

# Sustainable Rail Programme

## Rail Industry Sustainable Development Self-assessment Framework

*A tool to determine how well sustainable development is embedded in an organisation*

### User Guidance

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## Introduction to the framework

The Rail Industry Sustainable Development Framework is designed to help organisations gain a better understanding of how they perform against the Rail Industry Sustainable Development Principles (the SD Principles). This user guide is for people who want to use the framework.

### *Why use the framework?*

Experience shows that it is sometimes hard to know whether you are making progress on embedding the sustainable development into the way that your organisation works. What needs to change, and how far towards that are you? This framework is designed to help you answer such questions and move your organisation (and the wider rail industry) towards a more sustainable, resilient business model.

The framework's primary purpose is to help assess the progress of an organisation or department towards embedding the SD Principles. It can also assist with the following:

- creating a dialogue between teams and colleagues about sustainable development
- creating a better understanding of performance in different areas of an organisation
- creating a baseline and approach to enable you to benchmark your organisation's performance against the SD Principles (and also potentially against your peers)
- acting as a management tool for planning and measuring improvements
- enabling better communication both of sustainable development issues and of the performance of rail-industry organisations.

The aim of this project was to help organisations assess the extent to which they are acting upon and embedding sustainable development. This framework was developed in 2011, with extensive engagement from the rail industry.

### *How to use the framework*

The framework has five parts:

#### **1. This user guide**

This document provides the background and rationale behind the framework, as well as useful tips on completing the various sections and making your assessment meaningful. Please read this (or the relevant website pages) before you start your self-assessment, as it will affect how you respond to the questions. The user guide includes a flow chart that will help you to understand where you are in the process of using the framework, and therefore what you need to do next.

#### **2. The pre-assessment checklist**

This short list of questions ensures that you are fully prepared by the time you come to the full self-assessment questionnaire. It also provides advice that will help you to properly prepare and therefore get maximum benefit from it. This checklist is set out in Annex B of this document.

#### **3. The self-assessment questionnaire**

The multiple-choice questions that will allow you to assess your organisation against the five levels of performance for each of the principles. The questionnaire is available on the website.

#### **4. The results**

Shows you your organisation's level for each principle, based on the answers that you provided to the self-assessment questionnaire. It also outlines what you need to do to get to the next level. Available through the website.

Should you require additional support to that provided in this document or on the software, please contact [sustainable-railprogramme@rssb.co.uk](mailto:sustainable-railprogramme@rssb.co.uk).

## Introduction to the Rail Industry Sustainable Development Principles and the framework

The Sustainable Rail Programme (SRP) is a cross-industry programme set up to tackle sustainable development on behalf of the industry at a cross-industry system level. It focuses on those areas that require significant cross-industry coordination or involve significant government and policy input.

In February 2009 the SRP published the SD Principles. These ten principles represent the core values of the rail industry and are fundamental to delivering a sustainable railway at the centre of the transport system – a railway that meets the needs of society without compromising future quality of life. The SD Principles embody what sustainable development means for the railway.

The purpose of these principles is to inform and become an integral part of the rail industry's culture and decision-making processes. It is recognised that the principles will need to be balanced to achieve a sustainable transport system that contributes to prosperity, the wellbeing of people and the health of the planet.

### The Rail Industry Sustainable Development Principles:

- 1. Customer driven** – Embed a culture where dialogue with customers puts them at the very heart of the railway, and where they are able to make optimal travel and logistics decisions.
- 2. Putting rail in reach of people** – Position rail as an inclusive, affordable and accessible transport system through the provision of information and accessible facilities.
- 3. Providing an end-to-end journey** – Work together with all transport modes to provide an integrated, accessible transport system.
- 4. Being an employer of choice** – Respect, encourage and develop a diverse workforce. Support its wellbeing and actively consider and address the challenges of the future global labour market.
- 5. Reducing our environmental impact** – Operate and improve the business in a way that minimises the negative impacts and maximises the benefits of the railway to the environment.
- 6. Carbon smart** – Pursue initiatives to achieve long-term reductions in carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency, new technology and lower carbon power sources and facilitate modal shift, helping others make more carbon-efficient journeys.
- 7. Energy wise** – Maximise rail's energy efficiency for traction and non-traction use.
- 8. Supporting the economy** – Boost the productivity and competitiveness of the UK, at a national and regional level, through the provision of efficient passenger and freight services and by facilitating agglomeration and catalysing economic regeneration.
- 9. Optimising the railway** – Maximise the rail system's capability and build on its strengths to deliver a transport system that is efficient and offers good value for money.
- 10. Being transparent** – Promote a culture of open and accountable decision-making and measure, monitor and report publicly on our progress towards sustainability.

For more information on the principles, including a more detailed description of each, please see the RSSB website [www.rssb.co.uk](http://www.rssb.co.uk).

Since the principles were published the SRP has been committed to helping the industry to embed them into its practices.

### *What the framework doesn't do*

This framework does not assess the results of embedding the SD Principles into your organisation. It does not, for instance, assess how good your energy-efficiency measures are, or the strength of your accessibility programmes. This framework simply assesses the measures that are in place internally to produce those outcomes.

It is not our intention to publish or report the results of your self-assessment. We have taken an approach that encourages organisations to accurately assess their progress. This is because we want to make this less about achieving a high score and more about understanding where you are and what needs to be done to improve.

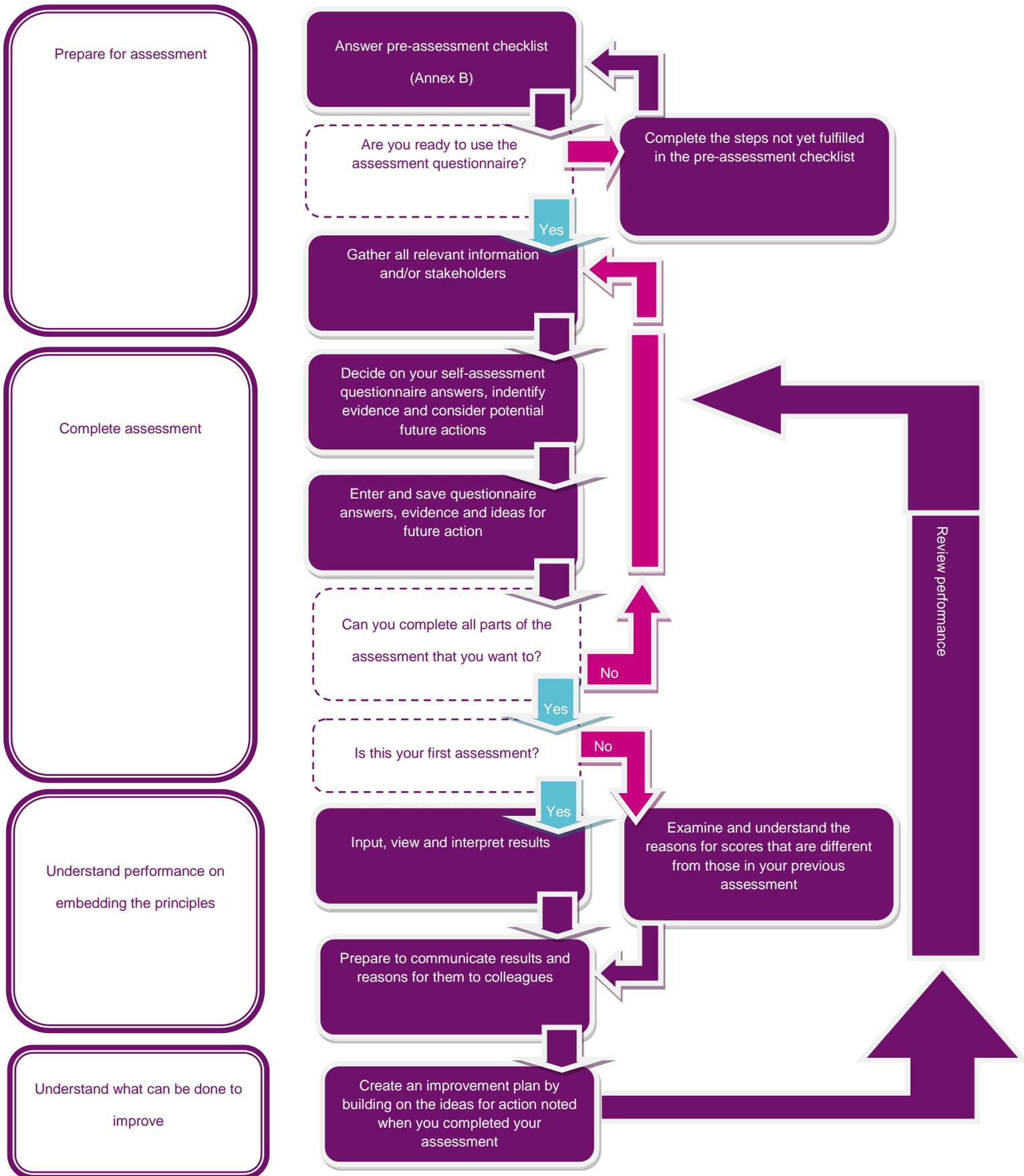
### *Who to involve?*

Different organisations may choose to complete the framework in different ways. Piloting the framework has shown that completing it with others from within an organisation adds value to the process. Using information, insight and expertise from people within your organisation, rather than answering the questions on your own, helps to provide a wider cross-team understanding of sustainability in your organisation. A matrix showing who could be consulted on specific questions is set out in Annex C.

It is the responsibility of rail-industry companies to adopt and implement the SD Principles within their own organisations. For this reason we encourage organisations to use the whole framework. It has nevertheless been designed to allow for a staggered approach: each individual principle can be assessed on its own. We leave it up to you as a user to decide where your priorities lie, and therefore which principle(s) to start with.

Finally, it is important that an organisation has an 'owner' of the framework. This will be a key person in the organisation who has access to the people and resources needed to complete the questionnaire.

## The process of using the framework



## Understanding the levels of progress in the questionnaire

The framework is based on five levels of progress towards embedding the principles. Each level has its own personality, and you will likely recognise your organisation as generally belonging to one of these as soon as you see them. The levels are all explained below, and Table 1 provides an overview.

We don't expect many organisations to be achieving Level 5 (pioneer), though we hope to encourage some to strive for that level. We hope that very few organisations will be at Level 1 (at risk) for any principle, but it is worth including it as a level in order to highlight immediate areas for attention.

### Level 1: At risk

This is the lowest level an organisation can be at in the framework. As the name suggests, an organisation at this level is at risk of breaching legal, regulatory or contractual obligations related to the principles.

### Level 2: Beginner

At this level an organisation is doing all that is required to be legally compliant. It understands that acting in the best interests of the customer, staff, the environment and the wider economy is necessary to stay in business.

### Level 3: Performer

An organisation at this level is beginning to see and act on the competitive opportunities in sustainable development. It remains one of a number of competing priorities but key people throughout the organisation are driving for a more sustainable operating model. Individual areas in the business or particular programmes of work are taking comprehensive action to embed sustainability into their operations and strategy. Other areas of the organisation may be lagging behind.

### Level 4: Leader

Sustainable development is seen as a big opportunity by organisations at Level 4. They are doing everything that they can within the current industry and organisational context to move towards a more sustainable operating model. The entire organisation is centred on this as a core purpose. It is leading initiatives that bring the industry together to achieve change that cannot be delivered at individual organisational level.

### Level 5: Pioneer

A pioneer pushes the traditionally accepted boundaries. It is an organisation that is challenging the way in which the industry operates and going beyond expectations for its role. It invests heavily in innovation, and has fostered a culture where everyone is empowered to contribute to moving towards a more sustainable operating model.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
	At risk	Beginner	Performer	Leader	Pioneer
<b>An organisation at this level would be...</b>	Taking only very limited action as it does not yet understand the relevance of sustainable development to its operations	Legally compliant	Pragmatically seeking opportunities to implement sustainable development	Doing as much as possible on sustainable development within the current way that it and the industry operate	Pushing the boundaries; challenging the way in which the industry operates with innovative, pioneering approaches to sustainable development
<b>An organisation at this level would be saying...</b>	We don't see a role for us in this	We need to do this to stay in business, but it's not a priority	This is important. It makes sense to do this. It's about good management and there are clear benefits	This is a big opportunity – we can create sustainable value and really make it work for everyone in the organisation	We're going beyond the principles and are working to take our sector with us
<b>An organisation at this level would be <u>concentrating on...</u></b>	Minimal compliance	Legislation, monitoring and compliance, philanthropy (eg charitable donations)	Eco design, supply-chain management, tools and measurement, reporting and public relations	Realising strategic opportunities, differentiation, embedding and innovation	Core sustainable products and services, relationships for sustainability, influencing to make sustainable development profitable
<b>An organisation at this level would be using the <u>Rail Industry Sustainable Development Principles...</u></b>	Not at all	As a tick-box exercise to check compliance	In selected departments to help inform operational decisions	In all departments to inform operational decisions	To inform strategic direction and as a basis for innovation

Table 1: An overview of the levels

## A few rules on scoring

- Be **honest**. There is nothing to be gained from overselling or underselling your organisation. In order to improve, you need an accurate picture of where you are.
- To meet a level, your organisation must **meet or surpass** all of the previous levels as well.
- If a box describes one part of the organisation well but not another, you will need to do **separate assessments** for different parts of the organisation, otherwise you cannot honestly say that your organisation meets that level.
- Try to provide **evidence** for your scoring. This will help you explain your responses and, if you revisit the assessment in the future to look for improvement, you will be able to understand more quickly where you were and what has really changed.
- Assume that the question applies to your type of organisation. The framework is designed to apply to the full range of organisations within the industry. For sections where it is possible that an organisation has no influence over embedding the principle, or a particular aspect of it, an option of not answering the question(s) has been provided. Please only use this option if your organisation fits the description provided.
- An organisation is more than likely to have **different scores for different principles**, and that is OK. They will also probably score differently on specific questions within principles, and that is also fine. The aim of the framework is to cover many different aspects of sustainable development, and this means that organisations are unlikely to have similar scores for each principle/question.
- The framework is designed to be flexible, so that you can either assess your entire organisation at once or perform different assessments for individual functions or business areas.

## *Further support and feedback*

Should you have any questions about how to use the framework, its content or support in applying it, please contact RSSB via email: [sustainabletrainprogramme@rssb.co.uk](mailto:sustainabletrainprogramme@rssb.co.uk).

We would also welcome any feedback or suggestions for improvements.

## Annex A: Glossary

### **Absolute emissions targets**

Absolute emissions quantifies the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases produced. Emissions intensity measures the amount of emissions *per unit of economic output*.

### **Carbon reduction commitment**

CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (formerly the Carbon Reduction Commitment) is a mandatory cap and trade scheme in the UK that will apply to large non energy-intensive organisations in the public and private sectors

### **Continuous improvement**

Continuous improvement in a measure is improvement that develops over time and overall in the same direction. Set-backs could happen within a time period, but overall there should be a progression from one time period to another.

### **Granularity of data**

The granularity of data refers to the fineness with which data fields are subdivided. Generally, the more granular (or fine grained) the data, the more information that can be obtained from that data. For example, a carbon footprint for the whole rail industry is much coarser grained than is the carbon footprint of a station.

### **Greenhouse gas**

Any of the atmospheric gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect. In descending order of abundance, the greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are:

- water vapour
- carbon dioxide
- methane
- nitrous oxide
- ozone
- chlorofluorocarbons.

### **Indirect and direct emissions**

- Emissions can include a range of substances emitted to air, water, or land.
- Direct emissions are emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the reporting entity. For the purposes of this assessment, electricity used directly by the organisation should be counted as a direct source of emissions.
- Indirect emissions are emissions that are a consequence of the activities of the reporting entity, but occur at sources owned or controlled by another entity. This includes electricity used by other entities.

### **Indirect and direct impacts**

Impacts are the effects that happen as a result of people's activities. Impacts include emissions but go beyond this to noise, biodiversity loss, land take etc.

- Direct impacts are those that flow directly from the activity of the reporting organisation. For example, Scope 2 emissions.
- Indirect impacts are those that flow from the reporting organisation but have been caused by an intermediate party. An example of this is Scope 1 and 3 emissions (see separate glossary definition of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions).

### **Life-cycle costs**

The environmental and social impacts arising from a product or service over its whole life. These costs may either be expressed in terms of impacts or converted into monetary form.

### **Life-cycle energy impacts**

The energy used throughout the whole life of a product or service.

### **Long term**

Beyond ten years from now.

### **Low-carbon power sources**

Sources of power that result in emissions significantly lower than the grid average. This may include solar, wind or hydro (for instance).

### **Normalised**

Performance measures may be normalised to better understand them and to take account of changes in activity. This is in contrast to absolute data. For example, let us say that the carbon footprint of an organisation is 100 tonnes and that this grows to 150 tonnes the following year. That represents a significant increase. Now let us say that in the same time this organisation's activity, captured by income, doubles from £1 million to £2 million. In this case the normalised footprint changes from 10 tonne/£100,000 to 7.5 tonne/£100,000, ie a decrease. Both absolute and normalised measures can be useful.

### **Performance reviews**

A performance appraisal, employee appraisal, performance review or (career) development discussion is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated (generally in terms of quality, quantity, cost and time) – typically by the corresponding manager or supervisor.

### **Scopes 1, 2 and 3**

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol further categorises direct and indirect emissions into three broad scopes:

- Scope 1: All direct greenhouse gas emissions.
- Scope 2: Indirect greenhouse gas emissions from consumption of purchased electricity, heat or steam.
- Scope 3: Other indirect emissions, such as the extraction and production of purchased materials and fuels, transport-related activities in vehicles not owned or controlled by the reporting entity, electricity-related activities (eg transmission and distribution losses) not covered in Scope 2, outsourced activities, waste disposal and so on.

### **Societal greenhouse gas targets**

In the UK the [Climate Change Act 2008](#) set legally binding emission-reduction targets both for 2020 (a reduction of 34% in greenhouse gas emissions) and for 2050 (a reduction of at least 80%). It also introduced five-yearly [carbon budgets](#) to help ensure those targets are met.

### **Tier 1, 2 and 3 supply chain/suppliers**

A Tier 1 supplier provides goods or services directly to the buying organisation. A Tier 2 supplier provides goods or services to the Tier 1 supplier, who in turn uses these in the goods and services that they provide to the buying organisation. A Tier 3 supplier provides goods and services to a Tier 2 supplier, and so on.

### **Total cost of ownership**

Total cost of ownership is a calculation to help people make more informed financial decisions. Total cost of ownership captures the complete cost from purchase to disposal. It adds to the initial purchase price other costs expected to be incurred during the life of the product, such as servicing, repair and insurance. It can take account of financial as well as ecological and social costs – and benefits.

### **Upstream**

Upstream, when referring to the supply or value chain, refers to the direction in a supply chain opposite to the flow of materials, eg a supplier will always be upstream from its customers.

### **Value chain**

The sequential set of primary and support activities that an organisation performs to turn inputs into value-added outputs for its customers.

### **Value for money**

Value for money is the term used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it acquires and/or provides, within the resources available to it. It not only measures the cost of goods and services, but also takes account of the mix of quality, cost, resource use, fitness for purpose, timeliness and convenience to judge whether or not, when taken together, they constitute good value.

**Whole-life cost, approach, emissions**

Whole-life cost refers to the total cost of ownership of an asset. This typically includes (but is not restricted to) the purchase price, cost of maintenance and labour, fuel required for use, and disposal.

## Annex B: Pre-assessment checklist

What do you need to use the full assessment questionnaire?	Pre-assessment question	Resources and advice that may help you
Familiarity with Rail Industry Sustainable Development Principles	Have you read the Rail Industry Sustainable Development Principles?	You can find the principles here: <a href="http://www.rssb.co.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/national_programmes/sustainable_rail/Rail%20Industry%20Sustainable%20Development%20Principles.pdf">http://www.rssb.co.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/national_programmes/sustainable_rail/Rail%20Industry%20Sustainable%20Development%20Principles.pdf</a> .
The right aim	Will the framework help you do what you want to?	The framework is designed to be flexible. It can be used for a number of different purposes at a number of different times. But it will be most useful to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compile your sustainable development action plan</li> <li>• understand what is happening in your organisation on embedding sustainability already</li> <li>• measure progress on embedding sustainability into business strategy and operations over time</li> <li>• set the ambitions for your corporate strategy</li> <li>• systematically discuss sustainable development risks and opportunities with senior executives and others in your organisation.</li> </ul>
Ownership of the framework and results	Have you agreed who will own the framework within your organisation?	If any improvement is to be made from the use of the framework it is essential that the owner is sufficiently senior to have access to senior decision-makers, and has the ability to communicate the business case for action. The person owning the framework does not necessarily have to be the person conducting or coordinating the assessment, but they need to be able to dedicate a member or members of the organisation to this.
Accountability for performance	Have you agreed who will be accountable for performance and/or improvement?	In most cases the most logical person to be ultimately accountable for performance against the framework is the person with overarching responsibility for business performance or improvement. This is because the framework is all-encompassing, covering many areas of the business.
Co-ordination/management	Have you agreed who will coordinate implementation?	Using the framework will require the gathering of evidence

What do you need to use the full assessment questionnaire?	Pre-assessment question	Resources and advice that may help you
of assessment process		from different areas of the business. For this reason there should be one person who acts as the hub for that information and manages its use.
<b>Two or more people</b> to conduct/verify assessment	<p>Will the results of an assessment be agreed/verified between two or more people?</p> <p>Have you identified the people who may be able to help you conduct this assessment within your organisation?</p>	<p>In our experience, the most progress is brought about by conducting the assessment with others, rather than relying on the perspective of one person. Building consensus on what is currently happening and what improvements need to be made is one of the most important steps towards the end goal of a more sustainable organisation.</p> <p>But this approach will not be possible in all organisations. Conducting the assessment by gaining input from others through interviews or more informal methods may be the most pragmatic approach for most.</p> <p>An assessment based purely on one person's knowledge is likely to be flawed, as it is very difficult to know everything that is going on in an organisation. We would direct you away from this approach.</p> <p>For suggestions on who to involve when assessing performance against principles, see the 'Who could be involved' matrix (Annex C).</p>
Clear <b>boundaries</b> for assessment, ie is it for the organisation or for the business unit etc?	Have you decided the scope of your assessment?	Deciding whether you are assessing a department, a business unit or operating company, a parent company or an entire organisation will help you answer questions accurately and define what evidence is acceptable and what is not. The scope of the assessment is completely up to you – use what is most useful.
Relevant <b>pre-collated information</b>	Have you identified all other assessments that your organisation uses to assess performance on all or some of the principle areas (eg Business in the Community Index or EFQM CR excellence method)? If your organisation uses other assessments, do you have access to this information?	The most likely people to know what assessments are performed are those with responsibility for business improvement, environment, corporate responsibility or broad sustainability.
Clear understanding of <b>terms</b> used in assessment	Have you read and understood the Glossary?	Please see the Glossary (Annex A) within this user guide.
Clear understanding of	Are you familiar with the levels used in the assessment?	Please see the section 'Understanding the levels of progress

What do you need to use the full assessment questionnaire?	Pre-assessment question	Resources and advice that may help you
levels of progress used in assessment		in the questionnaire' in this user guide.
Clear understanding of <b>rules</b> regarding scoring progress	Are you familiar with the rules on scoring?	Please see the section 'A few rules on scoring' in this user guide
Enough <b>time</b> set aside to conduct the assessment	Have you set aside 1-1.5h per principle as a minimum?	This is just a guideline – you may be quicker if you have all the information to hand. You may want to spread this hour and a half over a few different sittings as and when you receive the information that you need to answer the questions accurately.
Clear understanding of what <b>evidence</b> is acceptable as proof of progress	Have you agreed what you will accept as sufficient evidence of achieving a level?	It is up to you how strict you are with what evidence is deemed sufficient proof of achieving a level. Please bear in mind that the more robust your evidence trail is the less open to criticism and debate your score will be, and the easier it will be to assess your position the next time, as you will know where to look and what to look for.
Somewhere to <b>save</b> and collate information as the assessment is being conducted	Do you have an agreed way of collating the information and assessment?	Set up a folder on a shared drive that is accessible to all who may need to contribute to or review the assessment now or in the future. This will save your inbox being filled with evidence from contributors.
Somewhere to <b>save</b> the finished assessment and an agreed process for how the results and improvement plan will be communicated	Do you have an agreed method for storing and communicating the results of the assessment, ensuring that it is readily accessible for year-on-year comparisons in the future?	Make sure that you understand how the owner and person accountable for performance would like the results reported. This may be through a presentation at a senior management meeting, a briefing paper or an article in an internal newsletter for instance. Remember that you may not be the one doing the next assessment, so wherever you store the assessment, evidence and results it needs to be easily found.

## Annex C: 'Who could be involved' matrix

Stakeholder		What Principle could they contribute to?										
Area	Responsibility	Principle	Principle 1 - Customer-driven	Principle 2 - Putting rail in reach of people	Principle 3 - Providing an end-to-end journey	Principle 4 - Being an employer of choice	Principle 5 - Reducing our environmental impact	Principle 6 - Carbon smart	Principle 7 - Energy wise	Principle 8 - Supporting the economy	Principle 9 - Optimising the railway	Principle 10 - Being transparent
Business improvement	Deciding how that feedback is taken into account	1	Y									
Business improvement	Business improvement	All	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Customer engagement	Gaining feedback and liaising with customers	1	Y									
Customer engagement	Providing information to the customer	1, 2, 3	Y	Y	Y							
Environment	Targets on environmental impacts such as climate change, biodiversity, water, waste	5					Y					
Environment	Management and monitoring of environmental impacts	5					Y					
Environment	Building environmental trends into business strategy	5					Y					
Environment	Targets on carbon emissions from the organisation, supply chain and customer	6						Y				
Environment	Management and monitoring of emissions	6						Y				
Environment	Building climate change implications into business strategy	6						Y				
Environment/energy	Targets on energy use by the organisation, supply chain and network	7							Y			
Environment/energy	Management and monitoring of energy use	7							Y			
Environment/energy	Cross-industry initiatives related to energy	7							Y			
Finance	Value for money assessments	8								Y		
Finance/business improvement	Cost and risk management	8								Y		
Governance	Scrutiny of decisions and accountability	10										Y
Governance	Reporting	10										Y
Human resources	Attraction and retention of staff	4				Y						
Human resources	Skills development	4				Y						
Human resources	Equality and diversity	4				Y						
Human resources	Understanding and acting upon staff satisfaction levels	4				Y						
Marketing	Encouraging modal shift	3			Y							
Marketing	Understanding the market and customer segments served by and targeted by your organisation	1, 2	Y	Y								
Operations	Physical and financial accessibility of products and services	2		Y								
Operations	Integrated transport planning	3			Y							
R&D/business improvement	Innovation	8, 9								Y	Y	
Stakeholder engagement	Local and national economic impact, eg regeneration projects	8								Y		
Stakeholder engagement	Liaison with local authorities and other transport planners	3			Y							
Stakeholder engagement	Industry engagement	8								Y		
Stakeholder engagement	Engagement with and management of stakeholders	10										Y
Stakeholder engagement/network	Cross-industry engagement on using the existing network to its maximum capacity	9									Y	
Stakeholder engagement/network	Cross-industry engagement on planning the future network and its use	9									Y	
Strategy	Long-term strategic planning	9									Y	
Strategy	Strategy	All	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

