practical application of the 5-Step Framework and prepare learners to analyse real sustainability challenges.

## Stakeholder engagement strategies

Effective stakeholder engagement is central to planning a sustainable cultural event and is closely aligned with the principles of ISO 20121, which emphasises transparency, inclusiveness and



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continuous improvement. Cultural events involve a wide range of actors, such as local authorities, community groups, cultural organisations, small businesses, volunteers and audiences, each with different expectations and forms of influence. Identifying these actors early, understanding their needs and involving them meaningfully in decision-making strengthens both the event's sustainability and its cultural relevance.

This process reinforces **GreenComp's "Collaborative Problem-Solving" competence**, which highlights working with diverse stakeholders to define shared challenges, co-design solutions and collectively evaluate outcomes. In practice, applying this competence means:

- mapping stakeholders based on their level of influence and interest,
- creating open communication channels,
- involving community actors in shaping the event narrative, and,
- ensuring that vulnerable or underrepresented groups are not excluded.

By integrating these principles, event organisers enhance community ownership, reduce potential conflicts and support a culturally grounded and socially responsible approach to sustainable event planning.

Key stakeholders in Mediterranean cultural events often include:

- local authorities
- residents and neighbourhood groups
- cultural organisations & heritage bodies
- SMEs, artisans, food vendors
- volunteers & accessibility groups
- visitors and tourism actors

### **Sustainable Budgeting & Responsible Procurement**

Sustainable budgeting ensures that cultural events allocate resources in ways that minimise environmental impact and maximise social and economic value. In line with ISO 20121, budgeting becomes part of a broader sustainability management system, by helping organisers plan responsibly, anticipate risks and make informed choices.

Responsible procurement supports this by prioritising suppliers and materials that are ethical, inclusive, and environmentally conscious. This reflects the GreenComp principles of **responsibility, resource efficiency and futures thinking**, encouraging organisers to consider long-term impacts rather than short-term cost alone.

Hence, when planning a budget, organisers should consider:

- **Resource efficiency:** reducing waste, reusing materials, choosing low-impact options.
- **Inclusive access:** allocating funds for accessibility tools or translations.
- **Local procurement:** supporting local suppliers, artisans, and communities.
- **Responsible sourcing:** selecting items that are reusable, recyclable, or sustainably produced.

### **Communication & Accessibility Inclusion**

Effective communication and accessibility are core elements of planning sustainable cultural events. ISO 20121 emphasises that events must be **inclusive, transparent and accessible to all stakeholders**, ensuring that information is understandable, participation is equitable and barriers are minimised.

From a GreenComp perspective, this aligns with the competencies of **empathy, responsibility**

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**and systems thinking**, encouraging organisers to consider diverse user needs (i.e. linguistic, physical, digital and social) and to design events that everyone can meaningfully participate in.

Cultural events often attract diverse audiences and their success depends on participants being able to access information and spaces without obstacles. Sustainable communication therefore means:

- **Clear information:** using simple language, visual aids and multilingual materials when needed.
- **Accessible formats:** subtitles in videos, alternative text for digital content, readable documents.
- **Inclusive event design:** providing ramps, interpretation, accessible seating and clear signage.
- **Engaging local communities:** ensuring communication channels reach all stakeholder groups, not only those already involved.

These practices reinforce the goals of sustainable cultural tourism by making cultural participation more equitable and strengthening community ownership.

This unit is complemented by the short **video “Inside the Planning Room: Designing a Sustainable Cultural Event”**, which illustrates how sustainability goals, stakeholder engagement and early planning decisions take shape in practice. The video offers a concise, visual walkthrough of the planning logic discussed in the unit, helping learners see how theoretical principles translate into real-world event design.

The video is available on the CULTMED platform and can be accessed at the following link: <https://cultmed.eu/digital-library/>

For ease of access, especially in case of printed versions of the module, a QR code is also provided below.



Following the above framework, participants will **work in groups using the fictional case study to apply each step in practice**. By positioning themselves as the event organisers of the ‘Athens Cultural Rhythms Festival’, groups will analyse the event’s sustainability challenges and complete the exercise in **Annex 4: 5-Step Framework for Planning Sustainable Cultural Events**. Their task is to identify material issues, set SMART goals, link them to KPIs, map stakeholders and propose communication and engagement strategies for improving the festival’s sustainability performance.

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## **Functional Case Study – The “Athens Cultural Rhythms Festival”**

*A large-scale cultural event facing sustainability challenges*

### **Event Overview**

- **Location:** Athens City Centre (Zappeion)
- **Duration:** 2 days
- **Visitors:** ≈ 70,000 attendees (locals, international tourists, cultural enthusiasts)
- **Type:** Open-air cultural festival showcasing music, visual arts, gastronomy, and heritage storytelling
- **Organiser:** Municipality of Athens & Cultural Foundations

### **Objectives:**

- Celebrate Athenian cultural heritage and diversity
- Strengthen local creative industries and artisans
- Promote community participation in urban cultural life
- Extend cultural activity beyond summer peak tourism
- Ensure responsible use of a heritage-rich area

The festival presents several sustainability challenges typical of Mediterranean urban cultural events:

### **Environmental Issues**

- High waste generation from food stalls and single-use materials
- Increased mobility, thus congestion, emissions and pressure on pedestrian zones
- Risk of damage to heritage paths and green areas
- High energy use for sound and lighting

### **Social & Cultural Issues**

- Accessibility barriers in historic streets
- Feeling of exclusion among long-term residents
- Risk of cultural commodification due to tourist-heavy audiences
- Noise and overcrowding in neighbourhoods

### **Economic Issues**

- Uneven distribution of economic benefits for local SMEs
- Reliance on external vendors
- Limited opportunities for micro-enterprises and artisans

Having explored how sustainable planning principles apply to a real scenario through the case study, learners are now invited to reflect on how these concepts translate into their own organisational or community contexts. This reflective step consolidates understanding and strengthens the connection between theory, practice and local cultural tourism realities.

*“How can you adapt these planning methods to your context?”*



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*“Which sustainability KPIs make sense for your organisation?”*

Complementary interactive activities and practical exercises related to this unit are available in **Annex 6: Interactive activities.**

### 3.2.6 Key Takeaways

- Clear sustainability goals and KPIs are the foundation of effective planning.
- Stakeholder engagement ensures relevance, legitimacy and community ownership.
- Sustainable budgeting & procurement translate values into concrete choices.
- Accessibility and inclusive communication are essential for equitable participation.
- The 5-Step Planning Framework helps structure decisions aligned with ISO 20121.
- Planning must reflect Mediterranean cultural realities (heritage, community, seasonality).
- The case study exercise shows how these principles apply to real cultural events.

## 3.3 Unit 3 – Implementing, Monitoring & Improving Sustainability

### 3.3.1 Learning Objective

By the end of this unit, learners will understand how to monitor sustainability performance during and after a cultural event and how to implement improvements following the “Check–Act” stages of the Plan–Do–Check–Act cycle, which underpins the ISO 20121 approach to sustainable event management. Using a real case study, learners will practise analysing results and designing improvement actions that enhance sustainable cultural tourism outcomes.

### 3.3.2 Why Monitoring & Improvement Matter

Sustainable event planning does not end once the event is implemented. According to ISO 20121, organisers must:

- **Check** whether sustainability objectives and KPIs were achieved.
- **Act** by implementing improvements for next years event.

This ensures events evolve over time, minimise negative impacts and maximise social, cultural, environmental and economic value. In sustainable cultural tourism, especially in Mediterranean destinations where events occur in sensitive cultural landscapes, continuous improvement is essential for **protecting local identity, managing visitor pressures, strengthening community trust and ensuring long-term viability of the event.**

To help learners understand how monitoring and evaluation can work in real event settings, this unit introduces a case study from the **Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF)** in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. A peer-reviewed study by **Negruşa et al. (2016)**<sup>19</sup> investigated how **residents perceived the festival’s economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts**, using survey data from a large sample of local participants.

Although these findings do **not** represent the organisers’ internal sustainability evaluation, they provide a valuable and credible **external perspective**. An external perspective that cultural event organisers must take seriously during the **Check** stage of the ISO 20121 PDCA cycle. Community

<sup>19</sup> Negruşa, A.L. *et al.* (2016) *Study of perceptions on cultural events’ Sustainability*, MDPI. Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/8/12/1269> (Accessed: 28 November 2025).



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perceptions form an important part of post-event monitoring, especially in cultural tourism contexts where local acceptance, cultural identity and quality of life are central to long-term event sustainability.

This case study therefore offers a realistic example of how sustainability performance can be assessed through **feedback, impact perceptions and community responses**. Learners will examine the insights emerging from the study and then practise translating these into **improvement actions** as if they were planning the next edition of the event.

To support this learning process, the following **case study** is provided. Please read the summary below and then complete the applied group exercise in **Annex 5: Sustainability Monitoring & Improvement Worksheet**, where you will analyse the TIFF example and propose realistic Check–Act improvements as if you were part of the organising team.



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### Case Study – Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF)

#### Event Overview

- **Location:** Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- **Duration:** 10 days (annual event)
- **Visitors:** ≈ 100,000 participants per edition (local residents, domestic & international cultural tourists)
- **Type:** International Film Festival (400+ film screenings across indoor cinemas, cultural venues and open-air spaces)

#### Key Findings on Sustainability Performance

##### Environmental Dimensions

- Environmental impacts are generally perceived as low.
- The festival contributed to the renovation and reuse of abandoned cultural venues.
- Occasional issues include traffic congestion and increased energy use during peak events.

##### Sociocultural Dimensions

- Identified as the strongest sustainability pillar in the study.
- Enhances cultural life, community pride, and social cohesion.
- Long-standing initiatives such as EducaTIFF (launched in 2009) strengthen cultural participation by developing film literacy among children and young audiences.
- The festival also includes thematic programmes such as EcoTIFF, which use curated film content to engage audiences with environmental topics through a cultural lens.
- Some segments of the local population feel less connected, depending on their interest in film culture.

##### Economic Dimensions

- The festival contributes to the local economy through visitor spending, tourism flows and additional revenue for municipal budgets.
- Residents perceive TIFF as attracting investment and strengthening the city's cultural economy.
- A significant part of the festival's budget relies on public funding and sponsorships.

Complementary interactive activities and practical exercises related to this unit are available in Annex 6: Interactive activities.

#### 3.3.3 Key Takeaways

- Monitoring sustainability performance shows whether event goals and KPIs were achieved.
- The ISO 20121 Check–Act stages provide a structured way to evaluate results and implement improvements.
- Community-based evidence, such as the TIFF case study, offers valuable insights into the real impacts of cultural events.
- Effective evaluation requires linking evidence to action, by identifying what worked, what did not and what needs adjustment.



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- Improvement measures should strengthen all sustainability pillars; environmental, social, economic and cultural.
- Sustainable cultural events evolve over time. Each edition should improve on the previous one through documented lessons learned.
- Applying a structured PDCA process enhances transparency, trust and long-term cultural value.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1 - Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Sustainable Cultural Tourism	Tourism that values and preserves cultural assets while ensuring benefits for local communities, respecting natural and cultural environments, and promoting long-term resilience.
ISO 20121	An international standard for Sustainable Event Management that provides a structured framework (Plan–Do–Check–Act) to embed sustainability across all aspects of event planning and delivery.
Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) Cycle	A continuous improvement model used in ISO 20121: Plan (set objectives), Do (implement actions), Check (monitor performance), Act (improve future events).
KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)	KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)
SMART Goals	Measurable indicators used to monitor progress toward sustainability goals (e.g., waste reduction %, local suppliers %). Objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound, used to structure sustainability targets.
GreenComp Framework	The European Sustainability Competence Framework outlining competencies such as systems thinking, responsibility, cooperation, and future-thinking needed to act sustainably.
Stakeholder Mapping	A tool to identify stakeholders, understand their influence and interest, and define effective engagement strategies.
Responsible Procurement	Selecting suppliers and products that minimise environmental impact, support ethical labour practices and promote local cultural and economic value.
Inclusive Accessibility	Designing events so all people, including persons with disabilities, linguistic minorities, and vulnerable groups, can participate equally.
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Systematic collection and assessment of data to understand event performance measured against KPIs and sustainability goals.
Material Issues	The sustainability themes most relevant to an event’s context (e.g., waste, community impact, cultural preservation), used as a foundation for setting goals.

### Annex 2: Matching Pillars

#### Match the Sustainability Action with the Sustainability Pillar



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## A. Sustainability Actions

1. Introducing a free community shuttle bus to the event
2. Providing recycled and reusable stage materials
3. Booking internationally famous artists, increasing ticket prices
4. Offering sign-language interpretation for live performances
5. Highlighting local craftspeople and traditional artists
6. Implementing pay-what-you-can entry for low-income residents
7. Ensuring food vendors use compostable packaging
8. Partnering with local SMEs for logistics and services
9. Designing a quiet/relaxation space for neurodivergent visitors
10. Monitoring energy use during rehearsals and performances

## B. Pillars

- A. Environmental
- B. Social
- C. Economic
- D. Cultural

## Annex 3: List of KPIs (examples)

### A. Environmental KPIs

#### Waste & Materials

- % of waste diverted from landfill
- Kg of waste per attendee
- % reduction in single-use plastics
- % of compostable or recyclable materials used
- Number of recycling stations installed

#### Energy

- Energy consumption per participant
- % of renewable energy used
- Reduction in electricity consumption vs previous editions

#### Water

- Litres of water used per attendee
- % reduction in water use

#### Mobility & Carbon

- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per attendee (transport + energy)
- % of attendees using sustainable transport
- % of suppliers within 50 km
- Km travelled for logistics compared to previous events

### B. Social KPIs

#### Accessibility & Inclusion

- Number of accessibility measures implemented
- Visitor satisfaction with accessibility
- % of venue areas fully accessible

#### Community Engagement

- Number of community partners involved
- % of staff/volunteers from the local community
- Attendance from underrepresented groups

#### Wellbeing & Safety



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- Number of incidents / safety events
- Volunteer satisfaction score

### **C. Economic KPIs**

- % of budget spent on local suppliers
- Total economic benefit to local SMEs
- Number of new local jobs created (temporary or permanent)
- Cost savings from sustainable practices (waste reduction, energy efficiency)
- Increase in local procurement year-to-year

### **D. Cultural KPIs**

#### **Cultural Heritage & Authenticity**

- Visitor satisfaction with cultural authenticity
- % of programming dedicated to local traditions
- Number of local cultural practitioners involved
- Number of activities related to cultural heritage protection

#### **Cultural Impact / Legacy**

- Creation of new cultural collaborations
- Increase in local cultural participation
- Number of educational cultural activities delivered



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#### Annex 4: 5-Step Framework for Planning Sustainable Cultural Events

Split into groups and read the fictional case study and do the following exercise.

##### STEP 1 — Identify the event's material sustainability issues

*What matters most in this cultural event? (environmentally, socially, economically, culturally)*

#	Material Issue	Why is it important? (local impact / community needs)
1.		
2.		
3.		
...		

##### STEP 2 — Translate issues into SMART sustainability goals

For each issue you identified, draft a **SMART goal**.

#	Material Issue	Draft Goal
1.		
2.		
3.		
...		

Then, choose a goal and complete the following:

## SMART GOALS PLANNER

Identify a goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Break it into actionable steps, each with its own deadline.



Specific

*What exactly do you want to achieve?*



Measurable

*How will you track your advancement?*



Attainable

*Evaluate the feasibility of your goal.*



Relevant

*How does it fit into your broader objectives?*



Time-bound

*What is the deadline?*



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A KPI shows whether progress is happening.

#	Goal	KPI	Measurement Method	Target
1				
2				
3				

#### STEP 4 — Identify and map Stakeholders

List all individuals, groups, or organisations affected by or involved in this event.

Stakeholder (Name/Group)	Their Role / Why They Matter	Their Needs / Expectations	Influence (H/M/L)	Interest (H/M/L)

#### STEP 5 — Communicate the goals internally and externally

Describe how you, as the organisers, would communicate these sustainability goals to:

- staff and volunteers
- local authorities
- suppliers and vendors
- community members
- visitors and tourists

For the most important stakeholders (2–4 groups), define a simple engagement plan.

Stakeholder	Preferred Engagement Method (meeting, email, workshop, co-design session)	Engagement Goal	Contribution to Sustainability



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## Annex 5: Sustainability Monitoring & Improvement Worksheet

### Instructions:

Working in small groups, read the case study summary “*Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF)*”. Then complete the following three tasks as if you were preparing the next edition of the festival.

### Task 1 — Select Priority Issues to Monitor (“Check”)

From the sustainability insights presented (environmental, socio-cultural, economic), discuss: “Which 2–3 sustainability issues require closer monitoring for the next edition of TIFF?”

#	Priority Issue	Why this issue matters? (based on the case study)
1		
2		
3		

### Task 2 — Propose “Check” Actions (How would you monitor performance?)

For each priority issue you identified, decide:

- **What evidence** you need (e.g. audience feedback, crowd counts, accessibility audits, energy use data).
- **Which tools** you will use (e.g. surveys, volunteer reports, ticketing data, simple environmental measurements, stakeholder interviews).

Provide practical monitoring ideas.

#	Issue	What evidence would you collect?	How would you collect it? (Monitoring tool/method)
1			
2			
3			

### Task 3 — Propose “Act” Actions (What improvements would you make?)

Using your monitoring insights, propose realistic improvement actions for the next edition of the festival. These can include operational adjustments, stakeholder engagement ideas or community-focused improvements.

#	Issue	Improvement Action (Act)	Expected Sustainability Benefit
1			
2			
3			

## Annex 6: Interactive activities

#	ACTIVITY TYPE	LINK	QR CODE
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# CULT MED

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1	Training Video 1	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdYnBetPFwI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdYnBetPFwI</a>	
2	Training Video 2	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxK4kKbtCZs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxK4kKbtCZs</a>	
3	Educational Games	<a href="https://cultmed.eu/educational-games/">https://cultmed.eu/educational-games/</a>	
5	Interactive Quizzes	<a href="https://cultmed.eu/interactive-activities/">https://cultmed.eu/interactive-activities/</a>	