

MAKING THE GRADE

The process of the implementation of the IRIS standard within the Russian machine building sector has passed the point of no return. 58 Russian companies have been certified already. According to experts, the quality management principles envisaged by IRIS, will be adapted by almost all companies in the sector and can become the basis for a national innovative quality standard.

Today, the process of implementation of IRIS into Russian industry is as follows: a company, which is going to stay in partnership with RZD and, consequently, implements IRIS, concludes at least two agreements. The first of them is with the bureau for certification, which makes the final audit and gives a certificate. There are 14 auditing companies in the world, but only five of them work in the Russian Federation, while only one of them is Russian, and the others are subsidiaries of international companies. They are the Russian Register, Bureau Veritas, AFNOR, DQS, and Lloyd's Register. Approximately half of all IRIS certificates in Russia were issued by the subsidiary of DQS in the RF.

The second agreement is concluded with a consulting company that helps prepare for the certification and implementation of the standard. The non-profit partnership Union of Industries of Railway Equipment (NP UIRE) publishes lists of auditor companies approved by the Partnership, thus helping companies to engage high quality consulting services.

ACCORDING TO EXPERTS, ABOUT 200 RUSSIAN COMPANIES, ONLY 50 OF WHICH ARE LARGE, ARE TO GET IRIS CERTIFICATES

When the consulting stage is over, the company submits an application to the bureau for certification. "Approximately a quarter of companies are audited and get a clean bill of health. They work with consultants carefully and go for certification with confidence. Sometimes we identify a number of areas for improvement. According to the rules, they should be eliminated within three months, after which the company has the right to be re-audited," says Sergey Kudryavtsev, Technical Director of the subsidiary

of DQS Holding GmbH in Russia, the IRIS standard auditor. According to him, the main problems for certification in Russia are misunderstanding or wrongly interpreting the requirements of the standard by plants.

The IRIS certification process is not expensive. In the words of Oleg Senkovsky, Vice President of the NP UIRE, First Deputy Head of the Center for Technical Audit at RZD, the cost of its implementation for a medium-sized company (about 4,000 employees) is €85,000-105,000, of which about €52,000 is the cost of the services of a

consulting company, €30,000-40,000 – audit readiness and the certification audit, and approximately €20,000 per annum – surveillance audit."

O. Senkovsky believes that the main result of IRIS implementation for the industry is the emergence of a well-adjusted and self-developing management system.

"Senior managers of companies certified according to IRIS in 2012, note an increase in the quality of delivered products and services," emphasize specialists at RZD. Sales by these companies increased by 8% and in labor

efficiency – by 10%. In addition, the number of foreign tenders won by them grew by 30% on average. Furthermore, such companies are expanding their number of new projects and products.

According to experts, about 200 Russian companies, only 50 of which are large, are to get IRIS certificates. Today, the standard is implemented in small companies that supply components to industry leaders.

In the words of O. Senkovsky, not all Russian transport engineering companies should be certified, for example, producers of components for

track infrastructure (railway sleepers, rails, overhead wiring). Specialists at RZD estimated that 75 companies, which are main suppliers to railways, will be certified according to the IRIS standard by 2015. There are no plans to receive IRIS certificates inside RZD, but the quality management system in the form of company's internal standard will be implemented.

First of all, it refers to locomotive depots. Perhaps, after the analysis of the pilot projects, a decision about an IRIS-based sophisticated standardization will be made.



Oleg Senkovsky,
Vice President of the NP UIRE,
First Deputy Head of the Center
for Technical Audit at RZD

One of the priorities of RZD is to implement the requirements envisaged by the IRIS standard into machine building companies. This will allow the reduction of expenses during the whole life cycle of products, increase the competitiveness of national producers, the efficiency of business and goods making process, enhance the quality and reliability of railway products, change the current system of inspection and acceptance control, and multi-level audits.

Even now the IRIS certificate is becoming an obligatory requirement in Russian agreements for rolling stock and components.