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## Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme **BRIEFING NOTE**

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**Subject:** **Assessing Human Factors and Organisational Culture as part of a RISAS assessment**

**Advice to:** Railway Industry Supplier Approval Bodies (RISABs); Suppliers

**Reference:** Standard: RISAS/003 Issue: 5

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**Applies when:** All RISAS assessments conducted against the requirements of RISAS/003 issue 5 (and subsequent issues).

**Note's Purpose:** To provide background, guidance and recommended assessment approach for the new assessment criteria to address human factors and organisational culture in RISAS assessments.

**Background:** Continuous improvement of the RISAS assessment criteria, both in terms of responding to feedback from assessments undertaken and taking account of emerging trends, is essential to ensure the scheme remains fresh and contemporary.

In 2014 RSSB led an investigation into a number of axle bearing failures, some of which involved RISAS-approved suppliers; the report identified that human and cultural factors featured in a number of these cases and consequently recommended that these factors be included as part of the RISAS scheme.

In addition, ORR had established its Risk Management Maturity Model ('RM3') which seeks to assess an organisation's ability to achieve excellence when controlling health and safety risks; this includes organisational culture and human factors-related. RSSB has also produced the Safety Culture Toolkit and the Human Factors Guidance Toolkit on Train Maintenance

From analysis of these inputs, eight human factors and organisational culture topic areas have been identified, as follows:

- Learning from in-process experience
- Selection and assessment
- Knowledge retention
- Organisational design
- Task design
- Workforce supervision
- Fitness to work and support
- Workplace fairness

A guidance document has been produced in association with these (see 'references' below).

## **1 General Overview and guidance for Suppliers and RISABs**

- 1.1 The existing assessment criteria within the Supplier Assessment Module (RISAS/003 Part B) have been amended to include the new human factors and organisational culture topics, as described above.
- 1.2 Some of the new topics have been included into a section called 'Work Organisation'; this replaces the previous section called 'Risk Management', the content of which has been disaggregated elsewhere in the document. The other new topics have been incorporated into several of the existing sections. In certain cases, the existing criteria has been modified or even deleted. A new clause 3.8.3 has been added to Part A of the document to reflect the different approach that can be adopted to addressing issues raised.
- 1.3 Each topic area has one requirement with several associated 'examples of evidence'. These should be read in conjunction with the new guidance document to fully understand the intent of each of the new requirements.
- 1.4 The 'examples of evidence' and guidance have been developed for each requirement to help assessors and suppliers understand the type of arrangements that might be expected to be in place. However, given the nature of the topic areas, suppliers are likely to have a variety of arrangements, some novel, that may satisfy the intent of the requirement, and RISABs are expected to be flexible and use professional judgement accordingly in determining whether the intent of the requirements has been met.
- 1.5 There will be supplier assessments when the 'examples of evidence' do not apply. For example, a non-workshop supplier, such as a rolling stock leasing company (ROSCO) seeking approval for a S01 service product group, may not need to consider its arrangements for handing over work from one shift to another, but will need to look at its arrangements for error-free data transfer.
- 1.6 Due to the approach outlined above, it is not expected that overall assessment time and effort will increase; rather that there is a refocussing of assessment approach. It is however accepted that the introduction of the new criteria represents a significant change to the scheme and a phased introduction is acceptable (eg 'ghost' findings the first time the criteria are applied to an existing approval).

## **2 Requirements for RISABs**

- 2.1 RISABs are expected to adopt a different approach to assessment against the new criteria. This recognises the fact that human factors and organisational culture are regarded as more 'softer', non-technical assessment topics and the evidence gathered will not be as 'black and white' as more traditional, technical issues such as document control or calibration. An effective approach can be to contrast and compare evidence from observations and discussions on the shop floor with that from a review of management systems.
- 2.2 To maximise the impact of the new criteria, RISABs should look beyond the immediate question and answer to identify trends and systemic issues (where reasonably justified). Human error is sometimes identified as a cause in failures

of critical products, but workshop personnel rarely make mistakes on purpose or as an isolated event. These failures are often the result of wider shortcomings in the organisation.

- 2.3 Where wider trends or systemic issues have been identified, RISABs should refer to page 8 of the guidance document where it outlines the RISAS improvement programme. This is a different approach to the traditional 'required action' and subsequent close out; the 'improvement programme' (as proposed by the supplier and agreed by the RISAB) implies a series of staged short, medium and long term actions, together with monitoring and review to ensure that improvement has been sustained. It is unlikely, therefore, that such a programme could be initiated, progressed and closed out in less than 12 months.
- 2.4 To support the new approach, specific training in Human Factors and Organisational Culture was provided to RISABs in December 2016 and will be periodically offered in the future to support the new assessment criteria. RISAB Competence Requirements are further explained on page 9 of the guidance document.

### **3 Requirements for Suppliers**

- 3.1 Suppliers are strongly recommended to prepare for assessment against the new criteria and guidance is offered on this on page 7 of the guidance document under 'self-assessment'.
- 3.2 Suppliers are encouraged to recognise the concept of the new RISAS improvement programme and co-operate with their RISAB when there is reasonable justification for implementing such an approach (as explained under 2.3 above).

### **4 References**

[Engineering excellence into rail vehicle maintenance - How to evaluate human factors and organisational culture in RISAS assessments](#). (produced by RSSB for the Rail Industry Supplier Approval Scheme)

### **5 Definitions**

The main definition of terms used in RISAS is contained in RISAS/001, Principles of RISAS.

**Contact:**

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