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## HOW TO MAKE UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO EVENTS MORE SUSTAINABLE

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**Abstract:** In recent decades, the evolution of environmental concerns has reflected a significant change in the objectives of institutions. The approach, once centered on economic and financial issues, is now shifting towards a broader vision that considers social values and environmental impacts. This work aims to explore and encourage the implementation of sustainable practices in the design, organization and execution of events at the University of Aveiro (UA).

The main objective of this work is to solve the challenge of how to make university events more sustainable, establishing processes that also enhance the positioning of the UA brand.

In a world increasingly aware of the importance of environmental preservation and social responsibility, sustainable events are emerging as an essential practice for discovering ecologically correct and socially responsible alternatives, while developing replicable processes for sustainable event management.

The methodology applied by the University of Aveiro based on ISO 20121 - System for Sustainable Event Management which offers a comprehensive framework for planning, executing and monitoring sustainable events.

This certification requires planning and execution with environmental, social and economic. It promotes a holistic approach that makes it possible to improve all phases of the event, from the selection of suppliers to waste and energy management. At the University of Aveiro, the implementation of this standard aims not only to make events more sustainable and improve the university's reputation, but also to align with its mission of forming more aware and active citizens by promoting awareness of social and environmental responsibilities.

The standard, although little studied and referenced in the literature (figure 1), is related to eleven of the seventeen SDGs by ISO, indicating its broad applicability and relevance

to sustainability issues. Ronalter; Poltronieri; Gerolamo, (2023).

The phases to be considered for the effective implementation of this standard at the University of Aveiro are as follows:

- Initial Diagnosis: Assessment of the university's current situation - carried out at the two largest national education fairs - Qualifica and Futurália;
- Implementation Planning: Defining objectives, sustainable strategies and determining the scope of the management system;
- Implementation of Actions: Implementation of the strategies defined, within the scope of the events to be monitored - UA Day, Welcome, Sustainable Campus 2024 Conference, UA 2024 Anniversary.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous analysis of results and necessary adjustments - AU, Day Reception, Sustainable Campus 2024, Conference AU Anniversary 2024
- Possible Certification - UA Day Anniversary 2024

The Sustainable Campus Conference 2024 (CCS2024) will be adopted by the AU as a pilot event by carrying out an intermediate audit to monitor the application of the ISO 20121 standard. To this end, the principles of the standard were taken into account during the preparation of the conference application and in its organization, and will also be applied during and after the event. An example of this is the implementation and encouragement of actions to mitigate/compensate for the carbon emissions resulting from the event. As such, the organization of the event calls on all participants to adopt an environmentally responsible attitude. These and other actions encourage event participants to good practices have been compiled in a GOOD PRACTICE, available on the event's website. GUIDE

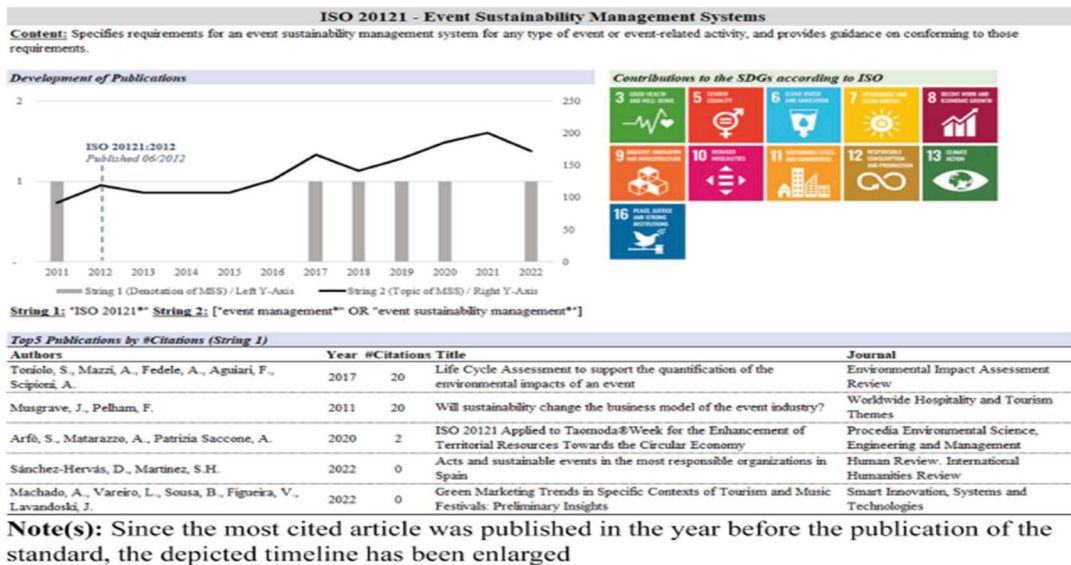


Figure 1- Bibliometric overview on ISO 12121

Source: ISO management system standards

With the implementation of this standard in the organization its events, the University of Aveiro expects the following results:

- Improving efficiency in resource : management Reducing waste and optimizing the use of materials.
- Promoting environmental awareness: Active involvement of *stakeholders* in sustainable practices.
- Increased participant satisfaction: Providing an event experience more in line with sustainability values.
- Strengthening UA's reputation: As a leading institution in sustainability practices in higher education by being the first university to obtain this certification.

## CONCLUSION

The application of the ISO standard 20121 at the University of Aveiro represents an innovative and effective strategy for organizing sustainable events, in line with goals sustainable development. This work not only improves event management, but also reinforces the UA's commitment to sustainability and social, positioning it as a benchmark in sustainability practices in the academic context. Responsibility

## REFERENCES

Ronalter, L. M., Poltronieri, C. F., & Gerolamo, M. C. (2023). ISO management system standards in the light of corporate sustainability: A bibliometric analysis. The TQM Journal, 35(9), 256-298. Acedido em 10 de maio 2024 em <https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-09-2022-0279>