RISSB
RAIL INDUSTRY SAFETY AND STANDARDS BOARD
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ADMIN 4.3 PRODUCT REVIEW AND COMMENT

VERSION 10

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1 Purpose

This procedure outlines the process for stakeholders to review and comment on a RISSB product. It details the internal process used by RISSB staff and Development Groups (DG) during product development, as well as the external process for conducting 'open' reviews of RISSB products. Additionally, it describes how RISSB handles and responds to stakeholder comments.

2 Procedure

RISSB products include Standards, codes of practice, rules, guidelines, and handbooks.

To ensure that content is appropriate and correct for use by the rail industry, and to secure strong stakeholder commitment, regular reviews are conducted throughout the product development stage.

This procedure facilitates the advancement of products from an author's preliminary draft to final status.

RISSB product reviews are conduct through:

- DG Review and comment
- Public Consultation (PC)
- Peer Review
- Independent Review (IR)
- Workshop Review (optional)

The development of Standards also considers the General Provisions of the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. More information is available via *https://notifications.wto.org/en/notification-requirements/technical-barriers-to-trade*.

2.1 DG review and comment

DG review and comment is the process that allows technical content experts—namely, DG members and workshop participants—to review and refine the preliminary draft of RISSB products, advancing them towards final status.

RISSB product authors develop preliminary drafts based on the agreed product objectives and scope. When a version of the draft is completed, it is submitted by the author through the Standard Development Manager (SDM) for DG Review.

DGs, consisting of content experts, review and provide feedback on preliminary drafts. Comments, ideally in the form of alternative content suggestions, are collected and documented by the SDM. This feedback is consolidated into a PDF commenting tool for discussion at the subsequent DG meeting where all feedback and associated actions are recorded.

The author incorporates DG comments and revises the draft product. It may undergo multiple DG Reviews before advancing to PC. If needed, the DG may seek additional input from the subject matter expert within the Standing Committee (SC), with all feedback documented.

The SDM will only advance the draft product to PC when the DG has confirmed that the draft product is of an acceptable standard.

2.2   Peer review

Reviews undertaken by RISSB staff are referred to as peer reviews. Peer reviews focus on the documents' structure, language conventions, formatting, and flow to ensure consistency in how RISSB products are developed and presented.

Peer reviews typically occur before the document is subjected to PC or IR.

2.3   Public consultation

The public consultation (PC) process involves publishing drafts of developed Standards and codes of practice on the RISSB website and notifying relevant industry and community stakeholders to review and provide comments. Other RISSB products may be subject to public consultation at the discretion of the GM Products and Innovation.

Notification includes RISSB communiqué to all RISSB subscribers (available to all interested parties), via agreed channels (newsletter, social media, etc) and distribution by the DG within their respective organisations.

The minimum PC duration is determined by the document type being developed:

- **Australian Standards:** 60 days
- **Codes of Practice:** 30 days
- **Other RISSB products:** May be circulated for public comment at the GM Products and Innovation's discretion.

After the PC period, the author compiles the feedback, which is reviewed by the DG. The DG decides which comments to incorporate, and the author updates the final draft document accordingly.

2.4   Independent review

An Independent Review (IR) is conducted during the PC period for Australian Standards and codes of practice. For all other documents, the IR occurs before DG approves the draft to proceed to Standing Committee for final endorsement before publication.

The IR is carried out following the guidelines outlined in ADMIN 4.4 Independent Review.

2.5   Workshop review (Optional)

Where there is significant public interest and extensive feedback on a draft product, RISSB's development process allows for an optional Workshop Review stage.

The need for a Workshop Review is determined by the SDM in consultation with RISSB GMs and SCs. All interested parties will be invited to participate via a RISSB communiqué, issued at least four weeks before the date of the Workshop Review.

During the Workshop Review, the independently reviewed draft standard is discussed by stakeholders, including DG members and other relevant experts, such as those specialising in risk and human factors. While no new issues are introduced, the workshop participants rigorously test the content of the draft.

The independent reviewer attends the workshop to address any immediate concerns. Following the workshop, the author revises the draft as needed and submits it for final approval by the DG.

3   Feedback/comment tracking

The SDM or author will track and document stakeholder comments from both the DG Review and PC phases. The actions taken in response to the feedback will also be recorded.

This feedback tracking will serve as a documented record of stakeholder deliberations, forming an essential audit trail as the product progresses through its various development phases.

The preferred tracking method is using Adobe Acrobat (comments) with a PDF version of the product. Other methods, such as Excel or Word lists, may be used where necessary. Regardless of the format used, the register must include the following information:

- Clause identification
- Commenter identification
- The comment itself
- The response to the comment

Examples of issues registers in a PDF document used for DG Review and comment is provided in Appendix A.

4   Record requirements

The following records are maintained as evidence of compliance with this procedure:

- Feedback/comment tracking (PDF version, saved for each submitted draft)
- Comments and their disposition
- Public comment documents
- Minutes from the workshop (if applicable)
- Product drafts submitted for review (all versions submitted for review are to be retained)
- Request For Service documentation

- Independent Review reports

NOTE: Record of comment tracking must be securely stored and maintained within RISSB's record-keeping systems. Any record of comments placed in the public domain, such as during PCs or Workshop Reviews, shall be de-identified in accordance with RISSB Privacy Provisions.

Appendix A   Issue Register Examples

Issue register – Adobe Acrobat (as comments)