

CEFIC: SHAPING ASSESSMENT BEST PRACTICES FOR 25 YEARS

As the trade association for the European chemical industry, Cefic places great emphasis on safe and sustainable logistics. Pharox' online SQAS platform solution helps Cefic members to organise a consistent and efficient assessment process, evaluating the standards and performance of their logistics service providers.

Ensuring safe transport and handling of its products is of key importance for the chemical industry's reputation. In 1992, Cefic developed a system for uniform third-party assessments, to drive continuous improvement in the standards and performance of logistic service providers (LSPs). The Safety and Quality Assessment for Sustainability scheme (SQAS) quickly became a worldwide benchmark, ensuring a consistent and efficient assessment process which provides chemical companies with detailed factual reports.

A fully managed multilingual solution

SQAS assessments are carried out by a European network of accredited independent third-party assessors using a standard questionnaire. This ensures consistency and avoids duplication of assessments.

While initially users of the SQAS system had to contact their LSPs to receive a copy of their latest SQAS assessment report, in 2000 Cefic decided to invest in an online platform. "Once that decision had been made, we approached Pharox", says Mr. Jos Verlinden, Director Transport and Logistics at Cefic. "As a specialist in this type of solution, they had a proven track record as the service provider of the EBIS database." Pharox' credentials included the ability to organize an end-to-end solution, and experience with multilingual assessment databases.

The SQAS platform initially covered only road transport companies, but over the years Cefic worked with Pharox to add other SQAS modules focusing on tank cleaning stations, rail transport, warehouses and distributors. "It cemented SQAS' status as a cornerstone of responsible care and logistics stewardship in the European chemical industry." SQAS is also widely regarded as a

best practice in its field: over the years, the model has been adopted around the world, from the Gulf region to China.

Smooth assessments

The SQAS scheme currently covers all land-based logistic service providers in the European chemical sector. "We work with over 70 independent assessors, all of whom are ISO-certified and have received specific SQAS training at Cefic. Together, they carry out around 1,000 assessments per year." Each assessment report represents a sizeable amount of data: questionnaires typically consist of up to 400 questions.

Assessment reports are uploaded to a central, secured database, which is hosted and managed by Pharox. Assessment data are made available to the chemical companies, who can grant access to an unlimited number of users throughout their company. In total SQAS members consult 5,000 and 6,000 inspection reports each year. "Pharox developed a very user-friendly interface, including templates that allow users to check and compare LSPs standards against their own requirements. This contributes to a quick and smooth assessment procedure."

End-to-end solution

Mr. Verlinden describes his experiences with Pharox as "very positive indeed". "Cooperation is very smooth, they promptly act on any questions and requested changes. They take responsibility for fully managing the SQAS platform, which has meant that there hasn't been a single cause for complaint from our point of view. Their expertise with end-to-end assessment solutions, which includes related databases like CDI and EBIS, also ensures they are up-to-date with recent developments in the chemical industry. All in all, Pharox' added value is undisputable."

The **European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic)** has been the primary representative of the chemical sector in Europe for decades. It represents large, medium and small chemical companies across Europe, which directly provide 1.2 million jobs and account for 14.7% of world chemical production. Based in Brussels it interacts on behalf of its members with international and EU institutions, non-governmental organisations, the international media, and other stakeholders.