

8 Evaluating the Organisation: (I)

Learning objectives

- Know how an event or event-tourism organisation can be evaluated with regard to each of its management functions and its overall effectiveness and success.
- Be able to implement ISO principles for effective organisations.
- Understand how ownership and mandate are linked.
- Know the meaning of governance and its importance for evaluation.
- Be able to describe and evaluate an organisation's business model.
- Be able to assess the adequacy of administrative services.
- Understand the roles of planning and specific types of plan.

8.1 Introduction

In terms of complexity, evaluating the event or event-tourism organisation ranks very high. There will be many stakeholders involved, the issues are sometimes difficult to define, and the scope of evaluation is wide. But this is also why a permanent, comprehensive evaluation system has to be in place.

Consultants are sometimes employed to provide an external evaluation or audit of an organisation, and certifying bodies do it, but ensuring that on-going evaluation and continuous improvement are implemented is the responsibility of directors/owners, with CEOs and other managers having to report regularly on issues and progress.

If the organisation and its management is structurally weak or incompetent, any event they produce or any strategy they pursue is likely to be seriously flawed. However, defining the 'effective organisation' is not in itself easy. It is indeed possible for loosely organised volunteers to produce a great event, with all the mistakes hidden from view (yes, I have been there!). There is not necessarily a one-to-one correlation between sound organisation and successful event outcomes.

In this chapter the starting point is ISO standards, as these provide structure and guidance for an evaluation system that looks at the whole organisation, as opposed to specific issues or problems. So does the Event Compass, described in the previous chapter. Figure 8.1 provides a framework for the remaining sections

of this chapter and the next. It clusters inter-related topics into seven categories, but this is for convenience only. Each topic is examined with emphasis on providing pertinent goals, evaluation measures and methods.

Figure 8.1: A framework for evaluating the event organisation



8.2 Standards

The whole purpose of international standards is to ensure that organisations conform to expected standards of policies, procedures, documentation and management systems. For the events sector we have The Global Reporting Initiative Event Organisers Supplement, and international standard ISO 20121: Event Sustainability Management Systems.

According to Meegan Jones, author of the book *Sustainable Event Management, A Practical Guide* (2018), these standards are underscored by the principles of sustainable development such as those prescribed in the UN Global Compact, and embrace social responsibility and principles outlined in ISO 26000 Social Responsibility. They require an organisation to put in place a transparent process through which it systematically evaluates the issues relevant to its operations and sets its own objectives and targets for improvement.

8.2.1 ISO standards for a quality management system

Source: <https://www.iso.org/standard/62085.html>

All ISO standards have many elements in common. These are generic and can be adapted to any organisation. The sustainability standards have a more specific intent. Notice the emphasis on quality, and keep in mind that it means different things to different organisations. I associate quality with effectiveness.

“ISO 9001:2015 specifies requirements for a quality management system when an organisation:

a) needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and

b) aims to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.”

Commitment to ISO leads to external certification by experts, and implementing an internal auditing system. Internal audits equate with systematic evaluation, not just financial audits. ISO not only leads to systematic quality planning and evaluation but also focuses management’s attention on continuous improvement and risk prevention.

8.2.2 ISO principles

Seven principles guide ISO 9001: 2015, and for each of these I have added some pertinent goals and KPIs. Note the similarities with the previously discussed CIPP and Balanced Scorecard Models, and the Event Compass.

Principle 1: Customer focus

All events must take a marketing or customer orientation, even if they are free to invited guests. A marketing or consumer orientation focuses managers’ attention on the customer experience, rather than becoming pre-occupied with design, logistics or delivery of a programme. Sometimes guest or customer satisfaction is not the top goal, nor is profit or revenue generation. Owners/managers might very well define quality and success in other ways, such as delivery of community service, client needs, media attention and image making, or tourism-related economic impacts. In the table below both orientations are included. *Clients*, in this context, could include stakeholder groups or constituencies such as people in need, cultural groups, companies, clubs and teams.