

FIAS Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FERTILISER INDUSTRY ASSURANCE SCHEME



Welcome

Welcome to the summer edition of FIAS Update.

By now, hopefully the ground is drying out after the wet winter weather, and crops are growing well.

This issue focusses on cyber security – something all business and individuals need to be aware of.

We also look at resources available for FIAS Participants and new developments in the pipeline.

As ever, if you have questions or ideas on features you would like to see in the future, please get in touch.



Roberta Reeve
Technical Manager
for AIC Services

Cyber security – how secure is your business?

Whether it is in relation to personal or business use of the internet, cyber security matters to us all.

Threats such as phishing emails, hacking, and ransomware can quickly become data security issues and even prevent a business from operating. Such activity could be for criminal or activist purposes or financial gain.

FIAS has a general requirement (clause G23.2) for data and cyber security:

“The Company shall ensure that data, computers, networks, servers, mobile devices and electronic IT systems are protected from unauthorised access and malicious attacks.”

Data includes commercial information as well as personal details such as those

stored for customers under the explosives precursors regulations.

It is an area that requires technical knowledge and skills, and that changes rapidly due to developments such as the growth of AI. Larger companies may have entire IT departments dealing with this, but advice and guidance is also available for smaller enterprises. [The National Cyber Security Centre](#) is referenced in the FIAS Standard and is a reliable source of useful advice and tips.

Guidance and support include information on types of threats along with simple actions that can be put in place such as multi-factor authentication, types of passwords, firewalls, and training on recognising phishing emails as well as a place to report cyber security issues.

FIAS auditors, although not IT or data protection experts, will expect to see evidence that the Participant is aware of and has considered potential risks to the fertiliser supply chain, has put in place relevant controls, and checks regularly to confirm they are fit for purpose.

Useful links:

The National Cyber Security Centre has detailed information for small businesses. This includes steps to assess the risks and actions to take, a downloadable guide, and a personalised Cyber Action Plan.

The advice applies to personal internet use and data storage too.

Go to <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide> for the details.

Have you read the FIAS report yet? - “Find out how FIAS secures the UK’s fertiliser supply chain.”

It can be easy to forget the reasons why trusted schemes like FIAS were developed, and what has been achieved since its inception.

An interactive report has been created offering an overview of the history of the scheme showing participation in FIAS and how with the support of stakeholders and industry, it continues to provide assurance of traceability, safety, and security of the fertiliser supply chain.

View the report in full on AIC’s website:



A look ahead to future scheme developments

FIAS is continually evolving to keep pace with the changing regulatory landscape and demands from the industry on fertiliser safety.

The team is working on several developments which are set to come later this year – look out for briefings and email updates including:

- **FIAS i-learning is undergoing an update** - Courses are being refreshed with a new modern look which will have spoken content and provide a more engaging and interactive experience for users.
- **Additional feature for the AIC Participant portal** - Participants who have approved non-FIAS contractors (Clause G16), will be able to maintain records of approvals and contractor audit reports via the portal. This will help in keeping approvals up to date and having current information available for their routine FIAS audit.



- **New appendix for the FIAS Standard** - This relates to the requirements of the Control of Explosives Precursors and Poisons Regulations (CEPPR) 2023 to existing clauses within the FIAS Standard.
- **New template document for collection of customer information** – This is being prepared for Participants to help them meet the requirements of the CEPPR. The FIAS Working Group agreed that this should be developed to help ensure that all relevant details are collected and to assist customers who are purchasing from several suppliers. This template will be made available on AIC’s website soon.

The industry-led groups behind FIAS

Did you know that FIAS is managed by two industry-led committees:

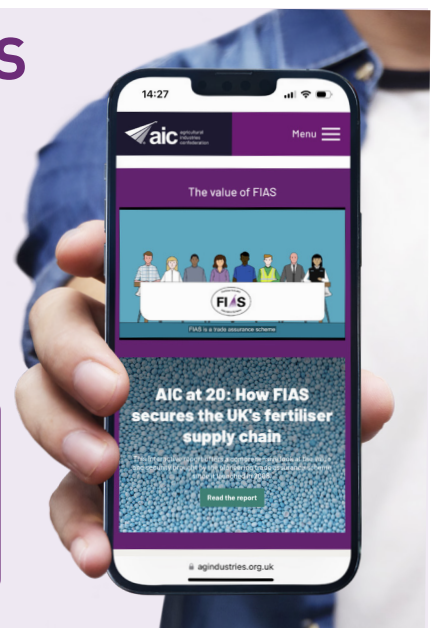
1. The Steering Group

Made up of representatives from the fertiliser industry, government departments, and stakeholders, this committee considers and advises on all aspects of direction and strategy for the ongoing development of the FIAS Scheme, overseeing the work of the FIAS Working Group and to engage stakeholders in the fertiliser supply chain, and encourage others to improve fertiliser security, safety, and traceability. It is ultimately responsible to the FIAS stakeholders in industry and government.

2. The Working Group

Responsible for the technical detail and implementation of FIAS, ensuring the standards remain up to date with respect to legislation and industry practice. This committee reports to the FIAS Steering Group. The committees meet at least twice a year.

For an overview of how FIAS works, please watch our animation:





Tell AIC

AIC Services has updated the [“Tell AIC” pages of its website](#) to improve the user experience and clarify the process for reporting a concern or registering a complaint about an AIC Trade Assurance Participant.

Improvements include modifications to the complaints process description and a new secure online form to submit complaints.

Anyone can use this confidential service if they become aware of activities of an AIC Trade Assurance Participant that have the potential to affect:

- Human or animal health through contamination or adulteration of the feed food chain
- Fertiliser safety or security
- The integrity of the biofuels supply chain
- Safety of seed treatment application
- Any other issue which has the potential to undermine the reputation of the agri-supply sector

The key changes to the complaints process are to emphasise the confidentiality of the system, and the protection afforded to whistleblowers.

The reports made using the new online form are held securely with only AIC employees involved in the complaints process having access to the information.

Scheme owners audit

In March, AIC carried out an audit of Kiwa at its office in Harrogate. The purpose of this annual audit is to review the processes, systems, and management of the scheme.

Traceability assessments were carried out on a range of types of audits and scopes, reviewing the process in relation to the FIAS Participant experience and interaction with the Certification Body.

The audit demonstrated the robust systems and processes in place as well as the knowledge and expertise of the Kiwa team.

Audit format – new remote options

From the beginning of March this year, FIAS Participants with scopes of non-hazardous transport and invoice only merchanting default to a remote audit for two out of every three audits with the other taking place on site. All other scopes remain routinely on-site.

These changes retain the benefits of remote auditing learnt during the coronavirus pandemic and provide Participants with more options.

Notes:

- Where there is a default to a remote audit, Participants can select an on-site audit if preferred
- The Certification Body may maintain or revert to on-site audits based on factors, such as a Participant’s compliance history and intelligence information
- All initial audits remain as on-site
- Joint scopes will default to the on-site requirement e.g. merchant and storage scope

Scope	On site audit	Remote audit option
Manufacturing	✓	✗
Storage	✓	✗
Product sales - general	✓	✗
Product sales - Invoice only merchants	✓	✓
Transport - carriers of fertilisers not defined as dangerous goods	✓	✓
Transport - carriers of Dangerous Goods e.g. Class 5.1 AN	✓	✗
Initial audit, all scopes	✓	✗

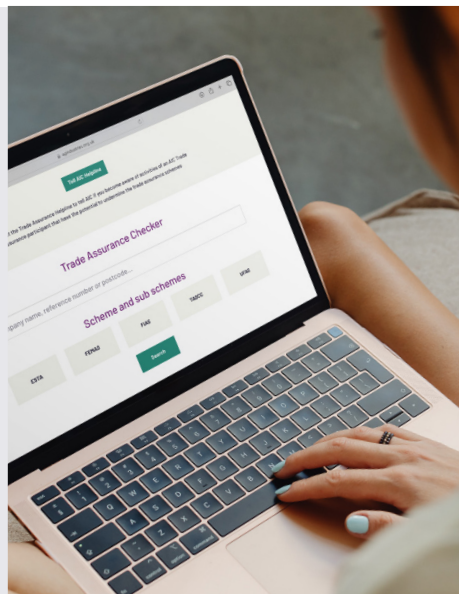


Certification and “Applied” status

When a business applies to join FIAS, it is listed on the Trade Assurance Checker with a description of “Applied” certification status. The business must then become fully certified within six months. If this is not achieved, the business is identified as “Withdrawn” and cannot re-apply within 12 months.

The “Applied” status allows businesses to function within the fertiliser supply chain while preparing for their certification audit. FIAS businesses trading with an “Applied” status should assess any risks and apply their controls to ensure safety, security, and traceability, keeping full records – for example, the Know Your Customer checks. It is recommended that further checks to confirm that FIAS certification was achieved are completed.

Although a six-month period is allowed to achieve FIAS certification, it can happen much more quickly if needed. The team at Kiwa work with applicants to help them join the scheme as quickly as possible to maintain the integrity of the supply chain.

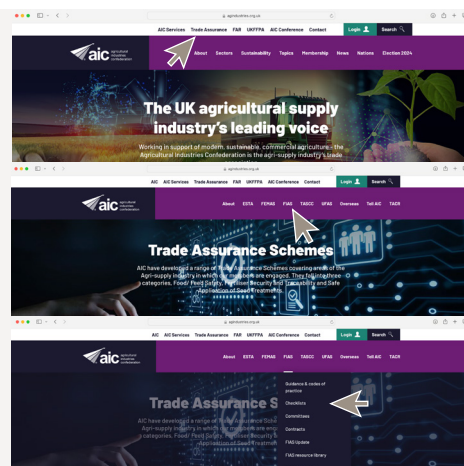


Resources for Participants reminder

Don't forget that the FIAS pages of AIC's website has a wealth of useful information and resources to help with scheme participation.

Scan the QR code, or visit agindustries.org.uk, click on “Trade Assurance” in the top navigation, hover over “FIAS” in the top menu until a drop-down menu appears and select from here to access useful documents and information:

- Checklists (template documents including policy, management review, internal audit and training record)
- Resource library for the online Standard, reports and videos



Trade Assurance Consultant Register (TACR)

Find out details of registered consultants who can support you on FIAS certification and compliance, by visiting our [consultants register](#) page.



Training

FIAS i-learning - Login details are available from Kiwa on: ukfias@kiwa.com or call 01423 878873

Videos - including “How to access the Portal” and “What to expect at your audit”

ProtectUK

Information about security issues, general counter terrorism guidance, ACT Awareness e-learning. Protect UK can be downloaded from: Google Play or Apple's App Store.



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Design & Development by RDP