



2024

CASE STUDY: CYBERSECURITY

Case study: Cyber security risk management

In a world and business environment increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure, cyber security is of critical strategic importance for Assala. New risks arise continuously from national and international threat actors. Whilst there were no significant impacts on Assala's IT infrastructure in 2024, we know that we must remain vigilant and adopt a proactive approach to cyber threats.

In 2024, our IT teams focused on the continued cyber security risks through identification, evaluation, and mitigation programmes, applying industry frameworks and best practices. A comprehensive end-user training and awareness programme and a 24/7 Security Operations Centre were also implemented.

When implementing our cyber security controls, our IT teams consider the environmental, social and governance implications of their initiatives, driving sustainable, continuous improvement to our IT processes and systems to support operational readiness.

Mitigation: End-user security awareness

One of the biggest identified risks to our business is an attack targeting our staff or IT infrastructure, which can cause downtime for the business and lead to personal or process safety incidents during operations. Furthermore, such attacks could lead to a breach of information security and leaks of sensitive personal or proprietary data.

As such, we foster a culture of IT security to drive accountability for users' roles in protecting the business, its employees, and the environment from such attacks. We ensure all Assala IT users complete regular training to raise awareness of the latest security threats and best practices to address them. As part of their training programme, personnel receive immediate feedback on their performance to swiftly identify additional support or education requirements, further mitigating user-associated risks.

Mitigation: Robust cybersecurity framework

In line with Assala's Values, our IT teams apply international standards and best practices and implement of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework, which provides a comprehensive structure for managing cyber security risks, adopting best practices and focusing on continuous improvement.

Mitigation: Multi-layered security and 24/7 Security Operations Centre

Assala has implemented multi-layered cybersecurity controls alongside a Security Operations Centre (SOC), meaning that, if one security layer is compromised, additional layers are in place to protect Assala's data, systems, and users. The SOC continuously monitors and analyses Assala's security alerts, which are crucial in our cyber security architecture.

With the SOC's real-time monitoring and alerting coupled with our multi-layered defences, we can swiftly adapt to the evolving cyber threat landscape, ensuring enhanced security, data protection, and business continuity. This proactive approach is vital for mitigating risks and reducing the impact of cyber threats.

Outcomes

Through this three-dimensional approach, Assala:

- **Ensures compliance** by aligning our process with regulatory data protection requirements, as well as with international standards and best practices.
- **Drives accountability for cyber security across the organisation** by highlighting and educating stakeholders on effective technology, information and hardware management.
- **Facilitates comprehensive risk management** by encouraging proactive identification, assessment and mitigation of risks.

- **Protects stakeholder data** by following international best practice for management of sensitive information.
- **Reinforces our reputation as a responsible operator** by demonstrating our commitment to mitigating risks associated with ineffective cyber security.
- **Optimises resources**, which can lead to wasteful expenditures of energy and resources required to resolve breaches.
- **Reduces electronic waste** by mitigating the likelihood of hardware becoming obsolete due to damage caused by malware and viruses.



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