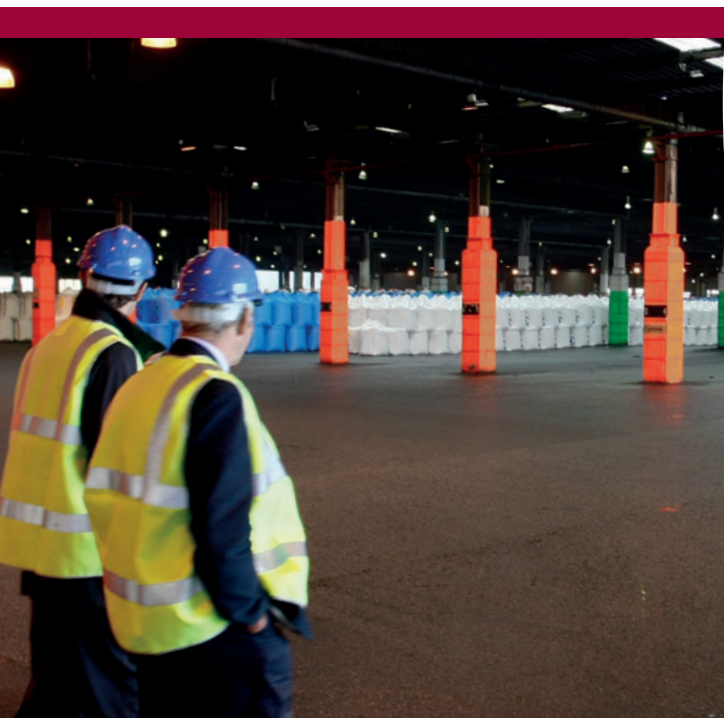


SCHEME RULES

Effective from **February 2016**



Fertiliser Industry Assurance Scheme



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Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Definitions	3
3.	FIAS Participation	3
4.	Scheme Rules.....	3
5.	Assessments	4
6.	Scope of FIAS Certification	5
7.	Certificate Suspension and Withdrawal	5
8.	Complaints.....	6
9.	Appeals	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1. FIAS covers the assurance of all fertilisers intended for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, amenity and any other such commercial use. It does not apply to fertilisers packaged for home garden use. The issues and the risks vary according to the type of fertiliser and it is for this reason that the entire scheme has adopted a “Risk assessment” approach to achieving the necessary level of assurance.
- 1.2. FIAS is a voluntary scheme developed by AIC in response to the need to prevent the misuse of fertilisers.
- 1.3. FIAS provides a safe and controlled environment for the import, manufacture, storage, merchandising and transport of fertilisers.
- 1.4. FIAS provides a credible independent assessment to demonstrate that the fertiliser supply industry complies with requirements for;
 - 1.4.1. Relevant Legislation
 - 1.4.2. Security
 - 1.4.3. Traceability
 - 1.4.4. Product safety
- 1.5. FIAS is managed by AIC, who developed and implemented the scheme.
- 1.6. FIAS requires an independent assessment that each scheme Participant fully complies with the current versions of the following Fertiliser Standards, as applicable to their operations:
 - 1.6.1. Fertiliser Manufacturing Standard
 - 1.6.2. Fertiliser Transport Standard
 - 1.6.3. Fertiliser Storage Standard
 - 1.6.4. Fertiliser Merchandising Standard
- 1.7. FIAS certification demonstrates that a company meets the standards required of suppliers to the agricultural sector.
- 1.8. By applying for certification to FIAS, the Applicant agrees that, if accepted, they will comply with the requirements of the relevant FIAS Standards and the FIAS Scheme Manual.
- 1.9. Where, in order to determine whether there has been any breach of the FIAS Rules, it is necessary to request an immediate assessment, the cost of such assessment (additional to the routine annual assessment) and also any further assessment(s) to check if any non-conformances identified by the assessment have been rectified or otherwise have been carried out, shall be at the sole cost of the Applicant or Participant.
- 1.10. The Applicant or Participant will have no claim against any officers, members or employees of AIC in the event of Expulsion, Suspension or a lesser punishment and/or the publication thereof as appropriate, nor have any claim against any of the above for any damages and/or compensation or costs for any financial loss occasioned thereby.

2. Definitions

Critical non-compliance	A regulatory violation, serious safety or security failure, total loss of traceability such that recall of unsafe goods would be impossible, and/or complete unwillingness to cooperate in the audit.
Major non-compliance	A complete failure to implement a requirement of FIAS or a failure that may result in a serious safety, security or traceability failure.
Minor non-compliance	A partial failure to implement a requirement of FIAS or poor evidence to demonstrate implementation.
Repeat non-compliance	A non-compliance found during a FIAS assessment which had been raised at the previous assessment
Source of Supply	The place from which materials are purchased.
Supplier	The company that sells fertiliser within the scope of FIAS

3. FIAS Participation

- 3.1. FIAS is open to any company involved in the manufacture, importing, distribution, transport or storage of fertilisers, subject to paying the FIAS registration fee and complying with the Scheme Rules.
- 3.2. A register of certified participants is on AIC's website at: www.agindustries.org.uk

4. Scheme Rules

- 4.1. In order to become a fully approved FIAS participant, an Applicant shall:
 - 4.1.1. Apply for certification by completing an Application Form and returning to the Scheme Certification Body. The Applicant must confirm that they agree to comply with the Scheme Manual, the relevant FIAS Standards and the Certification Body's Scheme Regulations.
 - 4.1.2. Provide the Scheme Certification Body with the information needed to prepare a certification quotation.
 - 4.1.3. The applicant must return the Certification Agreement, included in the quotation pack, duly signed. Once received by PAI the applicant business name will be added to the AIC FIAS web listing with a status of "Applied". The applied status on the web can only exist for 6 months after which time the business must be fully approved or will be identified as 'Resigned/Withdrawn'. Re-application within 12 months will only be permitted at the discretion of the the certification body. Repeat applications will also only be displayed on the AIC website at the discretion of the certification body.
 - 4.1.4. Pay the FIAS registration fee and the Scheme Certification Body's certification fee.
 - 4.1.5. Arrange to have an audit visit organised by the Scheme Certification Body.
- 4.2. When the Applicant has been audited and corrected any noncompliances that may have been identified, the Scheme Certification Body will issue a Certificate of Conformity and add the successful Applicant to the list of Participants on the AIC web site.
- 4.3. Certificates of Conformity will be valid from the date on which the Applicant demonstrated compliance with the Standards and expire on the anniversary of the date of the audit.
- 4.4. Participants will be contacted prior to the expiry of the Certificates of Conformity with a renewal form. Participants that wish to continue in scheme must complete the Renewal Form, pay their FIAS registration fee and return to the Scheme Certification Body by the date shown on the Renewal Form.
- 4.5. Participants shall comply with the Scheme Requirements at all times as defined in the Scheme Manual and the Standards.

- 4.6. Participants shall advise the Scheme Certification Body of any changes to the business, typically but not limited to:
- 4.6.1. Company ownership
 - 4.6.2. Scope of operations
 - 4.6.3. Key management
- 4.7. Participants and Applicants shall advise the Scheme Certification Body in the event that they are the subject of legal action that relates to their FIAS activities.

5. Assessments

- 5.1. The Assessor will conduct an assessment of a Participant's compliance with the relevant FIAS standards on an annual basis. The Participant shall give the Assessor access to all relevant information needed to confirm compliance with the Scheme. At the end of each audit, the Assessor will provide a written report and identify non-compliances graded according to the classifications defined in section 2 of this Scheme Manual, if any. Once a Participant has rectified the areas of non-compliance to the satisfaction of the Scheme Certification Body and within time limits specified in paragraphs 5.1.3 and 5.1.4, the Scheme Certification Body shall issue a FIAS certificate of compliance.
- 5.1.1. Any critical non-compliance as defined above shall result in the immediate suspension of the FIAS Participant, which will only be lifted following a satisfactory re-assessment.
 - 5.1.2. At the discretion of the Certification Body, any repeat non-conformances may be upgraded (e.g. minor to major) at the report review stage.
 - 5.1.3. Participants shall advise the Scheme Certification Body of proposed Corrective Actions within 30 days of the audit.
 - 5.1.4. Participants shall ensure that all Corrective Action is fully implemented and complete within 60 days of the audit.
- 5.2. At the discretion of the Scheme Certification Body, further assessments of contractors approved by the FIAS Participant or Applicant may be required.
- 5.3. At the discretion of the Scheme Certification Body, additional short notice (not less than 24 hours) assessments of participants may be requested. Failure to cooperate with such a request may result in suspension of the participant.
- 5.4. Appeals and complaints shall be directed to the Scheme Certification Body and will be handled in the manner covered by sections 8 and 9 below.

6. Scope of FIAS Certification

- 6.1. Applicants must identify the scope of their activities on the Scheme Application form.
- 6.2. Applicants cannot omit Standards that are integral to activities that are included within the scope of certification.
- 6.3. Applicants and participants must inform the Certification Body of all sites upon which FIAS related activities are carried out. At the discretion of the Certification Body, it may not be necessary to visit all FIAS sites each year.

7. Certificate Suspension and Withdrawal

- 7.1. The Scheme Certification Body will suspend a Participant's Certificate of conformity when the Participant has:
 - 7.1.1. Non-compliances that are not resolved within the required time limits.
 - 7.1.2. Critical non-compliances as defined above.
 - 7.1.3. Failed to cooperate with a request for a short notice assessment.
- 7.2. Suspended Participants must correct the non-compliances and have a follow-up assessment by the Scheme Certification Body to confirm that all the non-compliances have been fully resolved within 75 days of the original assessment, in order to have their certification re-instated.
- 7.3. Participants that do not demonstrate to the Scheme Certification Body that non-compliances have been resolved within 75 days will have their certificates of conformity withdrawn.
- 7.4. Participants that have their certification withdrawn would need to apply as new Applicants if they wish to regain their certification.
- 7.5. The Scheme Certification Body will automatically update the web site with details of a Participant's changing certification status.
- 7.6. Suspended Participants may not claim to be FIAS approved nor undertake contracts that specify FIAS registration without advising the client, until suspension has been lifted.

8. Complaints

- 8.1. Complaints about either a FIAS Participant, Assessor or the Scheme Certification Body should be directed to the Scheme Certification Body where they will be acknowledged, reviewed and actions taken to resolve the cause of any problems.
- 8.2. The Scheme Certification Body is a specialist Certification Body that is accredited by the UK Accreditation Authority and works to strict codes of conduct. If Participants are not satisfied with the way in which the Scheme Certification Body handles the complaint then they should refer the matter to AIC.

9. Appeals

- 9.1. A Participant has the right of appeal against decisions made by the Scheme Certification Body.
- 9.2. Appeals shall be made in writing to the Scheme Certification Body within 14 days of being advised of the decision that is the subject of the Appeal.
- 9.3. The Scheme Certification Body acknowledges appeals and an initial investigation made by the Certification Body's Scheme Manager.
- 9.4. If the Scheme Manager does not support the decision on which the appeal is based then the Scheme Certification Body will correct the erroneous decision.
- 9.5. If the Scheme Manager supports the decision on which the Appeal is based then an independent panel is convened to handle the appeal. Both the Scheme Certification Body and the Participant are entitled to attend the Appeals Panel and present information to the Panel.
- 9.6. The independent Appeals Panel make a ruling based on the information supplied during the hearing.
- 9.7. The ruling of the Appeals Panel is binding and final on the Scheme Certification Body and the Participant.
- 9.8. The Appeals Panel will be convened within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal.