

ANNEX K – GUIDE TO VALIDATING YOUR OPERATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT VALIDATION (RULES SECTION F)

DO I NEED TO VALIDATE MY OPERATION?

Yes, if the IOTA group from which your operation has or will take place

- is currently listed as provisionally numbered in the latest IOTA Directory, for example OC-288P, or
- is listed and marked with a #, signifying a rare group, in the listing of Most Wanted IOTA Groups.

Note: This applies even if there has, since publication of the Directory, been a valid operation that, in the case of a provisionally numbered group, has resulted in the number being confirmed.

Yes, if the island or the island group as a whole

- is known to have restrictions for whatever reason on landing or operating an amateur radio station, or
- is exceptionally difficult to reach, e.g. requiring an extended or costly or dangerous journey, or is known to present far greater than average political or licensing problems.

Note: You are required to take all reasonable steps to ascertain if any of these circumstances apply. If they do, you will need to show evidence as to how you have overcome the problems and, where permissions are necessary, that you have obtained them. If they do not apply, you may need to give account if the IOTA Committee receives contrary information.

Yes, if the IOTA Committee asks you to do so.

Note: Rule F.4.1 deals with the special case of operations by yachtsmen with access to on-board amateur radio stations.

No, in all other cases. However, even if your operation falls into a category that does not require validation, you are advised to collect and retain evidence of presence on the island and any local permission, for example from a landowner or a lighthouse management trust, to support your position in case of a challenge.

EVEN THOUGH I DO NOT NEED TO VALIDATE, CAN I?

Yes, if you think that there are special reasons to do so, for example where local permission has not always been easy to obtain in the past.

In all other cases we prefer you not to validate since it is unnecessary. Voluntary validation is particularly discouraged in the case of operations from islands in groups that are easily reached or regularly activated and / or have resident amateurs.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL TO VALIDATE WHEN ASKED?

Your operation will be recorded in the 'long term pending' category and Checkpoints will be instructed not to accept your cards for credit. You are free to choose whether or not you wish your cards to count for IOTA. We have that choice also.

WHAT DOES VALIDATION MEAN?

It means providing written evidence that you were on the island on the dates claimed, that you had permission, if required, to be there and to operate an amateur radio station and that you were properly licensed. Note that having a licence to operate does not necessarily mean that you have permission to do so in a particular location. They are two different things.

WHAT DO MOST DXPEDITIONERS PROVIDE TO PROVE PHYSICAL PRESENCE?

It depends on a lot of factors. Let's take it in stages.

Transportation

- Where people take public transport, e.g. a scheduled flight, ferry, train or bus, to reach an island, they normally provide a ticket, counterfoil or receipt for monies paid, suitably dated and showing the name of an island or a town on it. Ideally we would like to see the passenger's name also but with some forms of public transport this is not possible. Where they charter a boat or airplane for the final stage of the journey to the island, they normally provide a signed statement from the boat or airplane captain confirming transportation of the named passengers to and from the island on specified dates. Many DXpeditioners prepare a suitable statement in advance – this should always include space for the full name, address and telephone / fax / e-mail number of the signatory. A receipted invoice on headed paper confirming the booking is the next best thing.
- Where they hire a fisherman to transport them in his boat, they normally try to obtain a signed statement but experience shows that for various reasons this may not be possible. In such cases a photograph of the boat taken with the DXpeditioner will help but other evidence of presence will usually be expected (see below).
- Where they use their own boat or car, or swim (!), they are expected also to provide some other form of evidence of presence.

Presence

- Where the island is inhabited, most have no difficulty in providing a receipted invoice on headed paper from a hotel, village hut complex, campsite or other lodgings, issued in their name. Alternatively, a signed statement from someone in authority on the island, e.g. immigration officer, post office manager, lighthouse keeper or local headman will suffice.
- Where the island is uninhabited, increasingly people prove presence by taking a photograph of a GPS reading! Others provide a photograph of themselves against a well-known feature on the island, natural or man-made, or against a sign or plaque with the island name. If there is absolutely nothing to distinguish the island – it happens quite often, then photographs of the island taken from the sea, if possible including nearby islands or mainland, will help as will photographs of the operating site with antennas and the team. In such cases the names and call-signs of all team members (include addresses where there are non-licensed members) should be provided.

We would like evidence under both these headings if possible and particularly if your operation was from an uninhabited island. With careful planning this should not be difficult, expensive or particularly time-consuming to arrange.

WHAT KIND OF PERMISSIONS ARE REQUIRED?

This depends on who has control of entry to the island. This is not always solely the owner. In many countries the final decision rests with a governmental or quasi-governmental organisation charged with responsibility for the preservation of the island's flora and fauna, historical sites and the general environment. Particular care needs to be taken where an island is under military

control. Generally, where permission to land and / or operate a radio station is required, you should obtain this in writing and include a copy when submitting your other validation material.

Do not try an 'undercover' operation! If you are not totally satisfied that you have permission to be there, don't go. Not only could you be prejudicing permission being given for future operations but you could anyway find your operation rejected for IOTA on grounds of inadequate validation. Worse still, you could during the operation expose yourself to personal danger, not least in an emergency if no one in the locality knows that you are there.

DO I NEED TO SEND A COPY OF MY LICENCE?

No, if you use your standard call-sign with or without /P or a routine island prefix or suffix (and if, of course, it's legal). If, however, you use a special call-sign issued for this operation and / or island operations generally, you should send a copy with your validation material. The Committee recognises that this might be felt to be intrusive but it considers that the effect of the validation exercise would be negated if it ignored the licence used.

THIS ALL SOUNDS VERY BURDENSOME?

Well, it really should not be. Validation is required of very few operations. Where it is necessary, we have found during the many years that we have been applying the procedure that there have been very few significant problems with compliance. DXpeditioners have been able to provide in many cases first-class validation at the cost of a few minutes of their time. The secret is to incorporate the requirements into the detailed planning of an operation from the outset. Nowadays, all material can be scanned and sent as an attachment to an e-mail, so costs are negligible.

The IOTA Committee operates on a basis of trust and will normally take at face value validation provided. If however it receives information that an operation did not take place from a claimed island, did not have the necessary permissions or was unlicensed, it is bound to treat such allegations seriously, investigate them and, if it finds them proven, take whatever action is required to safeguard the integrity of the Programme. Luckily cases of this sort occur very infrequently.

SAMPLE STATEMENT CONFIRMING TRANSPORTATION

<Preferably on headed paper>

To
IOTA Manager
Radio Society of Great Britain
3 Abbey Court, Fraser Road
Priory Business Park
Bedford MK44 3WH
UK

Dear IOTA Manager

This is to certify that I transported the following radio amateurs by boat.....<name of boat>
from.....<point of embarkation> to.....<Island> on.....<date>,
setting them ashore at.....<local time>.

I also confirm that I collected them from the island on.....<date> at.....<local time> and transported them
back to.....<point of disembarkation>.

- Passenger 1.....
- Passenger 2.....
- Passenger 3.....
- Passenger 4.....

As far as I know, the above radio amateurs set up and operated their radio equipment from the island during their stay.

Signature.....Full Name.....
Position.....
Company.....
Company Address.....
Tel / fax No.....E-mail Address.....
Date.....