RINA Certification General Rules

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SOMMARIO

1 GENERAL

1.1

These Rules describe the procedures applied by RINA for the certification of Management Systems/Products/Services/Processes regarding the certification schemes in the document "Annex to the General Rules for RINA Certification – CERTIFICATION SCHEMES".

For the certification schemes not listed in the annex, the specific rules issued by RINA apply, available on the website www.rina.org.

For any issues not covered in this document, reference should be made to "GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" which can be downloaded at www.rina.org.

1.2

RINA issues certification to organisations/products/services/processes that has been recognised as conforming to the all the requirements of the reference standard or regulatory document

1.3

Certification is open to all Organisations and does not depend on whether they belong to an association or group.

RINA applies its current certification fees and guarantees fairness and uniformity of application.

RINA is entitled to refuse requests for certification by organisations that have been subject to, or whose production or activities have been subject to restriction, suspension or prescription by a public authority.

When RINA decline an application, the reasons shall be communicated to the client.

1.4

The certificate issued by RINA pertains exclusively to a single organisation, where organisation means a group, company, enterprise, body or institution, or parts and combinations thereof, whether associated or not, public or private, with its own functional and administrative structure.

For organisations with more than one operating unit, each operating unit can be defined as an organisation.

The participation of observers in audit is agreed in advance between RINA and the organization.

1.5

The terminology used in these Rules complies with the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17000:2005.

2 REFERENCE STANDARD / CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

2.1

Organisations wishing to obtain RINA certification must first and henceforth satisfy the requirements of the reference standard or regulatory document and those indicated in the following paragraphs of this chapter.

2.2

Conformity with the reference standard is verified by means of an audit programme including:

- an initial audit;
- a surveillance audit in the first year;
- a surveillance audit in the second year;
- a certification renewal audit in the third year.

The following are considered when establishing the audit programme: the size of the organisation, the scope and the complexity of the activities supplied by the organization, the products, the services and processes, the previous audit results, and any certificates already issued to the customer or other audits already performed.

3 INITIAL CERTIFICATION

3.1

Organisations wishing to obtain RINA certification must provide RINA with their main organisation/production data and site location, on the basis of which RINA will prepare an economic proposal.

In particular, the Organization shall provide information on:

- the management system/s, product/s, service(s), process(es) to be certified;
- the standard or standards to which the Organisation wishes to be certified;
- the general characteristics of the Organisation, including the name and the address of the site(s);
- all the processes outsourced by the organisation that may affect conformity with the requirements;
- company processes and relative dedicated resources;
- any certificates already obtained;
- Use of any consulting services connected with the scope of the certification.

On the basis of this information, RINA prepares a suitable offer.

Prior to performing the audit, RINA makes sure:

- there is sufficient information to perform the audit;
- certification requirements are clearly established and documented and are sent to the applicant organisation;
- every difference of interpretation between RINA and the applicant organisation has been eliminated;
- RINA has the skills and capacity to perform certification activities;

If organisations accept the offer, they must make their application official by sending RINA the specific form attached to the offer or the offer countersigned for acceptance, indicating the reference standard and, if relevant, any other reference standard document according to which certification is requested.

On receipt of the application for certification and the relative annexes and having ensured they are complete, RINA will send the organisation written acceptance of its application.

The organisation's request and its acceptance by RINA, contractually formalise the relationship between RINA and the organisation, and the applicability of these rules and the specific rules applicable to the scheme for which certification is required.

The agreement signed between RINA and the organisation includes:

- the initial audit and, if the outcome is successful, the issue of the certificate;
- subsequent surveillance and recertification audits;
- any additional services specified in the offer.

3.2

After the satisfactory completion of the initial audit and after a positive certification decision by RINA, a Certificate of Conformity with the reference standard, valid for three years, is issued.

In case of negative completion of the initial audit or after a negative certification decision, RINA could refuse to certify the Organisation.

When RINA refuse to certify, the reasons shall be communicated to the client.

The validity of the certificate is subject to the result of the subsequent annual surveillance audits and the three-yearly recertification.

The frequency and extension of the subsequent audits for maintaining certification are established by RINA on a case-by-case basis by drawing up a three-year audit plan, which it sends to the organisation.

For details on the management and validity of the certificates of conformity issued by RINA, see chapter 6.

4 MAINTAINING VALIDITY OF THE CERTIFICATE

4.1

The organisation must continue to comply with the Reference Standard or regulatory document.

4.2

The organisation must record any claims and the relative corrective action implemented and must make these records available to RINA together with the corrective action taken to address the non-conformities made during the periodic audits.

4.3

RINA performs periodic audits in order to evaluate the compliance with the requirements of the reference standard, according to the methods described in Chapter 6.

4.4

RINA also reserves the right to perform additional audits with respect to those established in the three-year programme, without notice, at the organisation:

- if it receives claims or reports, considered to be particularly significant, relative to the non-compliance of the certified service/product/process/system with the requirements of the reference standard and of these Rules;
- in relation to changes taking place in the organisation and in the certified service/product/process/system;
- to organisations whose certification has been suspended.

RINA shall exercise additional care in the assignment of the audit team because of the lack of opportunity for the organisation to object to audit team members.

If the organisation refuses without a justified reason, RINA start the suspension/withdrawal certification process.

If RINA considers the claims and reports to be justified, the cost of the supplementary audit will be charged to the organisation.

4.5

The validity of the certificate is confirmed following the successful outcome of the surveillance audit.

4.6

In the case of major non-conformities (type A findings) or minor non-conformities (type B findings) whose number in the opinion of the audit team is such as to impair the correct functioning of the system, the organisation will be subject to a supplementary audit within the time limits established by RINA in relation to the importance of the non-conformities and, in any case, not more than six months after the end of the audit in order to check the effectiveness of corrections and of the proposed corrective action.

If the major non-conformities are not eliminated within the established times or if the minor non-conformities do not assure the supplied products/services satisfy customer requirements and applicable law, RINA may suspend certification until these major non-conformities have been eliminated and, in any case, as specified in chapter 9.

All costs relative to any supplementary audits deriving from shortcomings will be charged to the organisation.

5 RECERTIFICATION

5.1

For the recertification audit, performed every three years, the organisation must contact RINA

about three months before the date indicated on the three-year audit plan in its possession, and send an updated of its data in order to allow RINA to plan the activity and agree on the date of the recertification audit.

5.2

The recertification audit sets out to confirm maintenance of the conformity and effectiveness of the overall Management System and is mainly based on an audit to perform on-site, generally, using the same criteria as the certification audit.

5.3

Usually, the recertification procedure must be successfully terminated before the expiry date indicated on the certificate. This date cannot be extended by RINA.

Consequently, the recertification audit must be successfully terminated in sufficient time to allow RINA to approve the recertification proposal and reissue the certificate within the above date.

If the organisation fails to abide by the above deadlines and does not obtain the reissued certificate within the date of expiry, the certificate must be considered as expired starting from the day after the date of expiry indicated on the certificate.

Organisations intending to obtain certification following the expiry of the certificate must present a new application and, generally, repeat the entire initial certification procedure.

5.4

In the case of major non-conformities or minor non-conformities whose number in the opinion of the auditing team is such as to impair the correct functioning of the management system, the organisation must effectively implement the relative corrections and corrective actions before the date of expiry of the certificate of conformity.

This means that RINA must perform the supplementary audit to verify the elimination of these non-conformities (major or minor) in sufficient time for the subsequent issue of the certificate.

The established times within which the supplementary audit must be performed are indicated in the recertification audit report.

The auditing team may decide to perform the supplementary audit on site or on the documents, depending on the type of corrective action involved.

All costs relative to any supplementary audits deriving from shortcomings will be charged to the organisation.

5.5

Following the satisfactory completion of the recertification audit, RINA reissues the certificate of conformity.

Confirmation of recertification approval by RINA with consequent issue of the certificate is sent to the organisation in writing.

For details on the management and validity of the certificates of conformity issued by RINA, see chapter 7.

6 AUDIT EXECUTION

6.1

The dates of the surveillance audits are agreed with the organisation.

An "Audit Plan" is drawn up for each audit which is sent to the customer organisation in good time.

RINA also uses the Audit Plan to inform the Organisation of the names of the auditors and technical experts appointed to perform the audit, chosen on the basis of the skills required to perform the audit; the Organisation may object to the appointment of these auditors provided it gives a justified reason.

During the AUDIT the auditors will be able to collect information also through:

a) Interviews;
b) observations of processes and activities;
c) review of documentation and records.

6.2

Each auditor shall be accompanied by a guide appointed by the organization to facilitate the audit performance and that can have the following responsibilities:

a) establishing contacts and timing for interviews;
b) arranging visits to specific parts of the site or organization;
c) ensuring that rules concerning site safety and security procedures are known and respected by the audit team members;
d) witnessing the audit on behalf of the client;
e) providing clarification or information as requested by an auditor.

6.3

A written report is prepared for each audit indicating any major non-conformities (type A findings), minor non-conformities (type B findings) and improvement recommendations (type C findings)[1].

A copy of the report is sent to the customer organisation.

The organisation may indicate any reservations or comments concerning the findings by the RINA auditors in the relative space in the audit report.

6.4

After analysing the reasons for any major or minor non-conformities indicated in the above report, the Organisation must, within the data indicated on the report, inform RINA of its proposals for handling the non-conformities, as well as the corrective action required and the dates envisaged for its implementation.

The organisation fill in the relative forms in use the "Member Area" of the RINA website (www.rina.org) to submit handling and corrective action proposals[2].

RINA will review the correct proposals submitted by the customer organisation and communicate acceptance via the RINA website.

6.5

In the event of major non-conformities (type A findings) the certification process is suspended; in the event of minor non-conformities the number of which, in the audit team's judgement, may compromise the efficiency of the management system, the certification process is also suspended.

In these cases, a supplementary audit must be performed within six months in order to check the effectiveness of corrections and of the proposed corrective action; if this audit is

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[1] *Major non-conformities are:*
- *failure to fulfill of one or more requirements of reference standard or document,*
- *non-compliance with one or more requirements of these Rules,*
- *a situation that could lead to the delivery of non-conforming products or products which do not comply with applicable legislation,*
- *situations that could cause serious shortcomings in the management system or reduce its capacity to ensure the control of processes or products/services.*

minor non-conformities are:
- *a situation that could reduce the customer's capacity of delivering a conforming product,*
- *situations that could cause minor shortcomings in the management system or not reduce its capacity to ensure the control of processes or products/services.*

Recommendations are.
- *suggestions for improving the management system that do not directly concern the requirements of the reference standard.*

2 If it is impossible to access the Internet, the organisation may fill in a paper form and send it to the pertinent RINA Office.

successful the certification process will be resumed.

The auditing team may decide to perform the supplementary audit on site or on the documents, depending on the type of corrective action involved.

All costs relative to any supplementary audits deriving from shortcomings will be charged to the organisation.

7 GESTIONE DEI CERTIFICATI DI CONFORMITA'

7.1

The certificate of conformity issued by RINA is valid for three years starting from the date of approval by RINA of the initial certification or recertification proposal.

7.2

From the moment of issue of the certificate by RINA, this and the relative three-year audit plan will made available to the organisation in the "Member Area" of the RINA website (www.rina.org).

The organisation may therefore enter and download the above documents directly from this area of the RINA website.

If it is impossible to access the Internet, the organisation may request a hardcopy from the pertinent RINA Office.

7.3

The validity of the certificate, throughout the three years of validity, is subject to the results of the subsequent surveillance audits.

The certificate of conformity is reissued following the successful outcome of each recertification audit.

The validity of the certificate may be suspended, withdrawn or relinquished in accordance with the contents of Chapters 8 and 9.

RINA directly publishes and updates the following on its website www.rina.org:

a) the list of certified organisations;
b) status of validity of the certificates issued, indicating valid, suspended or invalid for each certificate.

8 MODIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION OF CHANGES

8.1

An organisation in possession of certification may request a modification or extension by presenting a new certification application, accompanied by the duly updated documentation.

RINA reserves the right to examine requests on a case-by-case basis and to decide the evaluation methods for the purpose of issuing a new certificate according to the "GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" and the reference standard or regulatory document.

8.2

The organisation must promptly inform RINA of any changes in factors that may affect the capacity of the service/product/process/system to satisfy the requirements of the standard used for certification.

This requirement concerns, for example, modifications to:

- the legal, commercial, organisational or ownership status;
- organisation and management (e.g.: key managers or technical staff, decision making process, change in number of employees.);
- contact addresses and sites;
- field of application of the activities covered by the certificate;
- significant changes.

RINA reserves the right to perform additional audits or other actions on the organisation if the modifications communicated are considered particularly significant as regards maintaining the conformity with the requirements of the reference standard and of these rules or to review the economic conditions for the possible modification of the contract.

8.3

RINA promptly informs the organisation of every change in the reference standards or RINA certification rules.

9 SUSPENSION, REINSTATEMENT AND WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATION

9.1

The validity of the certificate of conformity is suspended as indicated in "GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" and in the following specific cases:

- if the Organisation refuses to allow the scheduled audits to be performed at the required frequencies and the special audits (short-notice audits and unannounced audits);
- if non-conformities are found in the management system which have not been corrected within the time limits established by RINA;
- if the organisation does not observe the deadlines established for the communication of corrective actions, following non-conformities/observations indicated on the audit report;
- if the organisation has made far-reaching changes to its Site/s or moves to another site without informing RINA of such changes;
- if the Organisation has made modifications to its management system that have not been accepted by RINA;
- if the organisation has undergone important organizational changes not reported this to RINA;
- if it refuses or obstructs the participation in audits of the observers of an accreditation body;
- for evidence that the scope of the certificate not guarantee the respect of the laws and regulations applicable to the supplied products/services, activity and/or site/s;
- if any justified and serious claims received by RINA are confirmed.

The organisation may also make a justified request to suspend certification, normally for not more than six months and in no case after the date of expiry of the certificate.

This suspension will be notified in writing (certified e-mail or equivalent method), stating the conditions for re-instating certification and the date by which the new conditions are to be complied with.

Suspension of the validity of the certificate is made public by RINA directly on the website www.rina.org.

9.2

Reinstatement of certification is subject to verification that the shortcomings which led to the suspension itself have been eliminated. This is achieved by means of an analytical audit checking the compliance of the Management System with all the requirements of the reference standard.

It is notified to the organisation in writing (certified e-mail or equivalent method) and made public by RINA on its website www.rina.org.

9.3

Failure to fulfil the conditions as per point 8.2 above by the established date will lead to revocation of the Certificate of Conformity.

Revocation of the certificate of conformity may be decided as indicated in "GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" and in the following specific cases:

- when there are reasons for suspension, which are held to be particularly serious;
- if the organisation stops the activities or services covered by the certificate for over six months as a rule;
- if the organisation does not accept the new contractual conditions;
- for every other major reason, at RINA's discretion, such as the proven incapacity of the system/product/service/process to pursue its objectives of complying with legislative, contractual or product safety requirements.

Withdrawal of the Certificate of Conformity is notified in writing (certified e-mail or equivalent method), to the Organisation and made public by RINA.

Any organisation which, following revocation of its Certificate, wishes to be re-certified, must submit a new application and follow the entire procedure all over again.

10 RENUNCIATION OF CERTIFICATION

A certified organisation may send formal communication of renunciation of certification to RINA, before the expiry of the certificate, including the case in which the organisation does not wish to or cannot conform to new provisions established by RINA.

Upon receipt of this communication, RINA starts the procedure for invalidating the certificate.

Generally speaking, within one month from the date of the communication, RINA updates the validity status of the certificate.

11 CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS

For contract conditions, the contents of the current edition of RINA document "GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" apply.

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English Edition

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Technical rules