

CASE STUDY



# CROKE PARK SCORES

A **GLOBAL FIRST** WITH BS 8901 CERTIFICATION



In May 2010 Dublin's Croke Park Stadium gained BS 8901:2009 certification, making it the world's first stadium to receive this prestigious award for sustainable event management.

Stadium Director Peter McKenna says: "We decided from the start there could be no half measures when it came to sustainable development – it was going to be the way we managed all our processes at Croke Park. From our organisational principles right through to all our operational activities and those of our contractors, sustainability is now the key pillar in the way we manage our business."

### **CROKE PARK**

Located 1 km from the centre of Dublin, Croke Park has been a focus for Irish sporting life for over a century.

A sports ground since 1884 and a stadium since 1913, Croke Park is home to Gaelic sports and headquarters to the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA). The complex also features the GAA Museum and Croke Park Conference Centre.

Páirc an Chrócaigh Teoranta (PCT) manages and operates Croke Park, which is the fourth-largest stadium in Europe, hosts around 90 major events annually, accommodates up to 82,300 people at a time and welcomes a total of 2.2 million visitors a year.

Croke Park is the venue for key GAA fixtures such as the Senior Hurling and Football Championships; other sports such as international rugby and football; as well as rock and pop concerts.

### **ABOUT BS 8901:2009**

BS 8901 is a sustainability management system for events. This relatively new standard is designed to help events organisations recognise their impact on the economy, society and environment. It aims to maximise positive impacts,

minimise negative impacts and foster balanced, enduring growth. This is achieved through greater:

- economic prosperity – ensuring long-term success, for example by generating strong income flows and controlling costs
- social responsibility – ensuring social progress by engaging and respecting staff, contractors and the community
- environmental responsibility – respecting the environment

### **CROKE PARK'S PATH TO BS 8901:2009**

In May 2009 Croke Park gained ISO 14001:2004 environmental management system certification. Its ISO 14001-related environmental actions include:

- establishing an environmental policy
- complying with all environmental legislation
- minimising resources consumption and environmental impacts
- forming an environmental management group, comprising representatives from the stadium, GAA and on-site contractors
- setting environmental goals and monitoring and continuously improving performance
- encouraging staff, suppliers and contractors to adopt environmentally sound practices

### **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES**

In May 2009 the GAA and Ireland's Electricity Supply Board (ESB) established Cúl Green, a joint initiative that has already succeeded in making Croke Park a carbon-neutral stadium.

In 2009 Croke Park also won the Repak Partnership Award for outstanding achievements in recycling and waste management.

Croke Park's environmental improvements include:

- reducing electricity consumption by 28% between 2007 and 2009
- opening recycling and composting facilities across the site
- increasing the recycling rate from 21% in 2008 to 52% in the first quarter of 2010
- sourcing all the stadium's electricity from a wind farm
- installing advanced energy monitoring and building management systems
- fitting solenoid valves in the toilets, thereby saving 312,000 litres of water a day
- receiving over 33,000 energy-saving pledges on the Cúl Green website, for example from spectators prepared to share cars or use public transport

### **BS 8901 ASSESSMENT**

BS 8901 adds economic and social considerations to the environmental aspects covered by ISO 14001. Organisations can choose to apply for ISO 14001, BS 8901 or both, and in either order and at any time.

Becky Toal, Lead Auditor at independent assessment body SGS, says: "After gaining ISO 14001 it was a natural next step for Croke Park to go for BS 8901 certification in sustainable events management."

BS 8901 shares many of the common management principles of other standards such as ISO 9001 (quality management) and ISO 14001. This includes the fundamental target-plan-do-check-review-revise cycle of continuous improvement.

Applying for and retaining BS 8901 involves a pre-certification assessment, the certification assessment itself and annual surveillance visits carried out by a third-party assessment body such as SGS.



Alan Gallagher, Operations Manager at Croke Park, says: "Sustainability is central to our activities here at Croke Park. BS 8901 shows that what we do in the area of sustainability we do right, and that we're committed to constant improvement."

Croke Park chose SGS Ireland to carry out its BS 8901 assessment. Alan Gallagher says: "SGS undertook our ISO 14001 assessment so we knew them already. SGS is the leading assessment body in Ireland and it was the only organisation in the country offering assessments to BS 8901."

SGS audited Croke Park under three main categories: environment, social and economic. Environmental practices scrutinised included recycling, reduction of carbon footprint and reduced use of energy and water; the social strand included health and safety, community and other stakeholder engagement, and the contribution of a contented and committed workforce; and the economic strand included assessments of financial and legal compliance and the management of contractors.

During the BS 8901 assessment SGS reviewed Croke Park's documentation and procedures and spoke with staff, contractors and others. "SGS proved to be thorough and professional," says Alan Gallagher.

Croke Park staff have been involved with BS 8901 from the start. Niamh McGroder, Environmental Manager at Croke Park, says: "There are regular staff meetings, some staff have been trained as internal auditors and others attend the monthly meetings of Croke Park's Sustainability & Environment Group.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES**

Croke Park's BS 8901-related sustainability initiatives include:

- publishing comprehensive sustainability, environmental and health and safety policies

- setting targets for using less energy and water, and for more recycling
- procuring from suppliers committed to sustainability
- improving public transport to the stadium
- providing a quarterly newsletter for all staff and contractors
- appointing a community liaison officer, partly to develop Croke Park's Community Fund Scheme
- producing an employee handbook
- hosting at least 10 on-site activity days a year for children from across Ireland

#### **"PHENOMENAL RESULT"**

Alan Gallagher says: "Being the first stadium in the world to be awarded BS 8901 is a phenomenal result – we're both delighted with our achievement and excited about the future. Among other things BS 8901 shows how relatively small improvements in our operations can make a massive difference to our sustainability."

For Croke Park the benefits of BS 8901 include:

- an enhanced reputation, helping it to attract more events and sponsorship
- lower energy, water and waste handling costs
- clear strategies, processes and goals
- more integrated management decision-making
- stronger teamwork and a more motivated, focused workforce
- easier recruitment of top talent and increased retention

#### **WIDER POTENTIAL**

Croke Park now demonstrates best practice in sustainability and will be an example for other stadiums to follow. It will be used, for example, as a case study as part of efforts to ensure the 2012 London Olympics are the world's first fully sustainable games.

Across the events industry BS 8901 can be used to drive continuous innovation, creativity and improvement. For example: venues can provide free tickets for those who support community projects; event organisers can save paper and other materials by running events without free handouts; and on-site catering companies can offer menus based on lower-CO<sub>2</sub> ingredients.

BS 8901 is relevant to event organisers, venues, suppliers, contractors and trade associations – in fact anyone who needs to consider the economic, social and environmental aspects of events.

Becky Toal of SGS says: "Croke Park has shown the way forward by ensuring that sustainability management is embedded throughout its operations. Other stadiums have great potential to embed sustainability and can learn valuable lessons from Croke Park on stakeholder engagement, operational controls and supply chain management."

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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