



GENERAL RULES FOR THE VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION DECLARED IN CLAIMS AND FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF THE MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION DECLARED IN CLAIMS

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CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL

1.1

These Rules describe the procedures applied by RINA for the validation and verification of information declared in claims or for the certification of management of information declared in claims and how organisations can apply for obtain, retain and use these assessments.

Validation/verification is understood to be a confirmation of reliability of information declared in claims.

The terms in use for the object of assessment by validation/verification are “statement”, “declaration”, “assertion”, “prediction” or “report”. For uniformity and simplicity, we will always use the term “claim” in the remainder of this document to indicate the information declared subject to validation and verification.

Both activities are distinguished according to the timeline of the assessed claim. Validation is applied to claims regarding an intended future use or projected outcome (confirmation of plausibility), while verification is applied to claims regarding events that have already occurred or results that have already been obtained (confirmation of truthfulness).

Certification described in this Rules aims to evaluate the procedures that allow the management of information declared in claims within the same organization and is subject to periodic surveillance activities to demonstrate over time the fulfilment of requirements.

The list of services that RINA offers and for which RINA is accredited is available on the website www.rina.org.

1.2

The activities described in this Rules are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the ISO / IEC 17029 standard "Conformity assessment — General principles and requirements for validation/verification bodies", latest edition (including any amendments).

1.3

RINA recognises the fundamental guiding principles of the validation/verification/certification processes and conducts all activities ensuring accuracy, prudence, relevance, credibility, reliability, completeness, consistency, transparency, impartiality, competence, independence and safeguarding from conflicts of interest and confidentiality.

The organisation and non-RINA is responsible for the claim and its compliance with the specified applicable requirements.

RINA is responsible for basing a statement on sufficient and appropriate objective evidence.

1.4

The terminology used in these Rules complies with ISO / IEC 17029 standard, latest edition (including any amendments).



CHAPTER 2 – REFERENCE SCHEME/PROGRAMME/STANDARD

2.1

To obtain a positive outcome of the validation/verification or certification, the claim or the management of information declared in claims and the organisation must meet the requirements of the reference scheme/programme/standard and those indicated in these Rules , in addition to any additional elements required by the accreditation bodies.

In the context of accreditation, in fact, RINA must comply with certain reference documents issued by the Accreditation Bodies themselves.

These documents are available by contacting RINA or directly by the accreditation bodies (for example by consulting the related websites).

In order to obtain a positive outcome of the validation/verification or certification, the claim or management of information stated in claims and the organisation must fulfil the requirements of the reference scheme/programme/standard and those indicated in these Rules, as well as any additional elements foreseen by the accreditation bodies.

2.2

The main steps of the validation and verification are the following:

- a) Contractual phase (pre-engagement and engagement);
- b) Planning;
- c) Execution;
- d) Independent Review;
- e) Decision and issue of the validation / verification statement.

The main steps of the certification are the following:

- a) Contractual phase (pre-engagement and engagement);
- b) Initial audit
 - o Planning;
 - o Execution;
 - o Independent Review;
 - o Decision and issue of the certificate.
- c) Surveillance audit
 - o Planning;
 - o Execution;
 - o Independent Review (if applicable depending on the scheme/programme/standard);
 - o Decision and issue of the certificate (if applicable depending on the scheme/programme/standard).
- d) Recertification audit
 - o Planning;
 - o Execution;
 - o Independent Review (if applicable depending on the scheme/programme/standard);
 - o Decision and issue of the certificate (if applicable depending on the scheme/programme/standard).



CHAPTER 3 - CONTRACT

3.1

Organisations wishing to obtain the validation/verification or the certification must provide RINA with the essential data of their organisation, related activities and the location of the involved sites, by sending the appropriate informative questionnaire form filled in in all its parts.

RINA makes the economic offer on the basis of the information given in the informative questionnaire.

In particular, the informative questionnaire requires that information is provided at least on:

- a) name of the applicant organisation;
- b) name of the organisation beneficiary of the assessment, if different from name of the applicant organisation;
- c) proposed claims;
- d) sites where the organisation's activities are carried out, related to claims;
- e) the reference scheme/programme/standard;
- f) any other information as required by the scheme/programme/standard.

This information must be received by an authorised representative of the organisation.

Based on this information, RINA prepares an adequate economic offer.

3.2

Organisation (applicant) formalises their order by sending RINA the request form or a contract duly signed by the chief executive officer or authorised representative, by way of a power of attorney together with a copy of the certificate of registration with the Chamber of Commerce or equivalent document.

On receipt of the request form or the signed contract and attachments requested, and after a preliminary review to check their completeness, RINA appropriately informs the organisation of its acceptance of the order.

Only after RINA notifies the organisation the acceptance of the order, the contract between RINA and the organization is considered stipulated.

The contract stipulated between RINA and the organisation covers:

- a) desk review of the organisation documents,
- b) follow-up actions (on-site visit and telephone or remote interviews);
 - o the on-site visit which is always performed when it is a requirement of the supervisory body of the scheme, of the accreditation body, competent authority; it is at the discretion of RINA, in relation to the nature of the statement in all other cases; and
- c) any additional services stated in the offer.

For certification, in addition, the contract between RINA and the organization normally also includes surveillance and recertification audits from.

CHAPTER 4 – PLANNING

4.1

Together with the request, or subsequently to the same, the organisation must make available to RINA the documented information required by the reference scheme/programme/standard and/or deemed necessary by



the organisation to ensure the reliability of the information stated in the claim or in the management of the information contained in claims;

RINA may request at its discretion, for examination, also other documents than those indicated above, deemed important for the activity.

The above documentation is reviewed by RINA for compliance with the reference scheme/programme/standard and the requirements of these Rules.

RINA identifies the possible risks of material inaccuracies and non-compliance with the criteria, taking into account:

- a) the objectives and the reference scheme/programme/standard requirements;
- b) competence, consistency and real as well as perceived impartiality;
- c) legal, regulatory and liability issues;
- d) the organization, where activity is being carried out, its management system, operating environment, geographic location;
- e) the susceptibility of any parameter included in the claims to generate a material misstatement, even if there is a control system implemented;
- f) the level of assurance to be achieved and the corresponding evidence-gathering used, if applicable;
- g) perception of interested parties;
- h) the possibility that claims are misleading;
- i) opportunities for improvement.

4.2

RINA selects the team that performs the assessment and the staff who will carry out the activity of independent review of the results, based on the knowledge, skills and competences necessary, taking into account the criteria/requirements of the reference scheme/programme/standard and any additional elements, if any, indicated by the oversight body of the scheme/programme/standard, by the accreditation body/competent authority.

The team is completely independent from all aspects of the claims and has not participated in any way in the design of any part of it or of the related information system, in accordance with the procedures approved by the committee for the safeguarding of impartiality.

4.3

RINA prepares a plan, which is sent to the organisation in advance.

RINA, through the plan, communicates the names of the team members and any technical experts in charge of carrying out the assessment, observers, interpreters or translators chosen on the basis of the skills necessary for carrying out the activities.

The organisation can object to these appointments, within 5 working days of notification, justifying the reasons.

RINA reconstitutes the team following valid objections.

In the plan, the assigned tasks are indicated for each team member.

It is required that for each organisation it is assessed:

- a) that the structure, processes, registrations and related documents, relevant to the claim or the management of information contained in claims meet the applicable requirements of the scheme/programme/standard;
- b) that the defined documented processes and information are prepared, implemented and effectively kept active, in order to form the basis for the reliability in the organisation's claim;
- c) in the case of certification, the procedures enabling the development of comply with the requirements.



CHAPTER 5 – EXECUTION

5.1

After the documentation review, the team identifies further topics and aspects (objective evidence) that must be investigated with the organisation.

Activity is carried out on the basis of sufficient sampling to verify the reliability of data and information in accordance with the requirements of the reference scheme/programme/standard.

The process may also require an on-site visit when it is a requirement of the reference scheme/programme/standard and in other cases, at RINA's discretion, depending on the nature of the claim or of the management of information contained in claims.

The date of the site visits is agreed with the organisation sufficiently in advance and will be/will be officially confirmed at least one week before through the plan.

If, during the document review, doubts or problems arise that cannot be resolved without a visit to the organisation, the team will still have to make this on-site visit to resolve them.

During the activity, team members may collect information through:

- a) interviews;
- b) observations of processes and activities;
- c) review of documentation and records provided by the organisation;
- d) review of information from other sources.

5.2

During the execution of the validation/verification activities on site, each team member must be accompanied by a guide designated by the organisation to facilitate its execution and who may have the following responsibilities:

- a) establish contacts and times for interviews;
- b) organise visits to specific parts of the site of the organisation;
- c) ensure that the rules regarding site security and safety procedures are known and respected by members of the team;
- d) assisting on site visit on behalf of the organisation;
- e) provide clarification or information at the request of a team member.

5.3

The team can prepare a written draft report, that summarizes the findings that need to be further elaborated upon, researched or added to by the representatives of the Organization in order to confirm that the claim and the management of information contained in claims meets the requirements.

The organisation may indicate any reservations or comments it may have regarding the findings made by the team.

If evidence comes to RINA's attention that leads it to believe that there is an intentional inaccuracy or non-compliance, RINA reserves the right to inform the appropriate parties as soon as possible.

5.4

The organisation must provide additional information to clarify or otherwise make necessary improvements to the claim or the management of information contained in claims and supporting documentation, to solve



findings, that would result in a positive assessment outcome for the project, by the date and the methods established by the reference scheme/programme/standard.

According to the nature of the improvements/corrections and/or the provided documentation, an additional on-site visit could be needed to check the correct implementation of the corrective actions proposed/implemented.

RINA will review the corrections or the proposed corrective actions of the organisation and communicate their acceptance and if necessary, plan an additional time aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the corrections and proposed corrective actions.

The additional time can be spent on site at the organisation based on the type of findings to be evaluate in the judgment of the team.

The team prepares the documents to be submitted to the independent auditor according to the criteria of the reference scheme/programme/standard. Normally, the documents to be submitted are the following

- a) the final report (always);
- b) the draft validation/verification declaration or the certificate (always, although depending on the scheme/programme/reference standard the declaration may be contained in the report);
- c) some supporting documents (depending on scheme/programme/reference standard).

CHAPTER 6 - INDEPENDENT REVIEW AND DECISION

The independent reviewer (one or more depending on the competence required) reviews the documents submitted by the team to confirm that

- a) all activities have been completed in accordance with the contract, the scheme/programme/reference standard and the RINA documentation;
- b) there is sufficient and adequate evidence to support the declaration or certificate;
- c) any issues hindering the continuation of validation and verification or certification have been identified, resolved and documented.

RINA reserves the possibility to suspend the process in case of particular critical issues, as for example findings that the organisation is unable to manage and/or other requirements envisaged by the individual scheme/programme/standard that the organisation is unable to comply with.

The final report, the declaration or the certificate is then approved and signed by the authorised persons.

RINA forwards the approved documents to the organisation and in some cases, depending on the reference scheme/programme/standard, to the supervisory body of the scheme.

The validation/verification declaration contains at least the following contents

- a) name of the organisation beneficiary of the activity;
- b) whether it is a validation statement or a verification statement or both;
- c) the reference to the assertion
- d) the reference to the scheme/programme/standard
- e) the date of issue of the assertion
- f) any other information/references required by the relevant scheme/programme/standard.

The certificate shall contain at least the following

- g) name of the organisation receiving the activity;
- h) the reference to the assertion;
- i) the reference to the scheme/programme/standard;
- j) (c) the date of issue of the certificate, the current issue date and the expiry date of the certificate;
- k) (d) any other information/references required by the relevant scheme/programme/standard.



CHAPTER 7 – MODIFICATION AND WITHDRAWAL

7.1

The organisation holding of the validation/verification statement or the certificate can request a modification or extension by submitting a new request.

RINA reserves the right to examine the requests on a case-by-case basis and to decide how to evaluate for issuing a new validation/verification statement or certificate, in accordance with the reference scheme/programme/standard.

7.2

For the entire duration of the contractual relationship, the organisation must promptly notify RINA of any changes that have occurred on aspects that may affect the ability of the organisation to continue meeting the requirements of the scheme/programme/standard agreed.

If new facts or information that could materially affect the validation/verification statement or certificate discovered after the issue date, RINA will:

- a) communicate the matter as soon as practicable to the organisation and, if required, the scheme/programme/standard owner;
- b) take appropriate actions, including the following:
 - o discuss the matter with the organisation;
 - o consider if the validation/verification statement or certificate requires revision or withdrawal.

If the validation/verification statement or the certificate requires a revision, RINA implements the processes to issue a new version of the statement or the certificate which can include the specification of the reasons for the revision. These may include repeating the relevant stages of the validation/verification or certification process.

In the event of a revision of the statement or certificate, RINA can also communicate to other interested parties that the use of the original statement or the certificate can now be compromised given the new facts or information that has emerged.

7.3

RINA promptly informs the organisation of any significant change in the validation/verification or certification procedures.

CHAPTER 8 - CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS

8.1

For the contractual conditions and for anything not provided for in these Rules, the provisions contained in the RINA document "General contract conditions for conformity assessment activities", available on the website www.rina.org, apply.



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Technical rules