

Sustainable Rail Programme

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: http://www.rssb.co.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/national_programmes/sustainable_rail/Rail%20Industry%20Sustainable%20Development%20Principles.pdf .
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"> • compile your sustainable development action plan • understand what is happening in your organisation on embedding sustainability already • measure progress on embedding sustainability into business strategy and operations over time • set the ambitions for your corporate strategy • systematically discuss sustainable development risks and opportunities with senior executives and others in your organisation.
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

Rail Industry Sustainable Development Self-assessment Framework

Sustainable Rail Programme

What do you need to use the full assessment questionnaire?	Pre-assessment question	Resources and advice that may help you
Co-ordination /management of assessment process	Have you agreed who will coordinate implementation?	is all-encompassing, covering many areas of the business. Using the framework will require the gathering of evidence 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.
Two or more people to conduct/verify assessment	Will the results of an assessment be agreed/verified between two or more people? Have you identified the people who may be able to help you conduct this assessment within your organisation?	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. 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. 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. For suggestions on who to involve when assessing performance against principles, see the 'Who could be involved' matrix (Annex C).
Clear boundaries 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 pre-collated information	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	The most likely people to know what assessments are performed are those with responsibility for business improvement, environment, corporate responsibility or broad sustainability.

Sustainable Rail Programme

What do you need to use the full assessment questionnaire?	Pre-assessment question	Resources and advice that may help you
	this information?	
Clear understanding of terms used in assessment	Have you read and understood the Glossary?	Please see the Glossary (Annex A) within this user guide.
Clear understanding of levels of progress used in assessment	Are you familiar with the levels used in the assessment?	Please see the section 'Understanding the levels of progress in the questionnaire' in this user guide.
Clear understanding of rules 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 time 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 evidence 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 save 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 save the finished assessment and an agreed process for how the	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

Sustainable Rail Programme

What do you need to use the full assessment questionnaire?	Pre-assessment question	Resources and advice that may help you
results and improvement plan will be communicated		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.