

RISAS – Lessons Learnt Report:

Following a number of concerns raised by a customer in relation to product quality problems with a RISAS approved supplier, in accordance with RISAS scheme policy and due process, the RISAS Accreditation Agency (AA) undertook its own review given the potential repercussions for the wider industry.

Subsequent to that review a number of improvements were made to the scheme and its operation, whilst in parallel the RISAS Board took the opportunity to direct, on behalf of industry and its stakeholders and in recognition of the RISAS scheme's importance to industry in the management cycle of assurance of critical products and services, that a detailed independent review of the circumstances relating to these concerns was to be undertaken.

This independent review considered the scheme's policies, practices and procedures in place at that time and notwithstanding that it concluded that the issue of product quality did not reflect any shortcoming of the RISAS process, it subsequently made a number of recommendations. These, together with those already identified by the AA, have all now either been adopted in full, or are to be addressed as part of the RISAS Board's 'Business Plan' for 2013/14 and as appropriate the suite of RISAS documentation has been reviewed and amended where and as appropriate to the effect that:

- (i) there is sufficient guidance and detail provided to ensure that the obligations and responsibilities of the RISABs (Rail Industry Supplier Approval Bodies) when undertaking supplier assessments are clear, unambiguous and the compliance of the RISABs can be objectively measured by the AA.
- (ii) within the scope of the assessment specification this still allows a RISAB the desired flexibility to exercise their professional competence in assurance to optimal effect outside of the core minimum requirements, which remains and is essential as a key and unique feature of the scheme.
- (iii) there is clear guidance from the AA and examples of 'what good looks like' in the standard of supplier assessment reports to be provided by the RISABs.
- (iv) in the event of issues of risk to the railway being identified, then both the RISAB and the AA collaboratively respond with reasonable urgency and as is appropriate, commensurate with that risk, to resolve such matters and in a manner which allows sufficient time to develop effective improvements.
- (v) the option to suspend a RISAB may be exercised by the AA as the ultimate sanction, but only if and where absolutely necessary. The RISAS Board will not be involved in the exercising of such option to ensure that their independence is maintained, in order to accommodate any appeal which may subsequently be made by a RISAB.
- (vi) the option to suspend is brought to the attention of a RISAB immediately in the event of either their reluctance to change and/or to make necessary improvements as may be required by the AA in accordance with the scheme's policy and procedures.
- (vii) when in the event of a dispute arising with the AA where a RISAB may be facing such sanction, then they will be able to present evidence to the RISAS scheme manager, independently of the AA, before the stage of enactment of any suspension is reached.
- (viii) the authority to withdraw a certificate of accreditation as may be deemed necessary, shall be delegated to the AA.
- (ix) there is a clear division of scheme management responsibility, with scheme development undertaken by the scheme manager and accreditation by the accreditation manager.
- (x) the scheme will engage with UKAS to secure certification of the RISAS scheme.

If you should have any further questions about this report, or RISAS in general, Please contact risas.admin@rssb.co.uk or call the RISAS Helpdesk on: 0203 142 5376