

Anaerobic Digestion Certification Scheme

Scheme Rules



Version 1.0

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Document Control

Any updates to this document will be posted on the scheme website; it is recommended that anyone using this document periodically checks for updates to ensure they are using the latest version.

If you have any feedback or questions about the document, please email adcs@adbioresources.org.

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Document Owner: Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association

Website: <http://adcertificationscheme.co.uk>

Contact number: 020 3176 0503

Address: Canterbury Court, Kennington Park Business Centre, 1-3 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6DE

Disclaimer

This document and the Anaerobic Digestion Certification Scheme (ADCS) are for guidance only and are not intended to be a legal guide or a replacement for independent specialist advice. Those who use this document or participate in the ADCS could ensure that they take appropriate professional advice when using this document and participating in the ADCS. ADBA and its advisers accept no liability whatsoever for any expense, liability, loss, claim or proceedings arising from reliance placed upon this document or the ADCS or any part of it. Users must always satisfy themselves as to the applicability of the relevant part(s) of any guidance within this document or the ADCS to their particular circumstances.

The scheme criteria have been devised by a steering group with engagement with industry and are intended to accommodate a wide range of types of AD projects, from small to large scale and across agricultural and waste plants. Some operators may go further than the criteria, which is to be encouraged. The scheme is designed to reflect current industry practices at the time of publication and should not be taken as in any way discouraging or negating the need for innovation, further improvements in practice or advances in technology over time. The scheme criteria may be reviewed periodically by ADBA in conjunction with the steering group and other stakeholders and may be updated from time to time.

Contents

1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 The AD Certification Scheme.....	6
1.2 Objectives of the Scheme.....	6
1.3 Application of Scheme.....	6
1.4 Scope	7
1.5 Eligible applicants.....	7
1.6 Regulator Support	7
1.6 Insurer Support	8
1.7 Finance support.....	8
2.0 Scheme Structure	9
2.1 Scheme Structure Overview.....	9
2.2 Scheme owner and administrator.....	9
2.3 Steering Group	10
2.4 Certification Bodies	10
2.5 Scheme Members	10
3.0 Application and Certification Procedure	11
3.1 Summary	11
3.2 Type of Audit.....	11
3.3 Application and Certification Process	11
3.4 Audit Form and Report.....	13
3.5 Maintaining Certification	13
3.6 Membership number	14
3.7 Information and confidentiality	14
3.8 Scheme failure.....	15
4.0 Appeals and Complaints	16
4.1 Rights of the applicant	16
4.2 Appeals process.....	16
4.3 Complaints process	16
5.0 Certification Bodies	17
5.1 Certification Body Qualifications and Requirements.....	17
5.2 Auditor Requirements.....	18

5.3 Training for Certification Bodies	19
5.4 Quality Assurance.....	19
6.0 Scheme Assessment Criteria	20
6.1 Where to find the scheme criteria	20
6.2 How the scheme criteria are devised and maintained	20
Appendices	21
Appendix 1 - Certification Flow Diagrams	22

Definitions

Term or acronym	Meaning
ADBA	Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association
AD	Anaerobic digestion
Applicant	Company or organisation applying to be certified to the ADCS
Auditor	Person carrying out audits in accordance with the ADCS
ADCS	AD Certification Scheme (sometimes referred to as 'the Scheme')
Certification Body (CB)	Company appointed by ADBA (the scheme owner) to assess whether applicants comply with the ADCS
Operator	Company responsible for the day to day operation of an AD plant
Scheme Criteria	Criteria set out in the Scheme Criteria document which Certification Bodies use to assess applicants. This document is available at the scheme website.
Scheme Member	Applicant that has been successfully certified by an appointed Certification Body in accordance with the Scheme Criteria and Rules.
Scheme Rules	This document, which sets out the rules governing the scheme, including the scheme structure, how the audit and certification process works, the appeals and complaints procedures and the Certification Body qualifications and requirements.
Steering Group	An independent group set up to provide oversight of the scheme criteria and scheme rules and scheme structure, to consider comments from scheme members, and guide the future development of the scheme.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The AD Certification Scheme

This document sets out the scheme rules of the AD Certification Scheme (hereafter referred to as the ADCS) and is for the use of anyone interested in being involved in the scheme. It is of particular use for scheme applicants and potential Certification Bodies.

The ADCS is an industry-led initiative that aims to help the anaerobic digestion (AD) industry maximise its performance and allow operators and developers who are achieving high standards of operation to demonstrate this through an independent certification process. It is part of ADBA's wider work on improving standards, which is entitled the 'Best Practice Programme' which also includes training, guidance and resources and recognition for leadership or excellence in the industry. The Best Practice Programme provides a broad opportunity for addressing industry issues and will evolve to meet the needs of the industry.

The development of the ADCS has been led by the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA), with extensive engagement and input from industry partners. The scheme is also supported by the appropriate regulators of health and safety and environmental and animal health in the UK. The structure of the scheme is explained in Section 2.1.

ADBA is a trade association that represents over 400 members from across the AD industry including plant operators and developers, farmers, local authorities, waste management companies, supermarkets, food processors, energy and water companies, equipment manufacturers and suppliers, consultants, financiers and supporting service companies. ADBA works with its members and with other organisations to support the industry in achieving high standards of operation, ensuring the benefits of AD are fully realised whilst safeguarding the environment and health and safety of staff, visitors and the public.

1.2 Objectives of the Scheme

The AD industry has grown significantly over recent years and is now a mature industry encompassing waste management, agriculture and industrial/on-site settings. As stated above, the motivation behind developing the ADCS for AD is to provide a mechanism for operators of AD plants to improve their environmental, health and safety and operational performance and to demonstrate this achievement to third parties through an independent certification process. The scheme is designed to set out good practice in the operation of AD plants as defined collectively by the industry. The scheme provides a means of assurance that an AD plant is being run safely and well (within the terms of the scheme), which can be used by regulators, insurers, investors and others to understand the performance of the plant.

1.3 Application of Scheme

The scheme includes elements of compliance-checks against relevant regulatory requirements, but participation in the scheme is voluntary. The scheme is open to all AD operators, including those who are not ADBA members.

Regardless of participation in the ADCS, it is the responsibility of all AD operators to ensure their activities are legally compliant with all relevant legislation. The ADCS is only concerned with compliance with specific legal requirements relevant to the scope of the scheme as set out in the scheme criteria.

1.4 Scope

The scheme includes within its scope the whole of the AD industry, currently with the exception of those plants using sewage sludge as a feedstock (see 2.5 'Eligible Applicants', below).

The following areas are covered in the ADCS:

Health and safety – Effective health and safety management at an AD plant is vital, not only to protect the health and safety of workers and any others who may be affected by the operation of the plant, but also to ensure the safe operation of the plant itself. The establishment of effective health and safety management arrangements and the provision of suitably trained, qualified and competent staff, is key to ensuring compliance with relevant health and safety legislation.

Environmental performance – the operation of an AD plant carries with it risks to the environment and it is essential that these are managed effectively by the developer and operator. Environmental protection can be achieved through good site-specific design, high quality of construction and appropriate management systems and procedures. Compliance with relevant environmental regulation is also fundamental.

Operational performance – in the context of the scheme, relevant areas of operational performance are plant efficiency, the quantity and quality of biogas generated and the quality of digestate produced at an AD plant.

1.5 Eligible applicants

The ADCS certification process will be aimed at AD plants and therefore it will be the company responsible for operating the AD plant that will apply to have their plant assessed as part of the scheme. It is not a requirement to be an ADBA member in order to participate in the scheme.

The scheme has been designed to accommodate all types of AD plant, with the exception of those in the sewage treatment sector. The scheme accommodates plants which use wastes and those that use non-wastes (such as energy crops and crop residues¹).

At the time of writing, plants undertaking the co-digestion of food waste with sewage sludge are not within the scope of this scheme, due to the difficulties in implementation of co-digestion due to the different regulatory regimes governing biosolids and sewage sludge. This position will be under review.

The scheme is designed to apply across the whole of the UK, and so where relevant, the scheme criteria reflect the differences in regulatory requirements across the UK.

The scheme is currently intended to certify plants that are operational or ready for operation (i.e. constructed); this will allow the inspection of the plant which is a key part of the certification process. However, prospective applicants who are developing or constructing their plant may find it beneficial to engage early to ensure they cover all aspects of the scheme criteria.

1.6 Regulator Support

ADBA has worked with the key regulators to ensure that the scheme reflects their views, as well as to gain their support for the scheme. The regulators that have been engaged with the scheme are:

¹ Note that while there is a position statement by the Environment Agency stating that crop residues are considered non-wastes when used in AD in England and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency has a similar statement for use of crop residues in AD plants (with a capacity not exceeding 100 tonnes per day) in Scotland, at the time of writing there are not similar position statements for the rest of the UK and operators should discuss with their local regulator.

- Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Alongside the above regulators, ADBA will undertake to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme, including ensuring compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements. In due course this will provide evidence to allow the regulators to justify providing benefits to successfully certified operators in due course, such as reduced inspection frequency (as there is some alignment between the audits undertaken by regulators and by the Certification Body under the ADCS) and a reduction in regulatory charges. Any support from the regulators, or benefits to scheme members, will be detailed on the scheme website.

1.6 Insurer Support

The scheme provides an independent audit and certification process which has been developed with ongoing significant input from representatives of the insurance sector.

Please visit the scheme website to understand how operators can access the opportunity for reduced insurance premiums and favourable terms.

Insurers reserve their rights to not offer insurance terms for certified plants.

1.7 Finance support

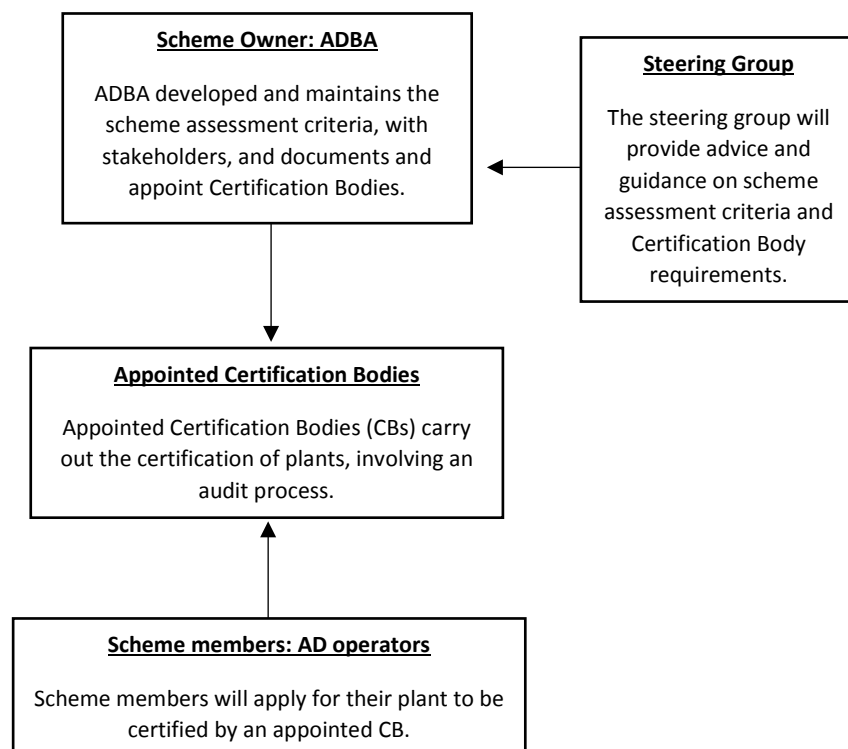
Investors are a key stakeholder, being both interested in the risk and potential return associated with a prospective investment and also able to influence the performance of the plant through the conditions for funding. Both at the initial financing stage and refinancing of projects which are operational, investors can use the scheme as a mechanism for assessing the credibility of the operator and the attractiveness of the potential investment. Certification to the scheme can aid in the due diligence process, as it provides a detailed report showing conformance or non-conformance with the scheme criteria, providing a foundation for the investor to work with.

2.0 Scheme Structure

2.1 Scheme Structure Overview

This section explains the structure of the ADCS and identifies the key parties involved in developing, administering and maintaining the scheme. The key parties involved in developing, administering and delivering the scheme are shown in the diagram below and explained in the following text.

Figure 1: Key parties



2.2 Scheme owner and administrator

The scheme is owned and administered by the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA), which is the trade association representing the UK AD industry. ADBA is responsible for:

- Developing and updating the scheme criteria;
- Managing the scheme's Steering Group;
- Appointing Certification Bodies and liaising with them;
- Ensuring the Certification Bodies are delivering certification to expected standards;
- Undertaking administration such as updating scheme documents and the scheme database; and
- Undertaking engagement with the AD industry and all stakeholders.

Across all of its activities, ADBA works closely with AD operators, developers, consultants, regulators, insurers, funders, trade associations, professional bodies and suppliers, to support the industry in fulfilling its potential.

Regarding the ADCS specifically, ADBA will continue its engagement with the industry in its function as the owner of the ADCS.

ADBA will not make any decisions regarding the applications to the scheme as these will all be at the discretion of the appointed Certification Body. In the event of any appeals or complaints about the process or Certification Body, the process set out in Section 4 will be followed.

2.3 Steering Group

The purpose of the scheme is to support the AD industry in improving standards and delivering high quality AD projects. In order to ensure that the scheme fulfils these aims through its development and implementation, ADBA maintains a Steering Group which consists of trade bodies, professional organisations and industry experts, representing all parts of the sector. The group will provide ongoing advice and guidance on scheme assessment criteria, structure and function.

The group is chaired by Dr Amaya Arias-Garcia. More information about the Steering Group and its members can be found on the scheme website. In due course, the group will also include a representative from the scheme's membership, to provide direct feedback on behalf of the scheme members.

2.4 Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies (CBs) will be appointed by the scheme owner (ADBA) to carry out certification services for the scheme. The requirements for appointed CBs are explained in Section 5 of this document. Appointed CBs will arrange audits, produce audit reports, assess compliance with the scheme and determine whether it is appropriate to award certification. Appointed CBs will be listed on the scheme website.

2.5 Scheme Members

Scheme members will be AD operators, who will apply to have the operation of their plant(s) certified (see Section 1.5 on 'Eligible Applicants'). If an operator runs multiple sites and wishes to have more than one plant certified, the certification process will need to be undertaken per plant.

3.0 Application and Certification Procedure

3.1 Summary

This section describes how to apply to be certified under the ADCS, from the point of application to maintaining certification. Any operator interested in applying to the scheme is encouraged to contact an appointed CB for an initial discussion.

In summary, the scheme applicant must apply to be certified by an appointed CB which will then begin the audit process. The audit process will allow the CB to assess whether the applicant is compliant with the scheme criteria and therefore to make their certification decision. If the applicant is not compliant with the criteria, the CB will identify the non-conformances and actions needed to achieve certification.

3.2 Type of Audit

In all cases, a site-based element will be required as part of the audit process. Although information and documentation can be gathered remotely, site-based audits are required to verify information provided. The length of the site-based audit will vary, depending on the level of information and verification to be gathered or checked on site. As set out in the scheme criteria, some criteria may be demonstrated to have been met through the provision of certificates or documentation that confirms the operator is certified under certain existing relevant certification schemes; this is to avoid duplication of audit for those operators who have already undergone third party audits which cover the criteria.

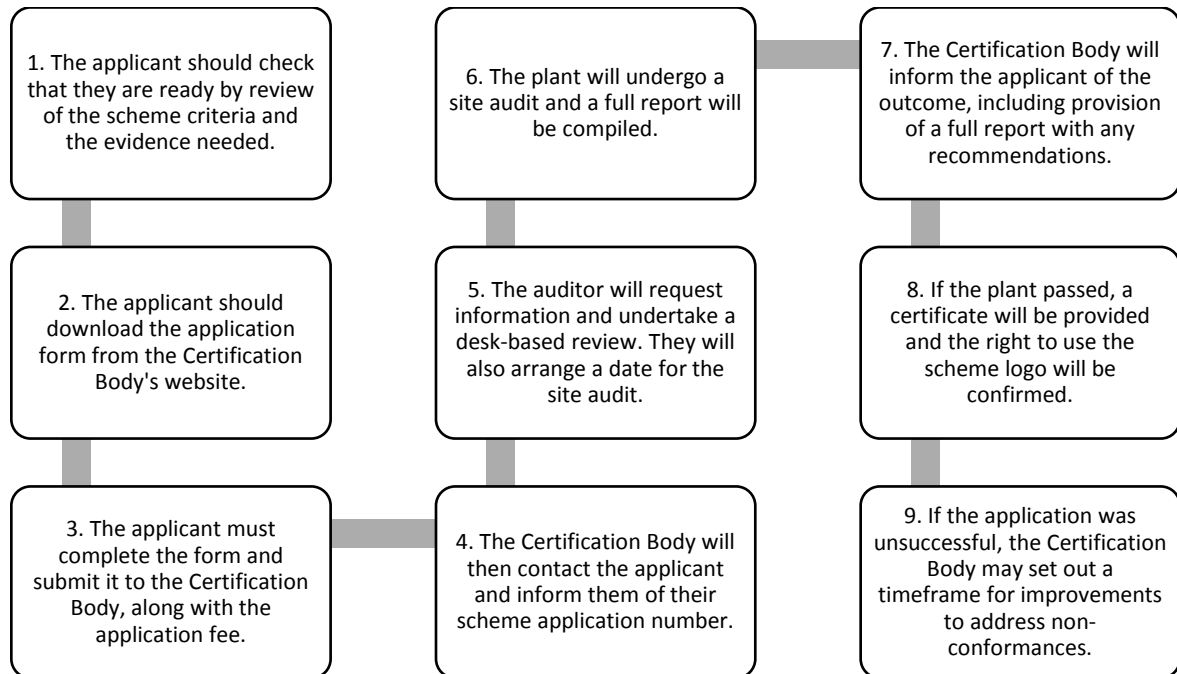
3.3 Scheme Charges

There will be a charge for application to the scheme and thereafter an annual renewal fee payable each year. These charges cover the cost of running the scheme and the audit process. The charges are set out separately and are available at the scheme website and the website of the Certification Body.

3.4 Application and Certification Process

The application process is shown below in a step-by-step process below and described in the subsequent text.

Diagram: Steps to Certification



Prospective applicants should check that they meet all scheme criteria

In order to have the best chance of successful certification, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the scheme criteria in detail and fully understand the evidence that they will need to submit.

The scheme criteria and supporting guidance documents are available on the scheme website and information is also available at the website of the appointed Certification Bodies (see scheme website for a list of appointed organisations).

Making an application to a Certification Body

Once confident that their plant meets the scheme criteria, the operator must choose and approach an appointed CB and they will be advised on the audit process. A list of appointed CBs, including their contact details, will be maintained on the scheme website (www.adcertificationscheme.co.uk).

An application form and scheme charges list will be held on the website of the CB. The CB will receive the application and contact the applicant to request information needed to ascertain the audit requirements.

Upon receipt of the application, the CB will inform ADBA when an operator makes an application to the scheme; ADBA will maintain a database of applicants, application progress and certification status. ADBA will assign the applicant an application number which will allow the application to be tracked.

Certification Body assesses submitted information through a desk-based review

The auditor will review the submitted information and supporting documents. If further information or detail is required, the auditor will request missing information from the applicant. The auditor will use this information to plan the site-based phase of the audit. For all applications, a site-based audit will be required as it is a key part of the verification process that an auditor must undertake but the length of this part of the audit will depend on several factors.

Certification Body arranges and undertakes the site-based element of the audit

If the auditor is confident that the applicant has provided all paperwork required in advance of the site-based audit they will arrange to undertake the site audit on a mutually convenient date (this may be provisionally agreed at an earlier stage).

Auditor completes audit report and Certification Officer makes certification decision

Following the site audit, the auditor will complete an audit report and provide this to their Certification Officer (a person appointed by the Certification Body) who will issue a certification decision and letter including any recommendations or areas of non-conformance. This letter would explain any remedial actions necessary and define a timeframe in which they must be completed in order to close out any non-conformances. Once suitable evidence has been provided to assure the Certification Officer that the remedial actions have been completed, a certification decision can be issued. In completing this step, it should be outlined that a further site visit may be required in order to verify any remedial actions have been implemented.

Should they wish, an applicant can appeal the decision made by the CB (see Section 4 on 'Appeals and Complaints').

3.5 Audit Form and Report

The audit form (see Scheme Criteria document, available at www.adcertificationscheme.co.uk) must be used by the auditor when carrying out the audit. The form should be used to structure the audit process and finalised following the audit. A copy of the audit report or summary report will be left with the applicant at the end of the audit. This would document any non-conformances identified during the audit. The applicant would be required to sign the form to indicate that they wish to proceed with their application.

3.6 Maintaining Certification

The certificate will be valid for a period of three years from the date that it is awarded. By signing up to the scheme, operators are making a commitment to endeavour to uphold the principles and actions required by the scheme. A full site visit will be required as a minimum each three years.

In interim years operators will be required to undergo annual reviews, which, depending on the circumstances, may involve either a full audit or a surveillance site audit. In advance of any audit, the auditor will contact the operator to request information, including:

- Any changes to the site operations (such as those shown in Table 1);

- Any regulator inspection reports from the preceding 12 months;
- A selection of records to review ongoing record-keeping; and
- Any evidence that recommendations from previous audit have been followed up.

The operator must provide accurate information to allow the auditor to determine the scope of the audit needed, depending on the extent of checks that must be undertaken to properly assess conformance with the scheme criteria.

Box 1: What is a ‘surveillance audit’?

As stated above, for all new applicants to the scheme, a full site-based audit will be required. This will also be required after three years from successful certification. This allows the auditor to verify the information provided by the operator, through visual inspection and speaking with site-based staff. This is an essential part of the certification process.

However, in the interim years, in many cases there will have been no material changes to the site – either in terms of its design, layout and construction, the key personnel running the site or the management systems which set out how it is operated. Therefore, in these instances a site visit is not necessary, and a desk-based ‘surveillance’ audit is sufficient (this will involve review of documentation and may include phone calls to individuals such as the site manager technically competent person). Scheme members will be required to declare any major changes which could mean that a surveillance audit is not sufficient.

Table 1: Changes that must be declared by operators annually

Type of change	Implication
Major changes to plant layout or design.	Re-certification required
Changes that may require regulatory changes e.g. increase in throughput or changing type of feedstock.	This will be noted during interim audit and audit will ensure that process undertaken to ensure compliance is maintained.
Occurrence of any major environmental or health and safety incidents	Re-certification.
Change of company acting as the operator	Re-certification
Change of Site Manager(s) (the main person responsible for the operation of the plant)	This will be noted during interim audit and the auditor may review the section on Staff Training and Competence.
Change of site ownership	Re-certification

3.7 Membership number

All applicants to the scheme will be assigned a membership number by ADBA to allow tracking of applications in progress, certifications issued and renewal dates.

3.8 Information and confidentiality

The audit process will result in the collation of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the scheme criteria.

In accordance with the requirements of ISO17065, CBs will be responsible for the management of all information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities. All information shall be regarded as confidential unless the client (scheme applicant) makes information publicly available, or there is an agreement

in place between the CB and the client. The CB is required to inform the client in advance of the information it intends to place in the public domain.

Any information pertaining to the client obtained from sources other than the client shall be treated as confidential.

The only exception to the confidentiality requirement set out above relates to unsafe or dangerous working practices observed; applicants should be aware that the auditor has a duty to report any unsafe working practices that are likely to result in harm to any individual on site to the appropriate regulator.

3.9 Scheme failure

There may be instances where there are non-conformances identified during the site audit which prevent that plant from being certified. In the event of failure, application fees are non-refundable as the work undertaking the audit will have been carried out. The rights of applicants to make an appeal or complaint are set out in Section 4.

It is encouraged that applicants to the scheme will have assessed their readiness for audit and applied once they believe they meet the criteria and can supply suitable evidence; the decision to apply is wholly at their discretion. In any case, an audit undertaken by an independent organisation can be an extremely useful exercise for operators who are seeking an impartial assessment of where improvements can be made at their plant.

The purpose of the scheme is to drive improvements and to be supportive to operators, and therefore any failed applicants will be provided with a full explanation of non-conformances and directed to the relevant part of the scheme website where they can access resources and guidance, training and organisations who can provide expertise. This may help operators to address non-conformances.

4.0 Appeals and Complaints

4.1 Rights of the applicant

Scheme applicants have the right to make an appeal or complaint if they so wish.

An appeal must be about a specific certification decision and must be made by the scheme applicant. The purpose of an appeal is to contest the decision made, with a view to it being reviewed. The appeal process is described in Section 4.1, below.

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint about the quality of service provided by the CB they should follow the complaints process as set out in Section 4.2, below.

4.2 Appeals process

Scheme applicants can appeal against a certification decision made by the CB about their application, if they consider the decision is incorrect or unfair.

Appointed CBs must have in place suitable procedures for receiving, evaluating and making decisions on appeals and these should be made publicly available. The procedure must include having in place a suitable committee to consider any appeals and make a recommendation through an independent voting process (in which the auditor would not have a vote). Following this stage, should the committee uphold the original decision of the CB and the appellant still wishes to pursue their appeal, ADBA as the scheme owner will appoint a third party to review the case (this will be subject to a charge to the appellant in order to cover the costs of the review). By appointing a third party, ADBA will not be involved in making decisions regarding any application.

Appeals must be submitted to the CB within 14 days of receipt of the CB issuing the decision (this date must be specified by the CB in the communication with the applicant). Upon receipt of the completed appeal form, the CB will then implement their processes.

4.3 Complaints process

Scheme applicants can make a complaint about the delivery of certification services provided by the CB that they have chosen, if they consider that the service provided is not to the standard expected.

Appointed CBs must have in place suitable procedures for receiving, evaluating and making decisions about complaints about their service. The complainant must be asked to complete an application form, which should be kept on record. The CB should take steps to address any complaints and should the complainant not feel that their complaint has been resolved satisfactorily through the internal process, the scheme owner should be informed.

If following the complaint investigation and action, the applicant is still dissatisfied, they should notify the CB who will then contact the scheme owner for the issue to be resolved.

Scheme applicants or others may also make complaints regarding the scheme content or process itself; these should be sent to ADBA and will be handled by the scheme Steering Group where appropriate.

5.0 Certification Bodies

5.1 Certification Body Qualifications and Requirements

CBs will be appointed to the scheme by the scheme owner, ADBA. Prospective CBs must apply to ADBA, demonstrating how they will deliver certification under the scheme and providing evidence to show that they can and will continue to meet the minimum qualifications and requirements shown below.

It is the responsibility of the CB to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to protect the health and safety of anyone working on their behalf, and that any such person fully complies with all rules and/or requirements associated with the site that they are auditing.

Appointed CBs will be required to:

- Operate in accordance with the principles of the International Standard ISO 17065:2012 Conformity assessment – requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (and have undergone a UKAS review).
- Ensure that all auditors or other staff delivering services for the ADCS have received sufficient training and/or have relevant previous experience. To ensure that the CB can deliver the scheme, they must ensure that there is sufficient technical, sector-specific experience in-house, including at least one member of staff with an engineering or science-related degree and a minimum of 5 years' full-time direct relevant experience in the AD sector (this could be in engineering, design, regulation, plant operation, risk management etc.).
- Ensure that they employ suitable auditors, who meet the requirements in Section 5.2 below.
- Have in place procedures which require them to check that staff are fulfilling tasks to expected standards.
- Ensure that they follow the confidentiality requirements of the scheme (see Section 3).
- Ensure a representative attends the CB training provided by ADBA on a yearly basis (see Section 5.3, below). At least one representative should attend and if possible all auditors are encouraged to attend.
- Respond to applications in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the certification process is undertaken with impartiality.
- Ensure auditors declare any potential conflicts of interest.

Appointed CBs will be responsible for:

- Responding to applicants and delivering the certification service in accordance with the scheme.

- Informing ADBA of any applicants to the scheme and the outcome of the application, so that ADBA can generate a scheme membership number for each applicant and maintain a database of applications in progress, issued certificates and renewal dates.
- Ensuring that any staff or sub-contractors delivering any part of the certification process have been provided with the most up to date versions of the scheme documents (ADBA will notify appointed CBs of all changes at the point that such changes are published).
- Cooperating with any investigation into complaints made about the service provided and taking any required action as set out by ADBA.

Appointed CBs may sub-contract any part of the certification process, so long as they ensure that sub-contractors are appropriately qualified and that the quality management systems in place will ensure that the activities are performed to a high standard. ADBA must be informed of any proposed sub-contracting and have written agreement prior to sub-contractors beginning to undertake activities relating to the scheme. It must also be made clear in audit reports that the sub-contractor is carrying out the activities on behalf of the CB that is employing them. The CB itself must make the decision on whether to issue certification and must inform ADBA of this decision.

5.2 Auditor Requirements

The CB will be required to demonstrate that they have procedures in place to ensure that auditors carrying out certification to the scheme are suitably trained and meet the following essential criteria:

As stated in Section 5.1, each CB must have at least one member of staff who has a minimum of 5 years' experience in the AD industry.

However, they may use auditors with the following experience and qualifications:

- A minimum of 2 years' experience of working in the AD sector in a suitable role (i.e. design, operation or regulatory);
- A demonstrable understanding of the purpose of the AD Certification Scheme and the ability to undertake an objective assessment of plants against the scheme criteria;
- Well-organised, with good inter-personal and literacy skills and a high level of attention to detail; and
- An understanding of the importance of adhering to site health and safety procedures.

ADBA may undertake checks on the suitability of auditors, through:

- Requesting CVs of auditors; and/or
- Requesting a discussion with the auditor.

The auditor must also carry out Continuing Professional Development (CPD), for example through attending relevant industry events and reading relevant publications.

As stated above in Section 5.1, CBs may sub-contract parts of the certification process, but they must make sure that the auditor requirements are met.

5.3 Training for Certification Bodies

Due to the technical nature of some of the scheme criteria, and the need to ensure CBs are up to date with any changes to the scheme criteria, ADBA will provide a half day training session to all Certification Bodies once a year. At least one representative from all CBs must undergo the training session once a year. If only one representative attends, there must be a procedure for them to cascade information to all those working on the scheme. The training session may be delivered by a webinar and there may be a short test to ensure that key messages have been understood.

The training will ensure a consistent approach is taken by all auditors.

5.4 Quality Assurance

ADBA, as the scheme owner, will undertake quality checks to provide an additional layer of assurance for scheme members and other stakeholders. ADBA may:

- Request to shadow the auditor on a site audit;
- Review audit reports with volunteers from Steering Group (one random selection per five undertaken by that CB);
- Seek feedback from scheme applicants; and
- Provision of annual training to CBs with a short test to check understanding.

The scheme owner would abide by the same confidentiality rules as a CB when undertaking quality assurance checks (as set out in Section 3.7).

The results of the quality assurance undertaken may be reported back to the Steering Group.

6.0 Scheme Assessment Criteria

6.1 Where to find the scheme criteria

The scheme criteria are provided as a standalone document at the scheme website. All those using the scheme criteria and any other scheme documents are recommended to visit the scheme website and ensure that they are using the up to date document.

ADBA is responsible for maintaining scheme documents and ensuring the latest versions are available on the website. ADBA will also notify CBs of any changes to the criteria or to other scheme documents.

6.2 How the scheme criteria are devised and maintained

The scheme criteria have been devised by ADBA through extensive engagement across the AD sector, including with the regulators (of environment, health and safety, and animal health), operators, insurers, the agricultural sector and the supply chain. The criteria include some regulatory aspects and elements of checking legal compliance.

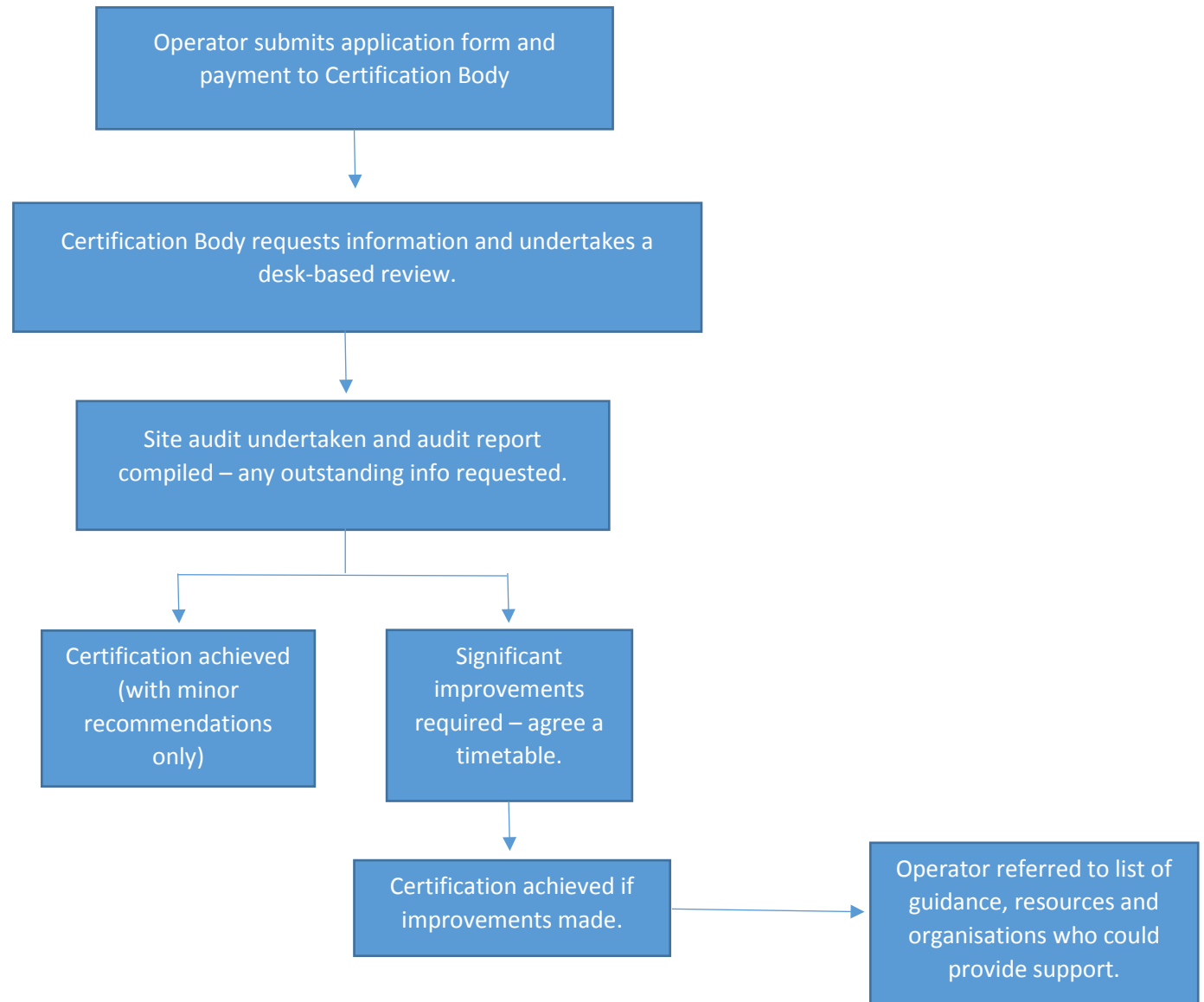
The scheme criteria have been designed to be straightforward and clear, though not overly prescriptive. The scheme criteria document also specifies how applicants can demonstrate that they have met each criterion.

The scheme criteria will be reviewed on an annual basis, in order to take into account any implications from regulatory changes, or feedback from CBs and scheme participants.

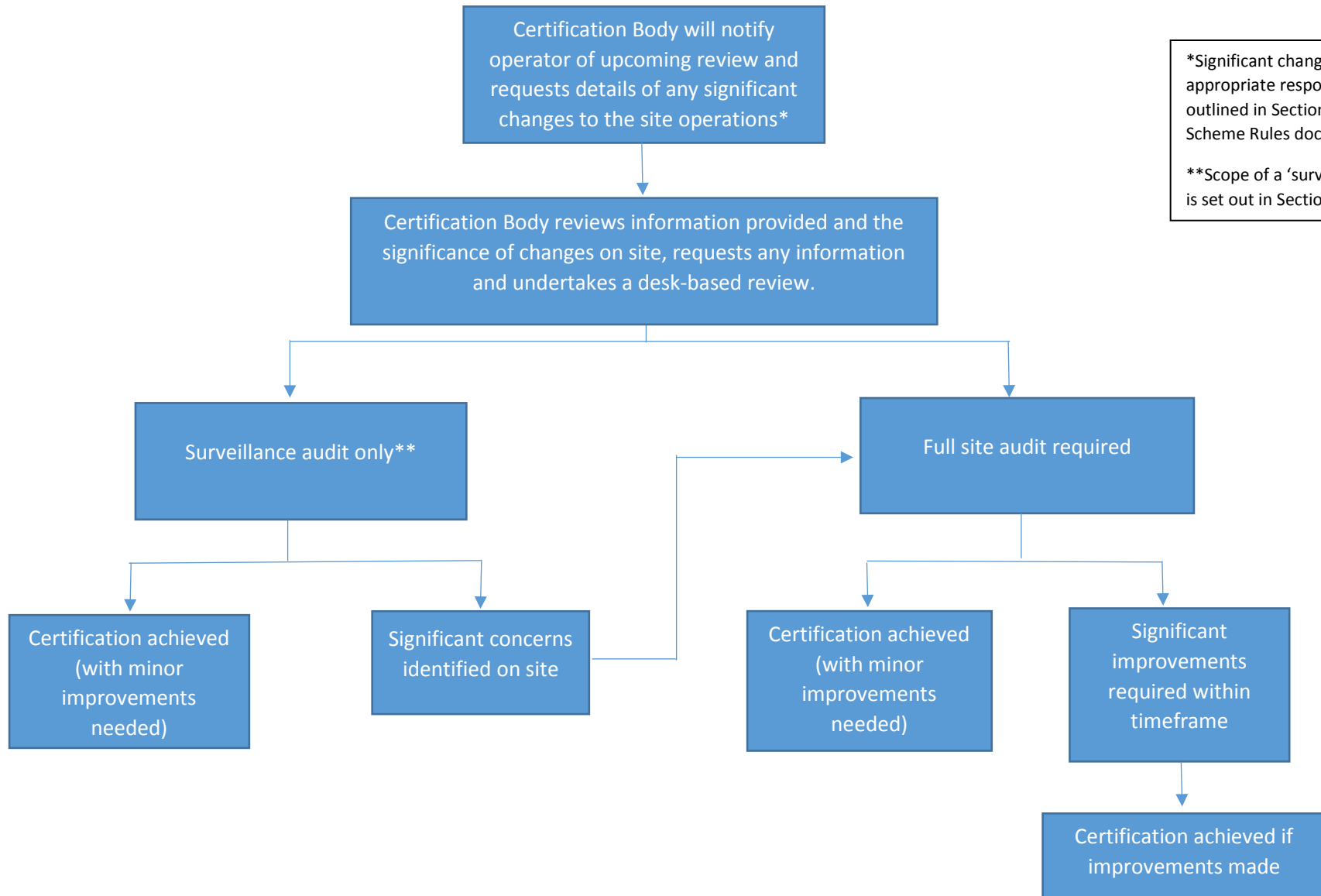
Appendices

Appendix 1 - Certification Flow Diagrams

Applications



Annual Reviews



*Significant changes and the appropriate response are outlined in Section 3.5 of the Scheme Rules document.

**Scope of a 'surveillance audit' is set out in Section 3.5.

