

Best Practice Scheme for AD

Best Practice Checklists

The checklists are designed to provide a helpful and accessible guide to best practice, signposting existing regulatory requirements, guidance and tools relevant to the AD industry. In the longer term, as well as being useful guides in their own right, they will also provide a structure for the certification scheme that will be developed in the second phase of our project, as shown above.

The initial set of checklists will cover three topics that industry stakeholders have identified as priority areas, which are:

- Risk Management
- Procurement
- Operational Performance

Below is a summary of each checklist, explaining why it is so important to achieve a high standard in each of these aspects of developing and operating an AD plant. There is scope to create additional checklists and we will follow the guidance of the industry on this.

Risk Management

Ensuring the safety of employees and the public, and the protection of the environment, must be a priority when undertaking any activity that could result in their harm. The potential risks involved in the construction and operation of an AD plant are significant, but can be managed by putting in place suitable design features and operating procedures. The structure of the risk management checklist reflects the various stages in the development of an AD project and ultimately encourages putting in place a framework for controlling operational risks, embracing a holistic approach to risk management.

Procurement

To build and run an AD plant, plant owners, operators and developers make many procurement decisions. These items may be critical components of the digestion process itself; required for processing feedstock, digestate or gas; or they may be required for safety, staff welfare or environmental protection purposes. Items range from relatively cheap equipment such as gas monitors and safety vests, to major purchases, such as a CHP engine. In most cases external services, such as ongoing maintenance for engines, must also be obtained. The checklist explains the key considerations to ensure that items purchased are safe, fit for purpose and compliant with UK legislation and standards. Following good procurement practice can make a huge contribution to achieving effective risk management and safety, environmental protection and operational performance.

Operational Performance

For AD, the assessment of operational performance encompasses a range of measures including biogas quantity, digestate quality and compliance with UK legislation. A plant that performs well across these aspects will deliver a better return on investment and the operator will likely enjoy a more positive relationship with their regulators, insurers and funders. Our checklist provides guidance on how to monitor operational performance, as well as identifying the key factors in delivering a high-performing plant.

The checklists are available to download and print from our website – see the link below. The checklists will be updated periodically, so it is recommended that you check the website for the latest version.

Where can you find out more?

The ADBA website now includes a section dedicated to best practice, which you can find here: adbioresources.org/our-work/best-practice.

Here, you will find the latest versions of the checklists for your use, it also includes a Best Practice Library that collates most of the guidance referred to throughout the lists in one easily accessible place. We will also provide regular updates on the website on the scheme's progress from a set of checklists to a fully-formed certification scheme.

How can you get involved?

If you are part of the AD industry, we want to hear from you. The Best Practice Scheme is a collaborative, industry-led project. Whether you're an operator, developer, supplier, insurer, consultant or investor, it is important that we understand your views and this is only possible if you get involved. There are a number of different ways to be part of the project; for more information on this, please visit our website or contact Jess Allan, ADBA's Environment and Regulation Manager, who is coordinating this work.

BEST PRACTICE SCHEME FOR AD



ADBA is leading the development of a Best Practice Scheme for the AD industry, with support from partners across the industry. We are working closely with operators, developers, consultants, regulators, insurers, funders, trade associations, professional bodies and suppliers, to deliver a comprehensive scheme which supports operators to deliver world-class AD projects.

What are we trying to achieve?

The overall aim of this collaborative project is to help the industry improve its environmental, health and safety and operational performance, as explained in more detail below. The AD industry has grown significantly in recent years, particularly in terms of the number of food waste and on-farm plants. As a result, it is now a strong operational industry that has gained knowledge and experience, as well as a willingness to share this knowledge and work together to improve as a whole. This project aims to harness that wealth of experience and act as a focus for these efforts to deliver the industry's full potential.

Environmental Performance

The construction and operation of an AD plant carries with it risks to the environment and it is vital that these are understood and managed effectively. The AD industry has been under scrutiny from the environmental regulators in recent years, partly due to data indicating that the biowaste treatment sector, of which AD is a part, experiences a higher number of pollution incidents than other regulated sectors. Further to this, there have been some high profile incidents, some involving serious plant failure and resulting in pollution. This damages the reputation of the entire industry, so we must collectively address these issues. The Best Practice Scheme represents a positive statement of the industry's commitment to environmental protection, and will raise awareness of the key environmental risks and how to mitigate them.

Health and Safety Performance

Ensuring the health and safety of staff and the public is critical to running a successful business. To retain a competent and motivated workforce, there needs to be a strong commitment to health and safety across the organisation and this should be reflected across all working practices. The Best Practice Scheme will highlight key health and safety risks and the implications of ineffective risk management.

Operational Performance

Operational performance encompasses the quantity and quality of biogas generated and the quality of digestate produced at an AD plant. Operators are often seeking ways to improve the efficiencies and outputs of their plant and increase the return on investment. The scheme will collate and share knowledge so that both existing and new operators can make fully-informed decisions. This encompasses how to define and monitor optimal performance and how to overcome barriers to high levels of performance.

Industry-led Guidance

Feedback from Defra, the Environment Agency, Animal and Plant Health Agency and Health and Safety Executive indicates that they are keen for the industry to take responsibility for producing its own guidance and delivering collaborative projects to improve performance. This is a great opportunity for the industry to take control and, while still working closely with the regulatory bodies and government departments, set its own priorities. The UK AD industry can set an example to similar industries and overseas markets by seizing the initiative and delivering this scheme. We are working with all industry stakeholders – find out how you can get involved later in this booklet.

ADBA BEST PRACTICE SCHEME FOR AD TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank ADBA members and the wider AD industry for their input in delivering this work. We would also like to thank the trade associations, professional bodies, and other organisations that make up our Steering Group; thanks especially to Dr Amaya Arias-Garcia for leading the group. The group includes representatives from: Chartered Institution of Wastes Management, Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management, CNA Hardy (insurers), Country Land and Business Association, Energy Networks Association, Environmental Services Association, Institution of Chemical Engineers, Jelf Insurance Brokers, National Farmers Union, National Farmers Union Cymru, National Farmers Union Scotland, Renewable Energy Association, Water UK, Waste Resources Action Plan and Zero Waste Scotland. We are also grateful to the Animal and Plant Health Agency, Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency for their valuable contributions alongside the Steering Group.

How will the scheme benefit the industry?

The potential benefits to the industry of developing and implementing the Best Practice Scheme in accordance with our current plans include:

Benefits of Best Practice Scheme

INTENDED OUTCOME	BENEFIT
More effective risk management	Improving risk awareness across the industry and delivering more effective risk management will result in fewer environmental and health and safety incidents and, as a result, lower insurance cost and better terms as confidence in the industry increases.
Better operational efficiency	The scheme will include a strong emphasis on improving operational performance – getting the best outputs from the plant in the most resource and cost efficient way. Operators can deliver increased return on investment, improving the financial success of the particular project and helping to demonstrate the full value of AD more widely.
Improved reputation of industry	By demonstrating good all-round performance through a fully certifiable and recognised scheme, the industry can be viewed more positively by the public, regulators and others. This could result in less objection to planning applications and less regulatory scrutiny and burden.
Better data on performance	An additional aspect of the scheme involves encouraging operators to collect operational data and share it with their technology supplier and, when we have developed a suitable mechanism, with ADBA so that we can provide benchmarking reports and have access to better evidence to support the industry's policy aims. We are exploring how we can deliver this – clearly all data would be reported anonymously.
Easier access to industry guidance	With Defra and the regulatory bodies less able to provide guidance documents, the scheme will become the go-to place to find relevant guidance in one easy to use list; feedback from the industry indicates that this will make a real and immediate difference to operators, consultants and others.

What will the scheme deliver?

The primary deliverable of the scheme is to raise awareness of these existing tools and provide a certification process to recognise those plants and operators that meet best practice. With the guidance and direction of the Steering Group we have developed a two-step plan to deliver this. It was clear from our industry engagement that there is a significant amount of existing regulation, guidance and standards covering the vast majority of developing and running an AD plant, which if applied properly can contribute to best practice.

Best Practice Scheme - Delivery Plan Summary

STEP/DATE	SUMMARY
Step 1 July 2016 Best Practice Checklists	The first step of the project is to develop a series of checklists, which will set out how to achieve best practice in key aspects of operating AD plants and highlight existing tools, guidance and legislation that contribute to best practice. Initially, the checklists will focus on risk management, procurement and operational performance; the purpose and content of these is explained in more detail in the section below.
Step 2 July 2017 Best Practice Certification Scheme	After testing the checklists with the help of operators and others in the industry, we will develop a voluntary certification scheme. This will be a crucial part of the project; a certification process is essential to ensuring that regulators, insurers and investors have confidence in the scheme. The checklists will provide us with tried-and-tested structure and content but we will need to devise detailed assessment criteria that will allow third-party accreditation bodies to verify the achievement of best practice at AD plants. We will continue to work with industry and the scheme's wider stakeholders in the delivery of this part of the project.