

Supplier due diligence and quality assurance checklist



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Understanding and addressing the risks of harm, exploitation, unsafe working conditions and modern slavery within supply chains is an important part of responsible business conduct and effective due diligence.

Effective due diligence helps identify risks before contracts are awarded, while ongoing monitoring helps ensure suppliers continue to meet expected standards of health, safety, wellbeing, sustainability and responsible business conduct.

This checklist supports a prevention-based approach to supplier management. It is designed to help organisations ask the right questions, gather meaningful evidence and identify opportunities to improve outcomes for workers throughout the supply chain. Please note, this checklist is good practice guidance from a health and safety perspective and is not intended to replace any legal requirements for procurement and supply chain management and due diligence.

The checklist is divided into three stages.

- A. Preparing to subcontract** – ensuring your organisation has the processes, competence and resources needed to assess and manage suppliers effectively. This stage is undertaken before going out to tender.
- B. Effective due diligence** – assessing whether prospective suppliers can demonstrate good practice and manage risks appropriately. This stage is prohibitive to contracting if evidence cannot be provided.
- C. Agreeing clear expectations and ongoing management** – setting clear standards, monitoring performance and supporting continual improvement. Expectations are agreed prior to and during contracting, and ongoing management is sometimes referred to as compliance or quality assurance.

The reflective questions included throughout this checklist are intended to prompt and support discussion and planning, challenge assumptions and strengthen decision-making. Space has been provided for you to make notes. Please note, it is not anticipated that all questions will be relevant for all suppliers.

The checklist shows how compliance and continual improvement across supply chains supports achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some items are explicitly linked to particular SDGs – these are referenced by number in the topic column. The SDGs are referenced throughout to highlight how good supplier management can contribute to safer, healthier, fairer and more sustainable supply chains.

The checklist is divided into three stages.

- A. Preparing to subcontract.**
- B. Effective due diligence.**
- C. Agreeing expectations and ongoing management.**

There are also extra sections at the end of each section for further reflections on these areas.

Checklist A: Preparing to subcontract

These are questions that apply to your business ('the company').

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Is the company adequately resourced to assess tenders and ensure health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability standards are demonstrated?		
Will suppliers be subject to legal contracts?		
Will the contracts contain details of key performance indicators and sanctions applicable for health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability?		
Does the company have reliable access to advice from an occupational safety and health (OSH) professional – either employed in the business or consultant – with experience, skills and knowledge in the sustainable management of supply chains, and understanding of the SDGs?		
Is part of the OSH professional's responsibility or contract to support and advise on the due diligence and ongoing management of suppliers?		
Will employees who are not OSH professionals be responsible for monitoring the suppliers to assess their ongoing health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability performance?		

Points of reflection

How will those responsible for managing supplier quality and performance be trained and supported to ensure they are able to manage aspects relating to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability?

If they will be responsible for training suppliers to help them comply in these areas, who will ensure they are competent and qualified to do so?

Checklist A: Preparing to subcontract

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Will the company provide support measures to suppliers to help them achieve compliance with contractual rules and policies, as mentioned above?		
Will processes be in place to ensure that non-compliance with contractual obligations relating to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability are managed within the supply chain, and any sanctions applied?		
Will measures be in place to terminate the contracts of suppliers following non-compliance, when sanctions and support measures have been ineffective?		

Points of reflection

How will it be ensured that non-compliance with contractual obligations relating to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability are managed and sanctioned appropriately within the scope of the contract, and that poor practice is not superseded by financial needs? For example, if a supplier is found to be meeting production and financial targets at the expense of the health, safety and wellbeing of their workers or by using methods which negatively impact their health or safety, how will it be ensured that this is not allowed to continue?

Checklist B: Effective due diligence

These are questions to ask suppliers before offering contracts. Should it not be possible to satisfy the requirements of due diligence, organisations should reflect on the sustainability of the supplier and whether it is appropriate to offer them a contract.

Explanatory note: the word ‘policy’ does not necessarily indicate individual documents. For example, item three may be comprised of documentation associated with items four, five, six, and eight; and items 11 and 12 may be integrated. In addition to providing evidence of written policies and procedures, suppliers should be asked to explain:

- how policies and procedures work in practice
- how workers are trained on policies and procedures relating to safety, health, wellbeing and sustainability; and how their understanding is confirmed (including for speakers of other languages and those with other barriers to learning) (SDG 4.7.1)
- how compliance with policies and procedures is monitored and assured.

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Can the supplier provide evidence of their historic strong approach to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability; and demonstrate that any concerns raised about their practice have been effectively addressed?		
Can the supplier explain how incidents have been managed and whether lessons learnt have led to change in procedures?		
Does the supplier employ or have reliable access to an OSH professional?		

Points of reflection

Who will ensure that due diligence is undertaken effectively – that proposed suppliers understand the reasons they are being asked for the evidence and that the decision to offer contracts is not made without robust evidence in place? How will they balance the organisation’s financial needs with the need to operate a sustainable supply chain?

Checklist B: Effective due diligence

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Can the supplier's OSH professional demonstrate competence as required for the contract, in the form of certificates, recommendations etc?		
Does the supplier have a health, safety and wellbeing policy with supporting procedures, which adequately addresses risks associated with: • mechanical hazards (e.g. machinery and vehicles) • physical hazards (e.g. noise, vibration, temperature, lighting) • chemical hazards (e.g. dyes, acids, cleaning products, toxic gases and dusts) • biological hazards (e.g. bacteria, viruses, mould and fungi) • environmental hazards (e.g. slippery or unstable floor/ground, trailing cables, poor air quality) • psychosocial hazards (e.g. bullying and harassment, discrimination, excessively long working hours, unreasonable deadlines, inadequate training) (SDG 10.3.1, 16.1.3, 16.b.1)?		
Does the supplier's health, safety and wellbeing policy (and supporting procedures) adequately address risks associated with: • mental health challenges (work-related and otherwise) (SDG 3.4.2) • alcohol and substance misuse (SDG 3.5.2) • domestic violence (5.2.1)?		

Checklist B: Effective due diligence

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Does the supplier have current, suitable and sufficient risk assessments and mitigation strategies relating to all their premises and activities? Do these take into account: • occupational road risk (SDG 3.6.1) • likelihood of natural disaster (such as flood or wildfire) and extreme temperature/weather (SDG 1.5.1) • proximity to sources of air pollution and unsafe water (SDG 3.9.1, SDG 3.9.2, SDG 3.9.3) • proximity to public transport (SDG 11.2.1) • likelihood of exposure to conflict or its effects (SDG 16.1.2) • proximity to emergency services/healthcare provision and relevant access barriers such as unsafe roads or high traffic volumes (SDG 3.8.2, SDG 3.d.1, SDG 9.11, SDG 9.1.2)?		
Does the supplier have adequate risk assessments and procedures in place relating to the protection of vulnerable workers, including: • workers with higher vulnerability to occupational injuries and diseases • young workers (15-24 years old) • pregnant workers • women • older workers • persons with disabilities • migrant workers • those who are not employed formally (SDG 3.1) • those at risk of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law¹, including: ◦ right to privacy ◦ freedom of religion and belief ◦ freedom of expression ◦ right to equality before the law ◦ minority rights ◦ right of mothers to special protection before and after birth (SDG 16.b.1)?		

Checklist B: Effective due diligence

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Does the supplier have an effective return-to-work process to support rehabilitation following injury and ill health, including for workers who have suffered work-based harm (SDG 1.3.1) (SDG 8.5.2)?		
Does the supplier have effective occupational hygiene procedures adaptable and scalable to elevated risk of communicable disease (e.g. during epi/pandemics) (SDG 3.3)?		
Does the supplier have an effective welfare policy, supporting procedures, and accompanying facilities? Do these ensure all workers have access to: • safe drinking water (SDG 6.1.1) • safe, clean and lockable toilets (SDG 6.2.1) • safe and hygienic washing facilities with soap, water, and hand-drying equipment (SDG 6.2.1)?		
Does the supplier have an effective policy and approach to the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking; including procedures for reporting and handling concerns and allegations (SDG 16.2.2)?		
Does the supplier have an effective policy and approach to the eradication of fraud, bribery, and corruption, including procedures for whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers (SDG 16.5)?		

Checklist B: Effective due diligence

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Does the supplier promote healthy behaviours such as: • smoking cessation • nutrition • stress reduction • healthy sleep, including caffeine intake • healthy approach to recreational alcohol use (SDG 3.4.1, 3.5.2)?		
Does the supplier have an effective policy and supporting procedures relating to the responsible management of chemicals and waste, including: • recycling and reuse of materials where possible • safe and effective storage of chemicals and other hazardous materials (SDG 12.4.1)?		

Points of reflection

Are there opportunities for the company to liaise with external bodies on any observations and reports that provide insight on the supplier’s approach to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability?

Checklist C: Agreeing expectations/ongoing management

Note: in addition to the undertaking of due diligence, it is expected that suppliers will also receive clear explanations about the topics in the following section and have the opportunity to discuss them.

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Are the supplier's responsibilities for health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability clearly described in the contract?		
Have the names and contact details of those responsible for health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability within the supplier been provided to the organisation?		
Have the competencies associated with health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability that are required to keep the contract been understood and confirmed by the supplier?		
Can the supplier provide evidence that these competencies are met?		

Points of reflection

Is the company assured that the supplier understands the targets relating to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability? How will performance be measured (e.g. through monitoring of proactive and reactive indicators), and is the organisation confident the supplier knows what to expect?

Checklist C: Agreeing expectations/ongoing management

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Have service level agreements and key performance indicators been agreed in relation to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability? For example: • volume/number of health and safety incidents and the management of incidents in accordance with documented procedure • volume/number of occupational ill health reports and the control of associated risks in accordance with documented procedure • worker feedback on their health, safety and wellbeing • the results of any external monitoring (e.g. a poor review from an external agency, including those inspecting health and safety, food hygiene or public health might trigger an audit or visit).		
Will performance criteria be audited (e.g. bi-annual performance meetings, desk-based data reviews, worker surveys)?		

Points of reflection

In what format and how frequently will performance criteria be audited (e.g. bi-annual performance meetings, desk-based data reviews, worker surveys)? If site visits are considered necessary, how frequent should these be and who will be responsible?

Checklist C: Agreeing expectations/ongoing management

Topic	Yes/no	Evidence/comments
Are monitoring arrangements clearly specified in the contract, and have they been understood prior to signing?		
Are site visits necessary to monitor health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability standards? If so, can these be accommodated by the company?		
Will all suppliers within the chain be subject to the same monitoring procedures, or may some submit to increased requirements? For example, these could be due to: • the number of workers • the nature of work and degree of risk to workers • the financial size of the contract • the supplier's locality and its likelihood of engagement with non-standard business practice such as corruption • evidence of poor practice or increased risk (e.g. suppliers may face increased monitoring as part of following up a poor report or an incident).		

Points of reflection

What measures are in place to enforce adherence to monitoring requirements? For example, what would result in failure to provide evidence of compliance or failure to permit visits?

Will there be a process for reporting and responding to allegations or raised concerns relating to poor standards of health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability? Is this process safe for workers to use?

Points of reflection

What support measures will be provided to the supplier in order to help them achieve compliance? How will performance relating to health, safety, wellbeing and sustainability be reported at the end of the contract, and how will it affect decisions to renew contracts?



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