



CASE STUDY TITLE

Green Gold for the Bislett Alliance (Oslo Bislett Games)

SUMMARY

The Bislett Alliance has the stated aim of staging the eco-friendliest sports event in the world. The organizers intend to achieve their goal by applying international standards.

BACKGROUND

After 29 years of working with the same principal sponsor, the Oslo Bislett Games had to think outside the box when this sponsor terminated operations in Norway in 2016. Instead of seeking out a new principal sponsor, the Bislett Alliance, which organizes the event, chose to implement a green turnaround.

'We set ourselves three goals: we were to create the most sustainable international athletics event in the world; we were to be the leading meeting place for sustainable businesses, organizations and sport; and we were to be a showcase for Oslo's ambitions to stand proud as a modern, sustainable city,' relates Steinar Hoen, Meeting Director for the Oslo Bislett Games. This was just after it became known that Oslo had applied to become European Green Capital 2019.

STRATEGY

In order to achieve its goals, the Bislett Alliance has teamed up with Zero to work actively with two standards, ISO 14064 on greenhouse gasses and ISO 20121 on sustainable events.

ZERO (Zero Emission Resource Organization) is an independent, non-profit organization that was founded in 2002 and has one 'client', the climate. Zero works to ensure that everyone can make a difference and become part of the solution.

AT A GLANCE

COUNTRY

- Norway

LEVEL

- National

SDG ADDRESSED

- SDG 13 - Climate Action

Zero has a knowledge-based approach to the climate issue and wants to develop zero-emission solutions, at the expense of solutions that produce emissions.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Huge Reduction in Emissions

'The Oslo Bislett Games have been certified according to the ISO 14064 greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting and verification standard. This involves a number of aspects; for instance, participants are to use public transport, we have introduced sorting at source at the stadium, and all energy stems from renewable sources. We are also the first sports facility in Norway



RESULTS & IMPACT

to have its own solar energy installation on the roof,' says Steinar Hoen. He explains that this has helped the Bislett Alliance to cut the travel budget for participants by almost 40 per cent, to reduce climate gas emissions by 39 per cent, and to boost the level of sorting at source by more than 50 per cent.

The Most Sustainable Event in Norway

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Accounting and Verification Standard forms the basis for ISO 20121, the standard for sustainable events. The 2018 Oslo Bislett Games became the first sports event in Norway to be certified according to ISO 20121. This standard is a practical tool for managing events such that they contribute to all three dimensions of sustainability: finance, environment and society.

'In order to achieve the goals for this green turnaround, we have chosen to apply standards. ISO 14064 and ISO 20121 emphasize the seriousness of the work we are putting in. ISO 20121 also carries a requirement for us to improve on an ongoing basis. This means that our work is by no means done now that the event has been certified; we have to focus continuously on becoming more and more sustainable,' relates Steinar Hoen.

Inspiring Others

'ISO 20121 lays down the guidelines for many of the aspects that are important to organizers of major events – the management system, for instance. Here, we have cut down on our vulnerability by making the workplace cloud-based. Another part of the standard stipulates that we should communicate information openly so as to inspire other businesses and organizations. As a result, I continue to participate in various events where I talk about the green journey we have been on,' he adds.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Clear Impact on Marketing

Following the green turnaround, the Oslo Bislett Games have attracted several new, green and sustainable sponsors.

'I'm convinced that the work we put in on both standards has had a great impact for us in the context of marketing, even though this wasn't our principal motivation for making the green move. Our primary aim was to take the lead as a good example when Oslo stepped into its role of European Green Capital 2019. Looking back on it, however, we have actually been a 'First Mover' in the fields of sport and sustainability. This has triggered a host of enquiries and resulted in our entering into partnerships with several companies that have clear targets for their work with sustainability. There are few sports organizers that have really got to grips with sustainability work, so we have been pretty much on our own in this segment for almost two years – which is, of course, hardly a drawback,' he concludes.





POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

ISO 14064, a series of standards on greenhouse gasses, and ISO 20121 on sustainable events, are available through the national standards body. Organizations are free to adopt and implement standards, with a small fee to access the standard.

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