WORKSHEET 1.4

The Figure That Was Never Made

Subchapter 1.4 · case in the book: Cape Town

If your largest conference client asked tomorrow how much food was left after its last annual meeting, would the figure exist in your hotel, or would someone first have to estimate it? And do you know what the answer would cost you, and what the missing answer costs?

This worksheet turns the tools of the subchapter into a form you can fill in. The texts come from the book; the empty columns are for your own property. Adapt it before use: an unadapted checklist is exactly what the book warns against.

Practical application: what to do in your property

Step (from the book)	Done?	What we found / owner
One event measured in full: For the largest recurring event, Ndlovu and the kitchen recorded food cost, buffet and plate returns, room energy and waste once, completely, by hand where necessary.		
Quantities in the function sheet: Planned, issued and returned quantities now sit in the function sheet the kitchen keeps anyway, and returns are weighed at the end of the shift, separately for buffet and plate.		
One person sees the whole: Dlamini took responsibility herself for the data on each event, from proposal to debrief. Sales passes on her figures and invents none. She wrote to Adams that most data were not available today, would be collected at the March conference, and that she herself was responsible.		
No tender set aside unread: The shareholders released ZAR 130,000 for scales, containers and changes to the banqueting software. Sales now reports the missing data of every tender it does not enter, with its value. Measures that do not pay but fit what the hotel stands for are named as such in the policy.		

These steps are the book's method, not requirements of ISO 20121. Evidence can take whatever form suits the property; a separate document is needed only where an applicable requirement, or the property's own system, makes it necessary.

Verification Pact: what is believed, tested against the standard

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
Sustainability under ISO 20121 is an environmental topic	No. Under 4.1 social, economic and environmental impacts all belong to it	
The standard requires proof that the system pays	No. Weighing costs and benefits is guidance (A.13 c), not a requirement	

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
The standard sets food waste indicators	No. It is no scoring system; waste quantities appear only as examples in the annexes (A.20, C.3)	
A certificate earns higher prices	No. The standard says nothing about prices	
Leadership can hand sustainability to an officer	Only partially true. Roles can be assigned (5.3); leadership and integration remain with top management (5.1)	
The system must be integrated into business processes	Yes. 5.1 b)	

Common mistakes: a self-check

Mistake (from the book)	Present here?	Action / owner
Asking whether the system pays instead of what the hotel knows.		
Answering questionnaires with adjectives instead of figures.		
Setting a form beside the operation that lasts until the first follow-up question.		
Seeing the client as the only source of value, when food cost and energy are costs the hotel can cut alone.		
Setting tenders aside unread, so the hotel never learns what it missed.		
Dressing decisions on values up as business cases.		
Promising clients that a system earns a premium.		
Handing the whole topic to an officer, when integration into business processes stays with leadership.		

Operative synthesis

- **Do we know which clients ask for sustainability data, and what revenue they bring?: It shows what depends on the answers**
- **Can we state food waste in kilograms for our largest event?: Unknown waste is unknown food cost**
- **Do planned and returned quantities appear in the function sheet?: Data from running processes cost little**
- **Is one person responsible for the data on each event?: Otherwise sales answers with adjectives**
- **Do we know which tenders we skipped for lack of data?: Missed access never appears in the accounts**
- **Have we named openly which measures we take from conviction, not for return?: Disguised value decisions cost credibility**

- **Act on immediately. Answer the client honestly, name the person responsible and the date by which data will exist, and start weighing buffet and plate returns at the next large event.**
- **Plan for. Add planned, issued and returned quantities to the function sheet, measure one recurring event in full, and give the work a named budget line approved by the owners.**
- **Monitor going forward. Track food cost against returns per event, log every tender skipped for lack of data with its value, and review both at every debrief.**

Action plan for our property

Action	Owner	Due	How we will know it worked

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 8a «The Helm», subchapter 1.4. Edizioni Effedore, 2026. Clause references are paraphrased; this sheet does not reproduce the text of ISO 20121. It is not legal advice: the law that applies is that of the place where the property operates.