

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

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**Subject:** **COVID-19 PANDEMIC – TEMPORARY MEASURES FOR RISAS CERTIFICATION**

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

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

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**Applies when:** Covid-19 emergency measures are temporarily preventing Railway Industry Supplier Approval Bodies (RISABs) from carrying out planned assessments, visits, inspections, audits or any other on-site activity necessary to issue or confirm the efficacy of a RISAS certificate.

Potentially to other situations where an on-site assessment is not possible (e.g. the FCO advises against travel to a country).

**Note's Purpose:** To provide clarification and guidance on measures to be adopted for RISAS Certification during emergency measures imposed to fight the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**Background:** The emergency measures adopted in different countries to fight the Covid-19 outbreak, which often include severe travel restrictions, shutdowns of manufacturing facilities and teleworking of the concerned staff, are creating difficulties for some parties involved in the RISAS Certification process.

RISABs cannot therefore perform the evaluations, audits, visits and inspections as planned, affecting the issue or confirmation of the efficacy of RISAS certificates.

In view of the exceptional situation created by the Covid-19 outbreak, it has been decided to adopt the following temporary measures.

### **1 General Requirements**

1.1 RISABs should continue carrying out their tasks to the extent that is possible in respect of the different and varying confinement measures taken at individual country level. This applies particularly to those activities requiring visits to manufacturers' premises.

In doing so, RISABs should consider the following two documents, issued by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF):

- [IAF MD 4:2018](#), which gives details on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for auditing/assessment purposes; and
- Informative Document [IAF ID 3:2011](#) which provides information on the different steps which could be followed regarding the management of extraordinary events or circumstances.

See also Section 4 below.

- 1.2 When providing services in a more flexible manner as permitted by this Briefing Note:
- RISABs should act responsibly and assess and balance the risk. In particular, the RISAB shall record deviations and not provide such services if the deviations jeopardize the technical validity of that specific activity.
  - RISABs should inform the RISAS Scheme Manager of any issues relating to possible non-conformity of products, including where this may be relevant due to the need to postpone specific on-site visits in the context of the ongoing efficacy of RISAS Certification.
  - RISABs should advise the RISAS Scheme Manager of assessments undertaken by remote means, wherever possible before the assessment takes place.

## **2 Time Extension to Existing RISAS Certification**

- 2.1 For existing RISAS Certified Suppliers, RISABs can decide to postpone assessment activity and, where necessary, issue an 'extension' to the certificate for a limited period of time (not normally exceeding 6 months beyond the expiry date of the original certificate, or planned visit), provided that:
- the certified arrangements are considered sufficiently 'stable' to ensure that the products and services supplied during this period conform to RISAS requirement;
  - the RISAB produces evidence to support its confidence in the effectiveness of the supplier's certified arrangements, explaining the alternative methods used and the results of the assessments it has undertaken.
- 2.2 Where applicable, RISABs should upload to the RISAS website a new version of the certificate with extended time validity. The report and executive summary must clearly state the basis on which the certificate has been issued.

## **3. RISAS Certification by Remote Assessment**

- 3.1 For both existing and new RISAS certification, the RISAB can decide to perform the assessment by means of alternative methods, where possible, using the guidance referred to in 1.1 above. In this case:
- The RISAB should identify the impact of the use of alternative methods on the assessment activities, particularly the validity, representativeness and objectivity of the assessments performed remotely. This should be documented in the Executive Summary and the Report.
  - The outcome of the assessment activities should indicate the extent to which the alternative methods have been used and their effectiveness in achieving the assessment objectives.
  - The RISAB should produce evidence in support of its confidence in the supplier's ability to ensure that its products and services will continue to conform to RISAS requirements.
- 3.2 Certificates issued on the basis of remote assessment only should have a limitation requiring an interim on-site surveillance visit to witness critical activities. The length of time before the on-site surveillance should be dependent on the results of the remote assessment but should not normally exceed 12 months from the original assessment due date. Further extensions due to Covid restrictions may be agreed by following the process in 2.1 and

amending the limitation on the certificate.

#### 4. Commentary

4.1 The 'on-site' element of the assessment of physical production, of selected 'products', by RISAS Technical Experts and Assessors, is crucial to the 'assurance' of critical products and services which RISAS provides. Therefore, in the absence of the RISAB being able to suitably and sufficiently replicate this using alternative measures, the RISAB may issue a certificate, which is likely to include limitations. The complete list of limitations will depend on the actual circumstances but could include, for example:

- First Article Inspection;
  - Destructive and/or Non-Destructive Testing;
  - Sponsorship between a supplier and an existing or prospective rail customer, with the certificate to be valid only for a contract between these two parties, with suitable surveillance from the customer, etc.
  - Interim on-site surveillance to witness critical activities with a defined time period (e.g. 12 months). (see clauses 1.9 and 4.3.2 of RISAS/003).
- In case of any doubt, advice on appropriate limitations can be sought from the RISAS Scheme Manager.

4.2 RISAS/003 Issue 5, Supplier Assessment Module specifies the following:

- "3.2.1 The assessment shall identify the management systems in place and review their application to the physical production of selected products representative of the scope of approval being sought. This shall include the effectiveness of procedures / processes in place (which may be determined through analysis of the applicable outputs of internal auditing, management review, policy / objectives, performance monitoring, etc).*
- "3.2.2 The assessment shall confirm that the critical products reviewed during the assessment are representative of the capability of the supplier. This is particularly relevant for a first assessment of a supplier under RISAS.*
- "3.2.3 The RISAB assessment team shall ensure that the assessment covers all critical stages of the production and delivery of selected products (as identified during planning) against the selected contract(s) and applicable specifications, as referenced in the detailed assessment plan. This shall include the assessment of actual work in progress (especially key activities critical to product safety) against the relevant contract."*

4.3 From the [IAF website](#):

*"Q31: According to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Clause 9.6.3.1.1, planning for recertification shall be conducted in due time to enable for timely renewal before the certificate expiry date. Is this clause still valid?"*

*"A31: IAF FAQ 10 allows the recertification date to be extended up to six months, which would allow the planning to be extended accordingly. If that six months may not provide sufficient opportunities for Certification Bodies (CBs) to conclude recertification audits, the decision on recertification must be made within 3 months of the lifting of restrictions (e.g. travel) that were preventing the on-site audit taking place. However, if the time-frame from the certification date exceeds 12 months, the CB should complete the reassessment as possible using remote means for witnessing the certified processes during their*

*execution (real-time video of production and workplaces remotely guided by the auditor and/or review by the auditor of recorded videos in those areas where no direct connection is available, with a possible request of specific new partial video, when deemed necessary). In all those cases where the processes cannot be remotely assessed in an effective way to the satisfaction of the team leader, the certification scope shall be partially reduced consequently or the certificate shall be completely withdrawn, and a new initial audit will be required. In any case, a decision shall be made taking also into consideration the updated risk associated with the operational control capability of the organization in the COVID 19 emergency conditions and the type of certification scheme.”*

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