Code of Practice for Gaining Assurance When Procuring OTP Services
Document revision history

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Background

A sub-group of the M&EE Networking Group working in conjunction with the Rail Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme (RISQS) have looked at the arrangements to be undertaken in order to gain assurance when procuring OTP services. The M&EE Networking Group recommend this COP as good practice for the industry.

M&EE COPs are produced for the benefit of any industry partner who wishes to follow the good practice on any railway infrastructure. Where an infrastructure manager has mandated their own comparable requirements, the more onerous requirements should be followed as a minimum for work on their managed infrastructure.

The M&EE Networking Group makes no warranties, express or implied, that compliance with this document is sufficient on its own to ensure safe systems of work or operation. Users are reminded of their own duties under health and safety legislation.

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The M&EE Networking Group agreed and signed off this Code of Practice on 17 Jan 2018 and published on 3 March 2018.

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Purpose
This Code of Practice details the process to be undertaken to gain operational and engineering assurance when procuring OTP services.

Scope
This Code of Practice is intended to be used by companies when procuring OTP services and can be used to help them assure themselves that a supplier has the systems and capability in place prior to engagement.

The OTP service covered by this Code of Practice includes planning and management of operation, hire (operated or vehicle hire only), OEM and/or Conversion, upgrade/ modification and maintenance.

Note: On Network Rail Managed Infrastructure the On-Track Plant Operations Scheme (POS) is mandated for the Operational Planning and Management of OTP.
Definitions

**Additional Capability Assessment**
For the purposes of this document an assessment undertaken at a supplier’s premises to obtain supplementary assurance information where it was not possible to gain sufficient assurance through desktop assessment alone.

**Assessment**
Systematic and documented process for obtaining systems and capability evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which qualification assessment criteria are fulfilled (this process was formerly referred to as audit).

**Assessment team**
One, or more, assessors conducting qualification assessments.

**Assessor**
A person with the competence to conduct qualification assessment in support of the lead assessor if required.

**Assurance**
A systematic process of checking to see whether a product or service meets, or is capable of meeting, specified requirements.

**Desktop Capability Assessment**
For the purposes of this document an assessment undertaken on a supplier by virtue of a thorough, documented review of previous assessments undertaken to recognised assessment criteria by competent assessors.

**Infrastructure Manager**
For the purposes of this document the organisation under whose control the railway is managed.

**On-Track Plant (OTP)**
Machines with rail wheels capable of running on railway track, limited by their engineering acceptance to running within a possession only. For the purposes of this document they are split into three main groups: demountable machines, road-rail vehicles (RRVs), and trailers.
Operator

For the purposes of this document, the Operator, (written with a capital “O”), means the company responsible for managing the site operation of the vehicle (e.g. the POS when working on Network Rail managed infrastructure).

POS

Network Rail On-Track Plant Operations Scheme

Risk-Based Frequency

A method used to determine when assessment activities will be conducted based upon the risk profile of the supplier, the activity they undertake and the frequency at which it is undertaken so that the sufficient assurance is maintained at all times.

RISQS

The Railway Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme is the industry’s registration and assessment process for suppliers in the rail industry.

Site Assessment

For the purposes of this document an assessment undertaken on a supplier of the workplace activity which they undertake. This may either be on the buyer’s worksite while the supplier is working or at the supplier’s own premises as appropriate.
1 Assessment of Suppliers

1.1 Identification of Potential Suppliers

1.1.1 Identify suppliers capable of undertaking the OTP service required. This could be operational management, hire, conversion, upgrade, or maintenance. A list of potential suppliers is available via the relevant industry supplier assurance scheme.

Note: For the GB rail Industry, this would be through the Railway Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme (RISQS) by searching on the portal. Undertake a search of companies that are registered for product codes 17.01.01 or 17.01.02 with the appropriate activity code (i.e. SER, SMP, OPT, MRC, REF)

1.2 Desktop Capability Assessment

1.2.1 Once a list of suppliers that meet the criteria have been identified, the industry audits should be reviewed. This can be achieved by undertaking a desk top review of the published systems assessments contained on the RISQS portal in order to gain sufficient confidence that they meet the company’s assurance requirements.

1.2.2 If it is considered there is insufficient information in order to make an assessment decision, the supplier should be asked to provide copies of additional assessments undertaken by other organisations e.g. Infrastructure Managers Technical audit. This should provide additional material for review enabling a clearer picture of their ability to meet the assurance requirements.

1.2.3 If it is not possible to gain sufficient assurance from the desktop assessment to move forward in the procurement process, then this review should be recorded. Proceed to Section 1.3

1.2.4 If there is sufficient assurance from the desktop assessment to move forward in the procurement process, then this review should be recorded. Proceed to Section 1.4

1.3 Additional Capability Assessment

1.3.1 If it is not possible to gain sufficient assurance through desktop assessment alone but the company still intends to engage the supplier further assurance activity should be undertaken.

a) Perform a gap analysis of information reviewed against M&EE Audit Protocol AP0001 and any company requirements

b) Create an assessment plan to cover the elements not confirmed through the desktop review, avoiding duplication of assured elements
c) Contact the Supplier to arrange assessment  
d) Undertake the assessment  
e) Review assessment outcomes  

1.3.2 If it is not possible to gain sufficient assurance following the additional systems assessment, then the company should not engage the supplier until the requirements are met.

Note: The above supplier may still be used where the company SMS mitigates the risks identified.

1.3.3 If after the additional systems assessment, there is now sufficient assurance of the supplier’s capability then proceed to section 1.4

**1.4 Site Assessment**

1.4.1 Following the capability assessment further assurance should be gained on how a supplier performs while actually carrying out the contracted activities. The site check sheets in Audit Protocol AP0001 can be used as a part of this process if applicable to the products or services being audited.

1.4.2 The point at which the site assessment is undertaken should be determined by the level of assurance gained during any capability assessment(s). The timeframe should always be based on a determination of risk. This could take place on the first occasion the supplier is used, or at any point throughout the annual assurance cycle.

Note: This allows for buying organisations to undertake an intervention where there is less assurance gained from any capability assessment(s).

1.4.3 Depending on the outcome of the site assessment the buying organisation should make a determination on whether to continue using the supplier. The level of monitoring that would be required in order to ensure a sufficient level of assurance is maintained.

1.4.4 The site assessment will be different for different types of supplier.

a) Where the supplier works on rail infrastructure directly for the buying organisation then the site assessment should be undertaken on the buyer's worksite while the supplier is working for them.

b) Where the supplier undertakes the work at their own premises (e.g. maintenance, upgrade, or conversion) then the site assessment should be performed at their location(s).

Note 1: Where a site assessment is undertaken at a supplier's premises then this can be undertaken at the same time as an additional capability assessment if one is deemed to be necessary.
Note 2: Where a supplier has more than one site then a risk based approach should be taken to determine which locations should be assessed this can be on a rotational basis as part of the review/assurance cycle (section 1.5).

1.5 Review/assurance cycle

1.5.1 A supplier’s capability to provide the contracted service should be reviewed for the following reasons:

   a) Where there is a material change to the supplier’s organisation

   b) Following a change of scope to the services provided.

   c) Where a supplier’s performance is deemed to be unacceptable

   d) On a risk based frequency as determined in section 1.4.3 but this should be at least annually

1.5.2 On-going review should cover the process detailed in sections 1.2 & 1.4 and where necessary section 1.3.

1.6 Escalation Process

1.6.1 If the additional capability assessment review or site assessment reveals serious issues the supplier should not be used (e.g. potential breach of Health, Safety or environment). The issues should be brought to the attention of the supplier with an agree correction action plan implemented.

1.6.2 If the supplier fails to adequately address these issues, the relevant Infrastructure Manager(s) should be informed. The Infrastructure Manager can then take appropriate action to maintain the safety of the infrastructure.
1.7 Assurance Process Flow Chart

- **OTP Services required**
  - Use industry assurance scheme to check for suppliers with the ability to provide required service
  - Generate list of potential suppliers and review previous assessments held on scheme portal
  - Undertake capability review

- **Does the review give sufficient assurance?**
  - Yes
    - Site assessment Phase
    - Undertake additional capability assessment
  - No
    - Request additional assessment information from supplier

- **Do you now have sufficient assurance?**
  - Yes
    - Do not use supplier until action plan for improvement agreed
  - No
    - Undertake additional capability assessment

- **Should the supplier continue to be used?**
  - Yes
    - Escalation necessary?
      - Yes -> Do not use supplier
      - No -> Site assessment Phase
  - No -> Site assessment Phase
2 Competence

2.1 Auditor Competence

2.1.1 Organisations should define and document the competence that auditors require to undertake an effective audit.

Note: Guidance on auditor competence can be found in BS EN ISO 17021-Part 1 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.

2.2.1 Organisations should have processes in place to manage and demonstrate the competence of auditors.

2.3.1 The auditor should have suitable knowledge and understanding in specific areas depending on assessment being undertaken, suggested framework for auditor competence is as follows:

a) Desktop capability assessments,

i. Audit process

ii. Their organisation’s own assurance requirements and procurement processes

iii. Legal requirements, appropriate industry & Infrastructure Manager’s standards, Codes of Practice and OTP management system requirements

iv. The RISQS assurance process and requirements.

b. Additional Capability Assessments

i. All of the Criteria detailed in a) with the following additional elements:

ii. IRCA accredited Lead Auditor Qualification or Equivalent

iii. Understanding of relevant maintenance and/or engineering practices

c. Site Assessments

i. All of the Criteria detailed in b) with the following additional elements broken down into specific area depending on the type of site assessment being undertaken:

ii. Operational Site (buyer’s worksite)

1. Rail experience specific to OTP operations

iii. Maintenance provider’s facilities

1. Knowledge and understanding of maintenance and engineering practices relating to OTP
iv. OEM and/or Converters Facilities

1. Relevant Engineering Qualification (e.g. Degree, HND, HNC, Eng Tech, I Eng, C Eng etc.)

2. Suitable engineering experience as determined by the organisations competence requirements

3. Knowledge and understanding of legislative and infrastructure specific requirements for Manufacture and Conversion of OTP (including design, build, and testing)

Note: Where it is not possible for an individual to meet all the competence requirements it is acceptable to build a team that together meet all the criteria for the relevant audit.