



GSES Health & Safety Pillar (version 4.0) Assessment Guide

January, 2025

INTRODUCTION

- The goal of this document is simple: to help new users start with GSES *Assessments*.
- The Assessments are, for each Pillar, the way to measure your organization against the GSES Enterprise standard. It contains all questions in the GSES standard and allows you to earn points for each by filling in the assessment.
- To guide you through our Assessments for each pillar, we provide Assessment Guides like the one you are reading right now. It elaborates on what each of the questions in an assessment means and provides practical suggestions on how to provide an answer.

GSES PLATFORM PRACTICALITIES

- Start an assessment by logging in and navigating to Assessment under Organization. For more Getting Started information on how to use the platform for measuring your organization, please read through our "Getting Started measuring your Organization" guide.
- Assessments consist of 10-15 questions in total. Most questions are in 'closed-end format', so you can select your initial answer from a list.
- The questions are grouped into four sections: 1. Plan (Policy and Goals), 2. Do (Actions, Implementation, Measurement, Communication), 3. Check (Evaluate) and 4. Act (Improve).
- There is additional room to elaborate on your answer. This is important for both your internal record keeping (what is the key rationale given for the answer) as well as the auditors performing the audit to evaluate your performance.
- When you're done with the assessment, you can request a verification by an independent auditor. The auditor will check if and to what extent the answers you have given are supported by the uploaded evidence.
- This audit transforms the assessment from an internal exercise into an audited evaluation of sustainability performance which can be the basis of internal and external communication.
- For your audit preparation, for each question there is a suggestion of what that 'supporting evidence' could be. The suggestion is a practical recommendation and contains the preferred answer for auditors. However, if you have a different type of evidence to support your answers, that is also acceptable.
- At any point you can save your (draft) assessment and continue at a later moment. Click 'save' in the top right corner of your screen.
- When you're done, you can click on 'submit assessment' in the top right corner of your screen. After which you can proceed to request verification.

USEFUL NOTES

- If you need help, email support@gses-system.com. This is the fastest and most effective way to get the help you need. Your email arrives in our support box where a team of people is ready to pick it up and help you.
- GSES recognizes that every organization is different. We do not require you use a specific type of format policy document as evidence to support assessment answers. Your internal documents suffice. An auditor has the responsibility to assess whether your evidence is proof of performance.
- The auditor will only evaluate to what extent the answers given are supported by the evidence documents uploaded. The content of the evidence document itself (e.g. a CSR policy) will not be evaluated.
- Evidence is sent directly to the auditors, GSES does not have access to your evidence. This safeguards confidentiality of your documents and the independence of the audit process.

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

HEALTH & SAFETY ASSESSMENT VERSION 4.0

SECTION 1 - PLAN (POLICIES AND GOALS)

Question 1: Preferences and Requirements in relation to H&S

Question 2: Policies and Objectives for H&S

SECTION 2 - DO (ACTIONS, IMPLEMENTATION, MEASUREMENT, COMMUNICATION)

Question 3: H&S Employees

Question 4: H&S Risks and Opportunities

Question 5: Organizational Inventory

Question 6: Leadership and Support

Question 7: H&S Hazards

SECTION 3 – CHECK (EVALUATE)

Question 8: HS Performance

Question 9: HS Assessment audit

SECTION 4 – ACT (IMPROVEMENT)

Question 10: Conclusions

SECTION 1 - PLAN (Policies and Goals)

Preferences and Requirements in relation to H&S

Effective Health and Safety (H&S) management requires a thorough understanding of the preferences and requirements of key stakeholders, including employees, clients/customers, and subcontractors. These groups often have specific safety concerns and expectations that must be addressed to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. The international standard ISO 45001:2018, "Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – Requirements with Guidance for Use", serves as a framework for organizations to manage H&S risks and improve overall safety performance. The GSE-Standard H&S pillar is based on this ISO standard, ensuring that organizations meet both legal and ethical obligations to protect physical and mental health.

To effectively meet these requirements, organizations must maintain an inventory of the preferences and needs of their stakeholders, ensuring that H&S policies are tailored and relevant. The assessment question explores whether the organization has documented these preferences, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive H&S management system that promotes a safe, healthy, and compliant working environment.

Question 1: Respond to the following statement

The organization has made an inventory of health & safety preferences and requirements for the following stakeholders:				
	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Points
a Employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
b Clients/customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c Subcontractors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

Observations

- This question asks about aspects of your stakeholders' H&S preferences and requirements.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (c) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- You can then upload evidence to support your answer, such as your company's H&S policy including the needs of stakeholders. This can be a specific document or a section in another document or on your website/ webpage. To show the communication with stakeholders, you can upload stakeholder meeting reports.

Helpful notes:

- The question asks you to confirm that your organization has conducted a stakeholder analysis whereby the needs and preferences of certain stakeholders are identified and recorded. The evidence uploaded should reflect these statements, showing that these aspects are included in the policy. The content of the evidence itself (e.g. the preferences) is not the topic of the evaluation.

SECTION 1 - PLAN (Policies and Goals)

Policies and Objectives for H&S

Clear Health and Safety (H&S) policies and objectives are essential for managing risks and ensuring a safe environment for employees, clients, and subcontractors. A well-defined H&S policy outlines the organization's commitment to safety and provides a structured approach to managing potential hazards.

To effectively implement this, organizations should establish a comprehensive H&S management system, set concrete objectives, and use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress. These KPIs, aligned with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria, help monitor performance and drive continuous improvement in safety practices.

The assessment question explores whether the organization has formalized its H&S approach by having clear policies, set objectives, and established performance indicators to manage and evaluate H&S outcomes effectively.

Question 2: Respond to the following statement

The organization has policies and objectives for Health & Safety:				Points
	Yes	No	Not Applicable	
a H&S policy is set out in a company policy document or a separate H&S policy has been drawn up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
b A H&S management system has been set up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c Concrete, quantitative targets have been set for H&S.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
d H&S performance indicators (KPIs) have been established to measure progress towards the H&S targets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

Observations

- This question asks about aspects of your organization's H&S approach and asks to elaborate on the objectives and KPIs of your organization.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (d) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence you can upload to support your answer includes your organization's H&S policy and management system, clear objectives, and KPIs. This can be a specific document or a section in another document or on your website/ webpage for example.

Helpful notes:

- The question asks you to confirm certain aspects of your organization's H&S policy and targets. The evidence uploaded should reflect these statements, showing that these aspects are included in the policy. The content of the evidence itself (e.g. the policy or the targets) is not the topic of the evaluation.

SECTION 2 - DO (Actions, Implementation, Measurement, Communication)

Involvement of employees and H&S communication

Employee involvement is vital for effective Health and Safety (H&S) management, as it helps ensure policies are practical and aligned with workplace realities. Organizations must consult and involve employees, especially non-managerial staff, in a structured manner. This includes providing the time, training, and resources necessary for meaningful participation, as well as ensuring timely access to clear and relevant H&S information.

Best practices, such as those outlined in ISO 45001:2018, emphasize consulting employees when establishing H&S policies, identifying and addressing barriers to participation, and involving them in defining competence and training needs. The assessment question examines whether the organization has mechanisms in place for consulting and engaging employees and whether it provides other stakeholders with the necessary information to support a safe and healthy work environment.

Question 3: Respond to the following statement

The organization consults and involves employees in a structured manner and informs other stakeholders:		Yes	No	Not Applicable	Points
a	There are mechanisms, training, and resources in place for employee consultation and participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b	Offering employees timely access to clear, comprehensible, relevant information about Health & Safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c	Non-managerial employees are consulted when establishing the H&S policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
d	Obstacles and barriers to employee participation are identified, removed, or minimized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
e	Non-managerial employees are involved in establishing competence requirements, training needs, training, and evaluating training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
f	Timely access to clear, comprehensible, and relevant information about H&S is available to all other stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

Observations

- This question asks about the involvement of employees regarding H&S management.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (f) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence that you can upload to support your answer includes communication of H&S information, training records or other well-being initiatives.

Helpful notes

- Option (f): Other stakeholders refer to non-workers, such as visitors, the local community, shareholders, and the wider public.

SECTION 2 - DO (Actions, Implementation, Measurement, Communication)

H&S Risks and Opportunities

Identifying and managing Health and Safety (H&S) risks and opportunities is crucial for ensuring a safe and healthy work environment. This includes assessing a range of risks, such as physical, chemical, biological, psychosocial, mechanical, electrical, and movement-related hazards, which can affect employees, contractors, temporary workers, apprentices, and the environment.

A robust H&S management system, based on standards like ISO 45001:2018, helps organizations systematically identify, evaluate, and address these risks while also exploring opportunities to improve safety, employee well-being, and environmental protection.

The assessment question examines whether the organization has created an inventory of H&S risks and opportunities for all relevant groups, ensuring comprehensive protection for both people and the environment.

Question 4: Respond to the following statement

The organization consults and involves employees in a structured manner and informs other stakeholders:	Not			Points
	Yes	No	Applicable	
a Employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b Contractors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c Temporary workers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
d Apprentices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
e Other internal stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
f The environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

Observations

- This question asks about the management of H&S risks and opportunities and the assessment of this range of risks.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (f) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence that you can upload to support your answer includes risk assessment documentation, environmental considerations or a H&S program.

Helpful notes

- H&S risks, or hazards, can be related to aspects such as physical, chemical, biological, psychosocial, mechanical, electrical or based on movement and energy.
- Opportunities are a circumstance or set of circumstances that can lead to improvement of H&S performance.
- Option (f): Including the environment as a stakeholder indicates that the organization understands the impact of the environment on its operations (and therefore the impact of its operations on its employee health and safety). It also indicates that the organization recognizes its own impact on the environment, and tries to minimize this while finding opportunities for H&S performance improvement.

SECTION 2 - DO (Actions, Implementation, Measurement, Communication)

Organizational Inventory

An organizational inventory is essential for managing Health and Safety (H&S) effectively. It involves documenting tools, machines, and systems that promote safety, as well as identifying potential emergency situations that require immediate response. The inventory also helps highlight opportunities to improve H&S performance for employees, contractors, temporary workers, and the environment. Additionally, it ensures the organization is aware of and compliant with legal and regulatory requirements related to hazards and risks.

The assessment question examines whether the organization has created a comprehensive inventory covering these key areas, supporting a proactive approach to safety and compliance.

Question 5: Respond to the following statement

The organization has made an inventory of:		Yes	No	Not Applicable	Points
a	The information on tools, machines, and systems that can promote safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b	Potential emergencies (unplanned or unscheduled situations) that require an immediate response.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c	Opportunities for improving H&S-related performance for employees, contractors, temporary employees, and other internal stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
d	Opportunities for improving H&S-related performance for the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
e	Legal and other requirements applicable to its hazards and H&S risks (including opportunities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

Observations

- This question asks about the identification of risks and opportunities related to H&S within your organization.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (e) and elaborate in the context box. Note, that you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence that you can upload to support your answer includes an emergency response plan or inventory for safety tools, machines, and systems.

SECTION 2 - DO (Actions, Implementation, Measurement, Communication)

Leadership and Support

Effective leadership and strong support from management are crucial to fostering a culture of safety within any organization. Management's commitment to Health and Safety (H&S) not only ensures compliance with regulations but also demonstrates a genuine concern for the well-being of employees. By showing leadership, management can create an environment where employees feel safe and supported, free from the fear of reprisals when raising safety concerns.

Furthermore, organizations must actively engage employees by providing access to relevant H&S training and information. This includes offering additional training sessions, integrating H&S across all divisions, and establishing clear contact points for employees to access H&S-related information. Encouraging employees to actively contribute to H&S communication ensures that safety practices are continuously improved, making the workplace safer for everyone.

The assessment question explores whether management demonstrates leadership in H&S, provides necessary support to employees, and fosters a collaborative culture focused on safety.

Question 6: Respond to the following statement

The organization consults and involves employees in a structured manner and informs other stakeholders:			Yes	No	Not Applicable	Points
a	Management is committed and shows leadership about H&S.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b	Management creates a culture that protects employees from reprisals.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c	Employees are allowed to attend additional information sessions or training courses on H&S-related topics that are relevant to them.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
d	The organization involves all divisions in the integration of H&S.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
e	The organization has set up clear contact points for H&S information.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
f	Employees can make an active contribution to the content of H&S-related communication.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

Observations

- This question asks about the initiatives for creating a culture of safety through effective leadership.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (f) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence that you can upload to support your answer includes H&S policy and management commitment and leadership in H&S.

Helpful notes

- In the context of this question, management refers to the individuals or teams within an organization who are responsible for overseeing operations, setting policies, and ensuring the well-being of employees. This typically includes executives, senior leaders, department heads, and other managerial roles that influence workplace culture, policies, and practices related to health and safety (H&S).

SECTION 2 - DO (Actions, Implementation, Measurement, Communication)

Dealing with Health & Safety Hazards

Identifying and addressing Health and Safety (H&S) hazards is a critical responsibility for management in ensuring a safe and secure work environment. Effective hazard management involves continuously identifying both new and existing risks related to products, social factors, and work processes. This proactive approach allows organizations to design and implement control measures, including redesigning workflows or introducing safety protocols to eliminate or minimize hazards.

Moreover, management must ensure that employees are provided with the necessary tools and support, such as free personal protective equipment (PPE), along with clear instructions on its proper use and maintenance. In addition, contingency plans for emergency situations must be in place, accompanied by regular training and simulation exercises to ensure employees are prepared for potential risks.

The assessment question examines whether management takes a proactive, comprehensive approach to identifying H&S hazards and providing the necessary controls, equipment, and training to ensure employee safety in all circumstances.

Question 7: Respond to the following statement

The organization proactively deals with H&S hazards through:				Points
	Yes	No	Not Applicable	
a Constantly identifying (new) Health & Safety hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b Focusing on hazards related to social factors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
c Design control measures or reorganization of work to eliminate hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
d Provision of free personal protective equipment (PPE) and instructions for the use and maintenance of the PPE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
e Contingency plans and training for emergency situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
f Periodic exercises and/or tests to simulate potential emergency situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

Observations

- This question asks about the organization's hazard management and identification of risks.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) through (f) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence that you can upload to support your answer includes an emergency response plan, risk assessments or for example a simulation exercise record.

Helpful notes

- Social factors include workload, work hours, victimization, harassment and bullying.

SECTION 3 – CHECK (Evaluate)

H&S Performance

Evaluating your organization's Health & Safety (H&S) performance is essential for understanding what's working, where improvements are needed, and how to move forward with a stronger safety culture. With increasing regulatory pressure and a growing focus on worker well-being, this evaluation becomes even more crucial for ensuring compliance and minimizing risks.

A thorough evaluation is not just about identifying failures—it also highlights successes. It's an opportunity to recognize what's working well in your H&S practices and pinpoint areas where additional focus is required. By doing so, organizations can not only improve safety standards but also demonstrate their commitment to a safe working environment to stakeholders. Moreover, it provides a clear roadmap for setting future safety goals and continuing to enhance performance, ensuring ongoing improvement in both the short and long term.

Question 8: Respond to the following statement

Health & Safety performance is measured, monitored and assessed with quantitative targets:		Points
a	Yes.	10
b	No.	0
c	Not applicable.	-

Observations

- This question asks about your organization's evaluation process of H&S plans, targets and outcomes.
- This is a single-select question, you can answer "Yes," "No," or "Not applicable" and elaborate in the context box.
- Evidence you can upload to support your answer includes H&S target documentation and H&S policy plan.

Helpful notes

- The question asks you to demonstrate that you have set specific targets related to Health & Safety (H&S) performance and that the progress towards the targets is regularly monitored.
- These targets should be quantitative and aligned with your organization's priorities.
- A good practice is to use the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) to ensure that targets are clear and achievable, while also reflecting your organization's broader goals for continuous improvement in safety standards.

SECTION 3 – CHECK (Evaluate)

Auditing of the H&S Assessment

In an era where accountability is key, it's essential for organizations to build and maintain trust with their stakeholders. One effective way to do this is by actively auditing and reviewing your Health & Safety (H&S) performance. Independent audits of H&S efforts demonstrate that your organization is committed to transparency, continuous improvement, and the well-being of its employees.

Conducting internal audits is a useful method for tracking progress and identifying areas for improvement. However, an external audit provides an added level of credibility, offering an independent evaluation of your H&S practices. This not only helps to identify gaps or shortcomings in safety protocols but also reassures stakeholders that your organization is genuinely committed to providing a safe working environment.

Question 9: Respond to the following statement

How is the performance of health & safety annually monitored		Yes	No	Not Applicable	Points
a	Yes, with an internal audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
b	Yes, with an external audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6

Observations

- This question asks about your organization's audit strategy with regard to H&S performance assessment.
- This is a multi-select question, you can answer "yes", "no" or "not applicable" for options (a) though (b) and elaborate in the context box. Note, you can select "yes" for multiple answers if appropriate. If all the answers or the entire question are not applicable, select "not applicable" for each answer and explain in the context box.
- Evidence you can upload to support your answer includes internal and/or external audit reports.

Helpful notes

- The question asks you to confirm the organization's audit policy. The evidence uploaded should reflect support statements. The content of the evidence itself (e.g. an audit) is not the topic of the evaluation.

SECTION 4 - ACT (Improve)

Conclusions: Continuous Improvement

Health & Safety (H&S) management is an ongoing journey that requires constant attention and refinement. For organizations committed to improving their H&S performance, this means taking ownership of safety outcomes and continually refining strategies to enhance workplace safety.

Progress in H&S can come in many forms, from small, incremental changes to significant improvements in safety protocols. Staying informed about best practices, new safety technologies, and evolving regulations ensures that organizations remain at the forefront of safety management. Remember, every step forward—whether it's a minor adjustment or a major breakthrough—contributes to creating a safer, healthier work environment for all employees. Continuous improvement in H&S is not just a goal; it's a commitment to the long-term well-being of the workforce.

Question 10: Respond to the following statement

The organization draws conclusions from its H&S performance monitoring and works towards continuous improvement:		Points
a	Yes.	10
b	No.	0
c	Not applicable.	-

Observations

- This question asks about your organization's improvement strategy with regard to H&S measures.
- This is a single-select question, you can answer "Yes," "No," or "Not applicable" and elaborate in the context box.
- You can upload any internal/external documents to support your answer.

Helpful notes

- The question asks you to confirm your organization's improvement policy and the actions taken to review performance and make adjustments as required for continuous improvement. The evidence uploaded should reflect support statements. The content of the evidence itself (e.g. a report) is not the topic of the evaluation.