

Audit

- *Some suppliers are approved by registration and not by audit. Will that remain the same under the new arrangements?*

Answer: yes, the current structure of approval by questionnaire for lower risk businesses will stay the same.

- *We have an audit scheduled for the end of November. Shall we upload data from Achilles to RSSB after our audit?*

Answer: yes, we suggest that if you can, you upload now and then again after your audit or any other change you make. The data transfer takes less than 2 minutes once you have your PDF and if you can't print it yourself you can request it from Achilles.

- *With respect to an improved maturity model, currently RISQS do not like to provide the same auditor to a supplier. Will this change to follow a similar process to that of e.g. ISO BSI; whereby a company will be allocated an auditor for a fixed period (ie. 3yrs), thereby allowing a supplier to work with, and demonstrate to, an auditor how their maturity development is progressing?*

Answer: the rules within RISQS prevent you having the same auditor for more than two years in succession, and this will continue in the enhanced scheme.

- *We are about to pay to undergo the sentinel scheme rules audit and are quite hesitant to do so, yet it is a requirement to carry on receiving contracts. The concern is the cost of nearly £4000 for a three-day audit. We are a two-person office operating out of our home. We have asked what the audit will entail and have been sent PDFs but were advised that we need to pay prior to being given any more info. It currently feels like a big sales opportunity from RISQS with very little information being provided. Currently there is a wait of approximately 10 weeks from payment to audit and we need to know we can be ready for it. It would be great to speak to someone who can reassure us rather than receiving the sales calls chasing the payment for the audit.*

Answer: you should continue to pay for and undertake your audit with Achilles if it is due before May. The results of these audits will be transferred to the enhanced platform following transition. The audit fees should be £995 per day, so for three days you should be paying less than £3,000. Please contact our Scheme Manager (scheme.manager@RISQS.org) to discuss further.

- *It has sometimes been noted that there appears to be a scarcity of sufficiently competent auditors with regard to the POS module. Is this issue still present going into the new scheme?*

Answer: Capita has a significant resource of auditors and will be cross-training where necessary. We believe we will have adequate resource available from May 1st, 2018.

- *Are all non-trackside products subject to random audits?*

Answer: no, holders of product codes that are registration only do not need to be audited due to the selection of the product code. The random audits are for organisations that are required to sponsor their staff for the Industry Common Induction (ICI) and must follow the Non-Trackside Sentinel Rules.

- *The upgrades to the platform sound great from a higher level; but as a supplier the service we are procuring is also the delivery of the audit. Can we have some more information on the reasoning behind the audit provision being through Capita? How are the changes in the scheme going to be related to them and how RSSB will ensure that a quality audit is provided with 3rd party provision?*

Answer: RISQS has chosen Capita through a thorough tender process and based on their ability to provide high-quality auditors and manage audit booking. RISQS management team will be "auditing the auditors" to make sure audit delivery is to a high standard. The RISQS team in RSSB will be overseeing the service providers and will ensure that competence is maintained for all auditors; this oversight will include witnessed audits.

- *Currently RISQS audit your management systems; are there plans to audit product quality and suitability to meet NR standards?*

Answer: RISQS is a pre-qualification scheme and over the past few years we have removed many of the technical areas of audit as this was not in the remit of the scheme.

Once transition has been completed we will be looking to how we can help remove duplication in other areas of assurance. It is the aim of RSSB for all aspects of assurance in the industry to be linked so that there is a single place where all the assurance needs and interventions are met.

- *We have an audit due in June 2018. Will we be able to book an audit date before this date or will we need to rush it through after the takeover?*

Answer: you can book your audit any time in the last 12 weeks before your renewal is due without your renewal date changing. But RISQS will be contacting all suppliers 16 weeks before their expiry to arrange their audit.

- *In the first year will the audit duration remain as current?*

Answer: yes - we are not making any changes during transition to the audit requirements.

- *Our audit should be in April 2018; will this be with Achilles still?*

Answer: yes, all audits for RISQS up to April 30th 2018 will be carried out for us by Achilles. Audits from 1 May 1st 2018 onwards will be carried out for RISQS by Capita.

- *How often are suppliers required to be audited?*

Answer: where an audit is required - due to the product codes selected or trackside working - this will take place on an annual basis.

- *Can we have a much faster audit scheduling process and be able to have an audit much quicker? How long from the audit will it be before it is visible on the system?*

Answer: the new scheduling system will be closely integrated to the main portal and we expect this to create greater efficiency. Audit availability should be faster in the future but there are always limits on auditors to carry out such tasks when you need to keep utilisation high and thereby keep the process cost effective.

- *Our company is scheduled for audit in January 2018. Will this be different from previous annual audits, or are all the requirements the same?*

Answer: your audit will be the same as previously and up until May 1st 2018 RISQS audits will continue to be carried out by Achilles.

Fees

- *Retaining the current fee structure for 12 months is good news for all suppliers, but can you confirm this applies to both the registration fee and the audit fee?*

Answer: yes both registration and audit fees will be held for 12 month from May 1st, 2018.

- *What's going to happen about pricing?*

Answer: for the first year after transition - from May 1st 2018 - there will be no increase to any of the charges for RISQS. After the first year we will have a much better understanding of the scheme finances and will then carry out a thorough review. This will include consideration of the cost of providing the scheme, the improvements that both buyer and supplier members want, and the cost of these.

Compatibility with other schemes

- *I noticed on the slide presentation the mention of POS and Sentinel Scheme rules. However no mention was made to the RIP scheme. Following the removal of the RIPS rosette can an update be provided on what is happening with this?*

Answer: the RIPS protocol is now the Safe Work Planning protocol and covers the same elements as RIPS but is no longer a Network Rail scheme. It was decided that RISQS should own the requirements but NR will ensure that it meets their needs.

- *Is it possible that RISQS could recognise SSiP schemes such as SMAS and CHAS, and vice-versa, to avoid repetition of answering the same stock questions over and over? Are you considering allowing the RISQS audit to be included in an SSIP scheme?*

Answer: we are looking at mutual recognition but have to be very careful not to devalue your data which has been independently verified by RISQS as not all SSIP members do this, so we may not be able to accept their data. We intend to investigate SSIP but must protect the integrity of the information within the scheme.

Transition

- *I've received an email with log on details for the new system asking us to upload our data by 15th December. However to do so - if you follow the instructions - you need to log on to Achilles and save your data as a PDF by pressing the print button, but at the moment that print button seems to have disappeared.*

Answer: we have raised this with Achilles and they tell us that it is an IT problem. High-level discussions are ongoing to have this rectified. In the meantime, Achilles have agreed that any supplier can contact them either through their contact team or by emailing them at risqs@achilles.com and they will send them a copy of the PDF. The data belongs to the supplier and where suppliers have requested it the PDF has been sent very promptly. RISQS and our new service providers will do everything possible to try to save suppliers from having to re-type in their data to the new portal.

- *I've just checked my emails and have not had any communication from Achilles regards the change. Would you suggest I contact them?*

Answer: the RISQS system is continuing as at present up until May 1st, 2018. Thereafter RISQS continues but with new service providers and enhanced services. The transition will be managed by RISQS and we will continue to keep you updated during the coming months to help you make the transition without problems. Communications about transition will be coming from risqs@risqs.orgs so please keep an eye out for these.

- *How difficult will this change be and what's going to happen to my data?*

Answer: we are trying to make this as easy as possible and sent all members an email advising how to "print" all your data in the current Achilles system to PDF and upload to the new system. Unfortunately, Achilles have an IT issue so we are working on a new system but you can request your PDF from Achilles and they will provide it to you.

Standards

- *Are there any plans to integrate NR Standards and RSSB Standards? I think most suppliers would appreciate a simplified system which provides us with the tools to manage risks by providing direct access to all necessary documents from within the system, even if this means a slight uplift in fees. Also is there any reason why RISQS cannot immediately identify exact tailored standards and documents relevant to individual organizations?*

Answer: this sounds very sensible but is dependent on Network Rail wanting to do it. RSSB standards are "Group Standards" which apply to multiple infrastructures whereas Network Rail (and TfL) standards only apply to their own infrastructure. It must be each supplier's responsibility to decide, based on the exact scope and location of work, what standards are applicable to them as only they know what work they are undertaking.

Buyer-related

- *Currently via Achilles and as a contractor we are not able to see the RISQS status of any suppliers we would like to consider using unless we pay an additional fee. This seems very restrictive and a little unfair. Is this going to change? It would be especially useful when mobilising new contracts in unfamiliar geographical areas.*

Answer: the benefit of buyer membership is that it allows you to review the suppliers and that is part of the current scheme model. We will be transitioning with the same model and do not have any immediate plans to change this. In the future we will be considering all suggestions for change to the scheme but will, of course, still need to run a commercially viable scheme.

- *What is the timetable for rolling out system training for buyer organisations prior to the 1st may? And who do we need to contact to arrange sessions?*

Answer: Training will be provided for buyers through a handbook, online training, webex sessions, and there will also be face to face training. This will be in place prior to go live to ensure that all buyers have the ability to use the system.

- *Will all individual users from a buyer organisation automatically be given access to the new RISQS database?*

Answer: We do not currently have a list of each buyer's users. We will be communicating with buyers to obtain lists of the users you wish to have for the enhanced platform prior to go live.

- *The buyer searches on the supply chain appear to be lower month by month compared to previous years? Is there any further interpretation or understanding around this?*

Answer: The searches change each month and are not reducing but have actually increased in the last two years from between 7-10,000 searches per month to 10-15,000.

Governance

- *Who will make up the assurance working groups?*

Answer: these will be made up of those who wish to join and feel that they have the specific knowledge required to provide support to the group whether they are from the buyer or supplier membership.

- *Is there or will there be any small business representation in the RISQS governance structures or will it just be the largest suppliers represented?*

Answer: yes we believe it is very important that SME's are well represented and there will be opportunities to participate in the supplier and working groups.

Product Codes

- *Will there be codes which once selected identify other codes which are mandatory to support the selection of that code i.e. currently OTP Code requires the mandatory selection of "supply of OTP operator" code.*

Answer: the rules around code selection will not change.

- *Within the current product code catalogue there are some very vague codes which can be interpreted incorrectly. Within the RICCL codes will there be a descriptive which details the exact nature of the code?*

Answer: yes there will and where necessary these will be updated and enhanced with help from the industry to ensure that we provide the best information that works for all.

Software/Platform

- *On the information proposed to be provided on the number of times a company comes up in a search, or lack of shortlisting, will there be information on the specific areas (search criteria) that searches are being made?*

Answer: yes the product codes searched for will be advised but not the buyer member doing the searches.

- *Will any of the other Altius supplier appraisal software packages be available as an enhancement at preferential rates to existing RISQS suppliers?*

Answer: that is not in our current plans.

- *How will RISQS improve and streamline initial registration process of new members, with assistance guidance through the whole process?*

Answer: The new portal is much more user friendly and yes there will be a help team to guide and assist.

Miscellaneous

- *A concern has been raised by a supplier who is RISQS audited and that has in the past competed against Capita for works, and are now expected to open up their systems to scrutiny by their competitor. Is this not a conflict of interest? Can RISQS explain how this issue will be managed appropriately?*

Answer: the service providers are subject to confidentiality agreements and the auditors do not remove information from the supplier locations. We would take any allegation of impropriety very seriously and investigate thoroughly; however we do not believe a reputable organisation would behave in this manner.

- *On road risk, will you be taking this further and look at your track side and other such workers/subcontractors "driver fatigue" when working unsocial hours?*

Answer: while we will be transitioning with a like-for-like system, we are already looking at improvements and road risk is one of the first areas we will be considering. RSSB is already involved in road risk issues and have an ongoing working group which is looking at all aspects relevant to the railway.

- *We are currently registered with Achilles RISQS as a supplier of goods but we do not install on site. Will this be accommodated with the change to the scheme?*

Answer: yes, the RISQS scheme will continue to operate in the same way that it does currently but with improved implementation provided by the new service providers. Only when we have made sure that the transition has been fully implemented and in conjunction with the buyer and supplier and working groups will any fundamental changes be made.

- *As this is rail only I presume it will not include UVDB, so does this remain with Achilles?*

Answer: yes RISQS will continue with new service providers but UVDB is a separate scheme and so will continue to be run by Achilles.

- *For the 471 suppliers that have started but not finished an application, are there any follow-up activities carried out on that pool of suppliers?*

Answer: the 471 is not all suppliers that have not finished the application; they also include suppliers that have been archived for some reason. We follow up to offer assistance to those that have not fully engaged in the process in the hope that this will encourage them to complete the process.

- *As a British manufacture of both CCTV and fire detection equipment with less than 50 employees in the UK I guess that the company that I work for fits in to the type of target SME being sought for inclusion in the industry. Having a presence in the security industry over the last 25 years we see our products being supplied to Network Rail by higher*

level contractors who install. We are looking for a more direct involvement. Is RISQS for us and how would auditing (which has been mentioned but not described) apply to a company like ours? These are the questions which must be answered, in addition to the costs involved, so that we can reach a decision on joining.

Answer: yes we believe that RISQS is for you, either just by registering to supply your product or to include the installation which might involve audit if it is deemed to be safety critical or if installation takes place on or near the line. Audit is annual and looks at the content and application of your business processes.

- *The current procurement system favours the Tier 1 contractor. Will the new system address this by tiering opportunities ie. Tier 1 designated as Gold, Tier 2 Silver and so on, to ensure SMEs inclusivity and/or opportunity to directly tender against Tier 1 monopoly?*

Answer: RISQS is a supplier pre-qualification service which enables buyer members to find suppliers for their work and to comply with EU procurement rules where required. There is significant pressure from government for SME's to be used on major public projects and RISQS allows this to be easily selected by buyers.

- *You've mentioned the one to five rating system, is this continuing? We have heard this is being taken away in the grading process for the audited company.*

Answer: we will be maintaining the one to five star system to start with. However this is really just a measure of "non-compliances" and we would like to develop a system that gives credit to supplier members who do more than just meet the minimum requirements. We will therefore be working on developing a maturity measure for the future and this will be done in conjunction with the buyer and supplier and working groups.

- *Accessibility of RISQS data appears to be improving greatly with the implementation of the Altius platform and we would hope that the quality of audit data collected by Capita is certainly no worse than Achilles collect currently. What activities are RSSB, the RISQS Committee and jointly ISLG planning to ensure that the data available on RISQS provides assurance to all buyers so that costly multiple supplier assessments are reduced and/or eventually removed to avoid duplication?*

Answer: at this time we are concentrating on ensuring that the audit delivery is better than that we currently have. Only when the audit is trusted to meet the quality that people would want for themselves will the buyers feel that they can stop duplicating the audits that RISQS is carrying out.

The work that we are planning to undertake in the future includes working with groups like ISLG and trade bodies to educate the buyers on the level of assurance that RISQS provides and help to understand that we would never say that an organisation should not do additional assurance as this would be very necessary to get proper assurance of a supplier. We do however want to make sure that the additional assurance activities are supplemental and focussed on covering the activities that the buyer wants the supplier to do for them.

We will be looking to update the supplier assurance guidance from RSSB to better address this, and this will be with the involvement of the consultation groups with a working group specifically created for this.

- *Achilles suggested to me they may be looking to introduce an alternative rail industry accreditation to RISQS after losing it. Is there a possibility we will end up needing to register with more than one scheme?*

Answer: Network Rail have sent a message to the whole of their supply chain confirming that they will not require any accreditation other than RISQS. In addition, TfL have confirmed their support and that they too will be using RISQS for supplier accreditation. We therefore don't believe that there will be a need to be in any accreditation scheme other than RISQS. However, each buyer is free to manage their assurance through whatever means they wish, but as RISQS underpins Sentinel this would likely be part of the assurance requirements.