

Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)

**Policy rule for evaluation of
conformity assessment
schemes**

Document code:

RvA-BR012-UK

Version 1, 8-2-2017

(content equal to Dutch version of 22-12-2016)

RvA policy rules describe the RvA rules and the policy on specific subjects.

A current version of the policy rules can be obtained through the RvA web site (www.rva.nl).

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1. Scope

Article 1.

This policy rule is applicable to the evaluation of conformity assessment schemes (scheme) by the RvA in the following cases:

1. A scheme owner requests the RvA to evaluate a scheme that will only be used by Dutch conformity assessment bodies (CABs) (national scheme); chapter 3 and 4 are applicable;
2. A scheme owner requests the RvA to evaluate a scheme that will be used by CABs in more than one European Accreditation cooperation (EA) member country (multinational scheme); chapter 5 is applicable;
3. One or more CABs request(s) the RvA to evaluate a scheme of a scheme owner who does not request evaluation of that scheme. The specific scheme has also not been accepted by EA or endorsed by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF); chapter 6 is applicable;
4. The Dutch government requests the RvA to evaluate a scheme that is or will be part of national legislation (regulated scheme); chapters 3 and 7 are applicable.

Article 2.

This policy rule is not applicable to:

1. The application for accreditation for an “in-house scheme”, which is a scheme that has been developed by or for one CAB and is also being used by this CAB. In such a situation the application for accreditation will be handled according to Policy Rule RvA-BR002, without the use of this policy rule (BR012);
2. The application for accreditation for a scheme for which the RvA has accredited another CAB and/or a scheme that has been published according to policy rule BR010 in the list of schemes for which RvA can accredit CABs. In that case the application for accreditation will be handled according to policy rule RvA-BR002, without this policy rule (BR012) being applicable.

Article 3.

If the RvA receives an application for accreditation for a scheme for which, based on article 1 and 2, it can not be determined if BR012 is applicable, the board of the RvA will decide on how to handle the scheme evaluation and application for accreditation on an individual basis.

Article 4.

This policy rule refers to other RvA documents, which can be obtained from the RvA, but can also be found on the RvA website (www.rva.nl). RvA documents are, with a single exception, available in both Dutch and English. If a document is published in two languages, the Dutch version is binding..

Article 5.

This document shall come into force on the day of publication of the notification in the Dutch Government Gazette (Staatscourant).

2. Definitions

Article 6.

The definitions in ISO/IEC 17000 apply.

Article 7.

In this policy rule the terms below have the following meanings:

1. *Conformity assessment scheme (hereafter: scheme)*: a documented and publicly available set of requirements which establishes the following:
 - a. the object of conformity assessment, i.e. product, process, service, system, person to be assessed for conformity;
 - b. the requirements against which conformity is to be assessed;
 - c. the mechanism by which conformity is determined, e.g. testing, examination, inspection or auditing and any other supporting activities to ensure continued conformity;
 - d. requirements placed on CABs by the scheme owner, and any specific applications or interpretations thereof, if applicable
2. *Scheme owner* : an identifiable organization which has established a scheme and which is responsible for the design and management of the scheme. The following are examples of scheme owners:
 - a. standardisation bodies¹;
 - b. CABs;
 - c. organizations that use services provided by CABs;
 - d. organizations that buy or sell products subject to conformity assessment activities;
 - e. manufacturers or their associations that have established a scheme.

A national accreditation body can not be a scheme owner. If a CAB is the scheme owner and the only user of the scheme, this policy rule is not applicable.

3. *Self-assessment of a scheme*: The assessment of a scheme against the accreditation requirements by the scheme owner or by the CAB that wants to be accredited for the scheme. The RvA only accepts such a self-assessment if this at least addresses the requirements that are explained in explanatory document RvA-T033, "Explanation of the requirements for conformity assessment schemes".
4. *Scheme-evaluation*: an evaluation by RvA with the purpose of establishing:
 - a. if the scheme owner meets the requirements of Article 9;
 - b. if the requirements for accreditation in the form of the standard for accreditation chosen and any additional requirements fit the conformity assessment activities of the scheme;
 - c. if the self-assessment of the scheme provides evidence that the CAB meets the accreditation requirements by using the scheme;
 - d. which accreditation requirements are not (completely) laid down in the scheme and therefore have to be met by individual CABs;
 - e. the way the accreditation assessments for the scheme will be conducted.
5. *National accreditation body (NAB)*: the sole body in a Member State that is appointed to perform accreditation according to Regulation (EU) 765/2008.

¹ Does not include cases where the scheme is fully defined in standards and the role of standardisation body is limited to production of the standard.

6. *National scheme*: scheme for which CABs applying for accreditation, are located in the Netherlands. In most cases the scheme owner will also be located in the Netherlands, but it is possible (see definition of a home Accreditation Body (hAB)) it can be a legal identity outside the Netherlands.
7. *Multinational scheme*: scheme for which CABs legally established in more than one EA member country² are involved, each operation under the accreditation of their NAB, therefore multiple NABs are involved in accreditation of the scheme.
8. *IAF-endorsed scheme*: Scheme endorsed by IAF as published in IAF-PR4.
9. *Scheme specific requirements for the CABs*: specific requirements on the CABs laid down by the scheme owner.
10. *Home accreditation body (hAB)*: The local NAB which takes the lead for evaluating a multinational scheme.
11. *Regulated scheme*: scheme used in Dutch legislation, as explained in chapter 5 of the 'Kabinetsstandpunt conformiteitsbeoordeling & accreditatie'³.
12. *List of schemes the RvA can provide accreditation for*: list published on the RvA website, as stipulated in RvA policy rule BR010, containing the schemes for which the RvA can accredit CABs.

² Countries of the EA-region are countries where the accreditation body is a signatory of the EA multilateral or bilateral agreement (EA-MLA or EA-BLA) for the relevant scope of accreditation. Information is available on the [EA-website](#).

³ The position paper on conformity assessment & accreditation by the Dutch government was sent as a letter to parliament on September 19, 2016. The letter has an annex "The use of conformity assessment and accreditation in government policies". The report distinguishes three types of conformity assessment:

- Conformity assessment without a relation to regulations (chapter 3 of the report),
- Conformity assessment which is taken into account by governmental supervision & inspection (chapter 4)
- Conformity assessment used included in legislation (chapter 5).

3. Relationship between CABs, scheme owner and RvA

Article 8.

The RvA accredits CABs based on an assessment of the accreditation requirements. A scheme owner that is not a CAB can not apply for accreditation. This chapter describes the rules for the relationship between CABs, scheme owner and the RvA if one or more CABs apply for accreditation for a scheme of a scheme owner.

Article 9.

The RvA will only establish a relationship with scheme owners, who fulfil the following requirements:

1. The scheme owner is a legally identifiable entity.
2. The scheme owner is the owner of the scheme or has the authority to establish and change the requirements of the scheme in another way.
3. The scheme owner has demonstrated market support for the scheme. The scheme owner has provided evidence for such support by participation of relevant interested parties. The RvA acknowledges the number and nature of these relevant interested parties may differ for the object and the nature of the scheme. At least the manufacturers or suppliers and the end-users (for instance consumers or industry that uses the results of the conformity assessment in purchase decisions) are participating.
4. The scheme owner has the mandate to cooperate with the RvA for the evaluation of the scheme.
5. The scheme owner has reserved the use of the scheme to accredited CABs with which an agreement has been entered into. Such an agreement guarantees at least that the CABs will use the scheme without any limitations.
6. The scheme owner is responsible for informing all active CABs and the RvA on all relevant information and developments relating to the scheme, including every proposed change of requirements.
7. The scheme owner has demonstrably conducted and reported the self-assessment of the scheme as explained in RvA-T033, in addition to the request for evaluation of the scheme (F207).

Article 10.

The RvA uses the following rules regarding the relationship with scheme owner and CABs:

1. If during an RvA assessment of a CAB, using a scheme that is published in the list of schemes for which the RvA can provide accreditation, a non-conformity is found, this non-conformity will be reported to that specific CAB.
2. The CAB is responsible towards the RvA to deal with the non-conformity according to policy rule RvA-BR004.
3. If the root cause analysis and corrective actions according to policy rule RvA-BR004 accepted by the RvA, indicates that the scheme has to be changed, initiating those changes is the responsibility of the CAB. The RvA will allow the CAB to take (temporary) measures to (temporary) solve the non-conformity.
4. If several CABs use the scheme in question, after accepting the root cause analysis and corrective actions as mentioned in the previous section, the RvA will verify whether the non-conformity is also applicable to these CABs; if the nature of the non-conformity requires it, the RvA can decide on extra assessments of these CABs as described in policy rule RvA-BR002.
5. If the requirements of a scheme change, the scheme owner has to timely inform the RvA on these changes. The timing and content of the information is provided in such a manner that the RvA can evaluate the changed scheme before the CABs request accreditation for the changed scheme.

6. The CABs using the scheme inform RvA about the consequences of the changes in the scheme for fulfilment of the accreditation requirements and to obtain accreditation for the changed scheme, before the changes are implemented by the CABs.

4. Evaluation of a national scheme

Article 11.

The RvA accepts the request for evaluation of a scheme or a changed scheme on the following conditions:

1. The request for evaluation is made to the board of the RvA by a CAB or the scheme owner, using a fully completed form RvA-F207.
2. Additional documents are provided as referred to in form RvA-F207, and in the applicable additional form that is specified in RvA-F207.
3. The documents and forms together provide evidence that the scheme owner fulfils the requirements as explained in Article 9.
4. One or more of the CABs, named in the form F207, have filed an application for accreditation at the RvA for the specific scheme.
5. Documents shall be provided to the RvA in Dutch or English.

Article 12.

1. The applicant receives an acknowledgement of the receipt of the application from the RvA within ten working days.
2. The RvA assesses the completeness and correctness of the application. The applicant will be informed of the result of this assessment within twenty working days of the receipt of the application. If the application is complete and correct, the applicant will be notified on the planning of the evaluation and the expected time and costs involved.

Article 13.

1. The evaluation takes place based on the available information. If relevant the RvA can request additional information during the evaluation.
2. The result of the evaluation will be reported to the applicant. Form F207 is part of the report.
3. The RvA report gives conclusions on:
 - a. meeting the requirements as stated in Article 9;
 - b. the choice for scheme specific requirements for the CABs, including the standard used for accreditation of the CAB and any additional requirements;
 - c. the self-assessment of the scheme against the fulfilment of accreditation requirements.
4. Any deficiencies the RvA has identified against the subjects of section 3 are reported.
5. The report also contains, for the purpose of the accreditation assessments, conclusions on the fulfilment of the accreditation requirements by the scheme and the requirements that CABs need to address themselves.

Article 14.

1. If one or more deficiencies were identified, the RvA can verify additional and/or corrected information and/or documents in a follow-up assessment.

2. If no deficiencies were identified or no outstanding shortcomings are left, the final conclusion will be that the pre-assessment for the CABs that applied for accreditation for the scheme, can start. The report of the scheme-evaluation shall be used as input for these pre-assessments.
3. The RvA can decide to publish a Specific Accreditation Protocol (SAP) to specify the details of the assessment activities.
4. The scheme that was evaluated with a positive result is added to the list of schemes the RvA can provide accreditation for, as mentioned in policy rule RvA-BR010.

5. Evaluation of a multinational scheme according to EA-1/22

Article 15.

If a request for evaluation for a multinational scheme is made by a scheme owner, the RvA shall act according to EA1/22. A scheme owner has to contact the RvA about this, the RvA shall explain the procedure and make further arrangements on the evaluation.

Article 16.

1. The RvA shall be the hAB for scheme owners located in the Netherlands, unless the RvA does not expect Dutch CABs to apply for accreditation.
2. The RvA can become the hAB on request of EA, if the scheme owner is not located in the Netherlands and scheme owner's member state can not or will not be the hAB.

Article 17.

If an evaluation leads to a positive result as explained in EA1/22, the RvA will add the scheme to the list of schemes the RvA can provide accreditation for, as mentioned in policy rule RvA-BR010.

6. Evaluation of a scheme on a CABs request

Article 18.

If a CAB applies for accreditation for an external scheme of a scheme owner that does not want to request an evaluation by the RvA or another NAB, and the scheme is not IAF-endorsed, the evaluation will take place according to the rules as laid down in chapter 4.

Article 19.

Regarding the fulfilment of the requirements as stated in Article 9, the CAB will take responsibility for the fulfilment of sections 5 to 7.

7. Evaluation of a regulated scheme

Article 20.

1. On request of a Ministry that intends to use conformity assessment activities in legislation, the RvA can evaluate a scheme. If needed, this evaluation can also include the assessment by RvA of the scheme against the relevant accreditation requirements as explained in RvA-T033.

2. In order to start the evaluation, the RvA needs to receive the documents which describe the scheme and information by the Ministry on how the use of the scheme and accreditation are/will be prescribed in legislation.
3. The RvA will start the evaluation of the scheme without an application for accreditation by a CAB.
4. The costs for the evaluation are charged to the Ministry.
5. The results of the evaluation are reported to the Ministry.

Article 21.

If the Ministry intends to use the scheme of a scheme owner, and this scheme owner requests the RvA to evaluate the scheme, the rules of Article 9 and chapter 4 are applicable with the following changes:

1. The RvA will handle the request for evaluation by the scheme owner on behalf of the Ministry, if the Ministry confirms to RvA:
 - a. that the Ministry intends to use the scheme in legislation;
 - b. how the use of the scheme and accreditation are or will be prescribed in legislation;
 - c. that the scheme owner coordinates the request for evaluation.
2. The RvA will start the evaluation of the scheme without an application for accreditation by a CAB.
3. Providing evidence of the test period in the validation process is not applicable if the scheme has been designed to be used in legislation but has not really been used yet.
4. The evaluation will be reported to the scheme owner and a copy will be sent to the Ministry.

Article 22.

After publication of the legislation involved, CABs can apply for accreditation for the scheme. If during the evaluation phase as described in this chapter, validation of the scheme during a test phase was not demonstrated yet, evidence of the validation will be provided to the RvA before accreditation can be granted.

8. Changes compared with the previous policy rule

None, this is the first edition of this policy rule.