Fecc
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CHEMICAL DISTRIBUTORS

Guidelines

Fecc European Responsible Care Programme for Chemical Distributors

Responsible Care®
OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CHEMICAL DISTRIBUTORS

1 Scope, Objective and Context

These guidelines are meant for chemical distributors implementing the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme. They summarize the requirements and responsibilities of companies applying the ***Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme for Chemical Distributors**[1] in its latest version 2.3 (2016), taking into account all new developments and amendments in this field since the first edition of the Guidelines published in 2009.

The most relevant milestones of the last decade are the introduction of the security dimension into the *Fecc* European KPI Questionnaire, an amendment for office-only micro businesses (see page 9) and - in the wider context of Responsible Care - the re-foundation of ICTA (*International Chemical Trade Association*)[2] in 2016, the signing of a new Responsible Care Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) between *Cefic* and *Fecc* in May 2017, as well as the roll-out of the ICCA[3] Responsible Care Global Charter.

The growing role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability is reflected in the SQAS name change from *Safety and Quality Assessment System* to *Safety and Quality Assessment for* ***Sustainability*** in 2017 and new questions emanating from changes in this field (see www.sqas.org).

In the *Fecc* Note on Sustainability (March 2017), Responsible Care is clearly defined as *Fecc*'s Contribution to Sustainability and the global chemical industry's unique initiative to improve health, safety, security and environmental performance, and communicate with stakeholders about products and processes. The issues of health, safety, security and environmental protection (HSSE) are deeply embedded in *Fecc*'s members' corporate culture – as cornerstones of their responsibility to their employees, customers and suppliers, as well as to the local communities in which they operate. Responsible Care, as practiced within the chemical distribution sector, and hence within the Programme explained in these Guidelines goes historically beyond legislation and contributes to the "three pillars of sustainability".

In addition, key elements such as the Eight Guiding Principles, the role of *Fecc*, the Joint *Cefic-Fecc* Recommendation to combine ESAD-ISO (January 2018), and Product Stewardship are concisely explained.

[1] Henceforth also referred to as the "Programme" with references to the various chapters and ANNEXES.
[2] Formerly *ICCTA* (International Council of Chemical Trade Associations) - including an update of its Joint Responsible Distribution / Responsible Care Programme.
[3] *International Council of Chemical Associations.*

2 Introduction to the Programme

2.1 What is Responsible Care?

Responsible Care is the global chemical industry's unique initiative to drive continuous improvement in health, safety, security and environmental performance, and to communicate with stakeholders about products and processes. It achieves this objective by meeting and going beyond legislative and regulatory compliance and by adopting cooperative and voluntary initiatives with government and other stakeholders.

Responsible Care is both an ethic and a commitment intended to build trust and confidence in an industry that is essential to improving living standards and the quality of life. First launched in Canada in 1985, Responsible Care is today practiced in more than 65 countries around the globe.

2.2 Why the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme?

ICCA laid down fundamental features of Responsible Care and set the prime objectives of the programme for the chemical manufacturing industry. ICCTA signed in March 2009 an agreement with ICCA to closely cooperate in the promotion of Responsible Care initiatives.

ICTA has developed, with the assistance of the association members, a Programme which covers the principles of Responsible Care. *Fecc* is a member of ICTA and is committed to this Programme as it provides a common framework for the implementation of Responsible Care across the world.

On this basis, the European Responsible Care Programme has been developed by *Fecc* with the aim to provide an upgraded framework for the implementation of Responsible Care for Chemical Distributors. The Programme is designed to be pan-European and tailor-made for distributors, while taking into account a harmonized European approach. The objective is to increase Responsible Care adoption throughout Europe, to boost recognition of credible implementation of Responsible Care by suppliers and customers as well as to take advantage of the SQAS Distributor / ESAD evaluation tool.

2.3 Who is the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme for?

The European Responsible Care Programme is addressed to *Fecc* members meeting the following criteria:

- Fecc member companies' legal entities in European countries where no National Chemical Distribution Association exists. *Fecc* will inform *Cefic* regularly about these cases.
- National Chemical Distribution Associations (NA) that:
  - intend to adopt the *Fecc* European RC Programme to support the implementation of RC in their country (e.g. NAs that are currently applying the producers' RC Programme), and
  - delegate the management of RC in the distribution sector of their country to *Fecc*.
- Pan-European chemical distribution company members (operating in more than one country) that are **authorised by the chemical distributors' national association** in those countries to apply the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme directly with *Fecc*.

Note: This Programme has been approved by the *Fecc* Board and through the partnership agreement with *Cefic.* Therefore National Chemical Distribution Associations that adapt the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme and/or manage the Programme themselves are not in scope of this Programme.

2.4 *ICTA*'s Eight Guiding Principles

The *ICTA* Joint Responsible Distribution / Responsible Care Programme (RD/RC) provides a common framework for RD/RC implementation.
The joint *ICTA* Programme established a set of eight guiding principles. These principles are the core elements of the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme.
Companies applying for the Programme are committed to:

❖ Legal requirements

Comply with all legal requirements and regulations and operate in accordance with both government and industry codes of good practice, and guidance associated with their chemical activities.

❖ Management of Risk

Ensure that their activities do not present an unacceptable level of risk to employees, contractors, customers, the public or the environment.

❖ Policies and documentation

Have written documentation which covers their activities and ensure that their health, safety and environmental policies reflect their commitment to the Joint Responsible Distribution / Responsible Care Programme as an integral part of their business strategy.

❖ Provision of information

Provide relevant health, safety and environmental information on company products and activities to employees, contractors, customers, statutory bodies and the general public.

❖ Training

Ensure that all employees are aware of the commitment and provide the training necessary to enable them to be involved in the achievement of health, safety and environmental objectives.

❖ Emergency response

Establish and maintain an appropriate emergency response system.

❖ Ongoing improvements

Support and participate in activities that will improve the quality of their own operations and strengthen health, safety and environmental consciousness and awareness.

❖ **Community interaction**

Maintain an awareness of and respond to community concerns that relate to their activities

2.5 What is the Role of *Fecc*?

Fecc ensures the harmonized implementation of the Programme throughout Europe. *Fecc* verifies the company's or National Association's (in the case of the adoption of the Programme) compliance with the Programme. Furthermore, *Fecc* provides practical help and support in sharing and adapting best practices by organizing regular meetings of the *Fecc* Responsible Care Committee and by holding workshops and information sessions on a wide range of Responsible Care topics.

3 Procedure to achieve Responsible Care Recognition

3.1 Implementation

3.1.1 *Management Commitment*

The CEO or the Managing Director of the applying company shall sign a formal commitment (ANNEX I) to the Eight Guiding Principles and send a copy to *Fecc*. The commitment also refers to:

- ❖ compliance with the rules of use of the logo (ANNEX VI);
- ❖ monitor the continuous improvement of environmental, health, safety, and security performance;
- ❖ devote sufficient time and resources to the implementation of Responsible Care, including the appointment of a Responsible Care Coordinator (ANNEX II).

3.1.2 *Candidate Requirements*

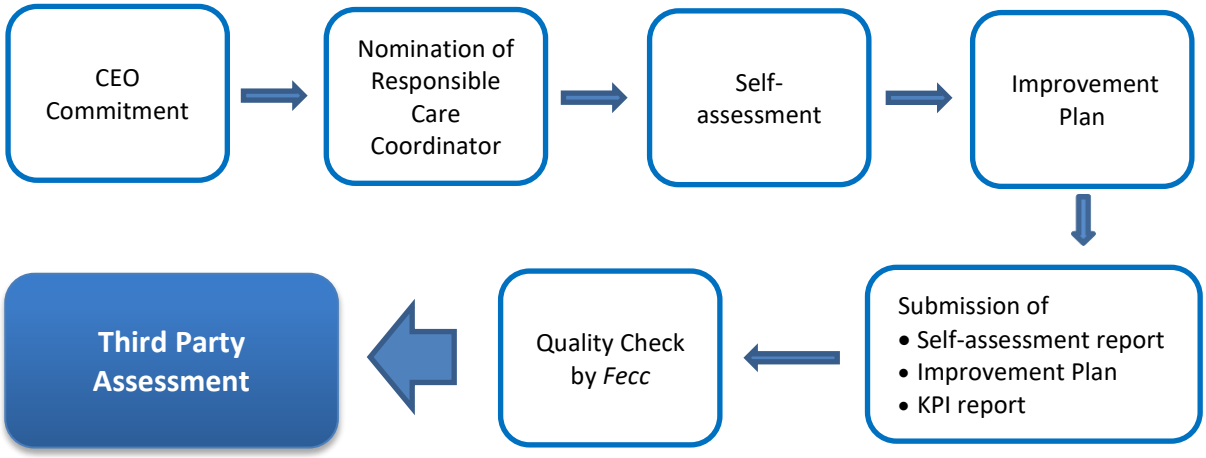
Companies who have sent the commitment from the CEO but have not yet completed the validation process become 'candidates' of the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme upon submission of:

- a self-assessment report, and
- an Improvement Plan, and
- a KPI report for the previous calendar year, and
- proof of participation in meetings or workshops on subjects related to Responsible Care.

The company will perform a self-assessment based on an approved Third Party validation questionnaire, the ESAD Di questionnaire or the ICTA Self-Assessment Questionnaire. The self-assessment documents together with the Improvement Plan (based on the self-assessment) and the KPI Report need to be sent to the *Fecc* Responsible Care Manager, who will perform a quality check of the submitted documents.

The candidate status is only an interim solution and to progress to full Programme compliance with the grant of the use of the Responsible Care logo, the company will need to undergo a Third Party Validation within a year from the sending of Management commitment letter to *Fecc*.

Flow-chart of the implementation process:



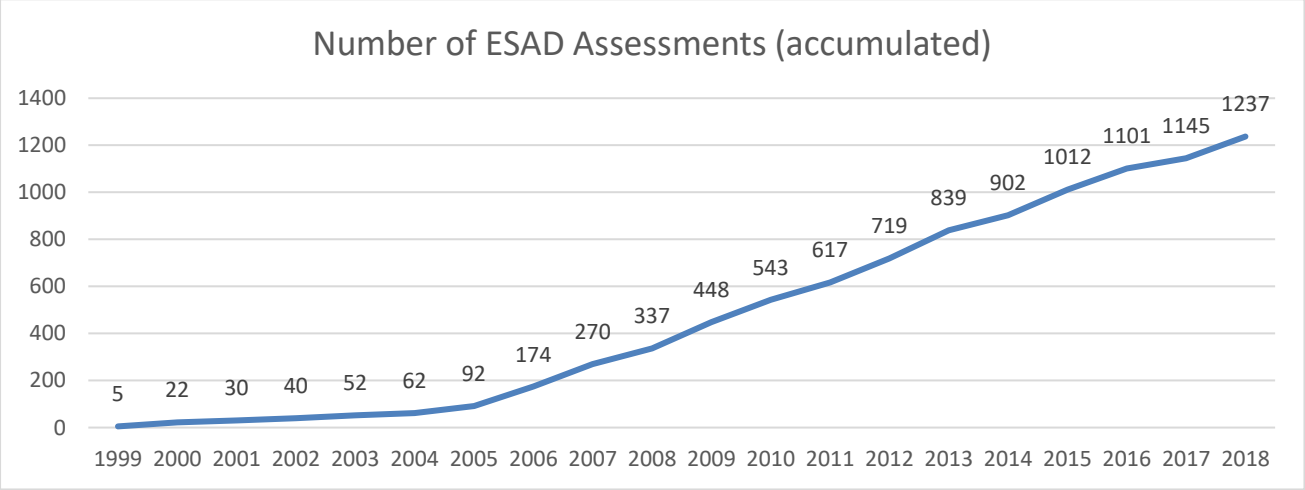
3.2 Third Party Assessment

The Programme demands that a Third Party Verification (TPV), an independent third party assessment of companies in the chemical supply chain, needs to be done within one year after signing the CEO letter of commitment. *Fecc* recommends **SQAS** (Safety & Quality Assessment for Sustainability), a pan-European system to evaluate the safety, security, quality, environmental and Corporate Social Responsibility standards of chemical distributors and logistics Services Providers which also offers a system of third party verification to Responsible Care. SQAS has a suite of assessment modules, among them the SQAS Distributor / ESAD for Chemical Distributors. The ESAD (European Single Assessment Document) assessment Questionnaire covers the management systems and the site operations, facilities, and processes. The Questionnaire consists of five sections:

- Distributor Standard Activities (Di)
- Site Assessment (S)
- Chlorinated Solvents (Cs)
- Food, Cosmetic or/and Pharma (F)
- GDTP – Good Trade and Distribution Practices for Pharmaceutical Excipients (G).

Fecc allows alternative schemes which need to be approved by the Fecc Responsible Care Manager prior to starting the application, for verifying Responsible Care performance.
The *Fecc* Responsible Care Manager to whom the Third Party Assessment Report and the Improvement Plans have to be submitted for the verification process (see chapter 3.3) is the only party to view these documents. There is no comparison of reports between different companies. The findings of the assessment and verification are treated in strict confidence.

For further information, go to www.sqas.org.



An SQAS assessment does not lead to a certificate nor is it a pass-fail system. The assessment offers a detailed factual report of the quality, safety, security, and environmental performance of chemical distributors.
How to prepare for Responsible Care and the Assessment?
The company should familiarize itself with the *Fecc* European Responsible Care Programme, particularly with the guidelines and requirements. To provide accurate, credible information, the

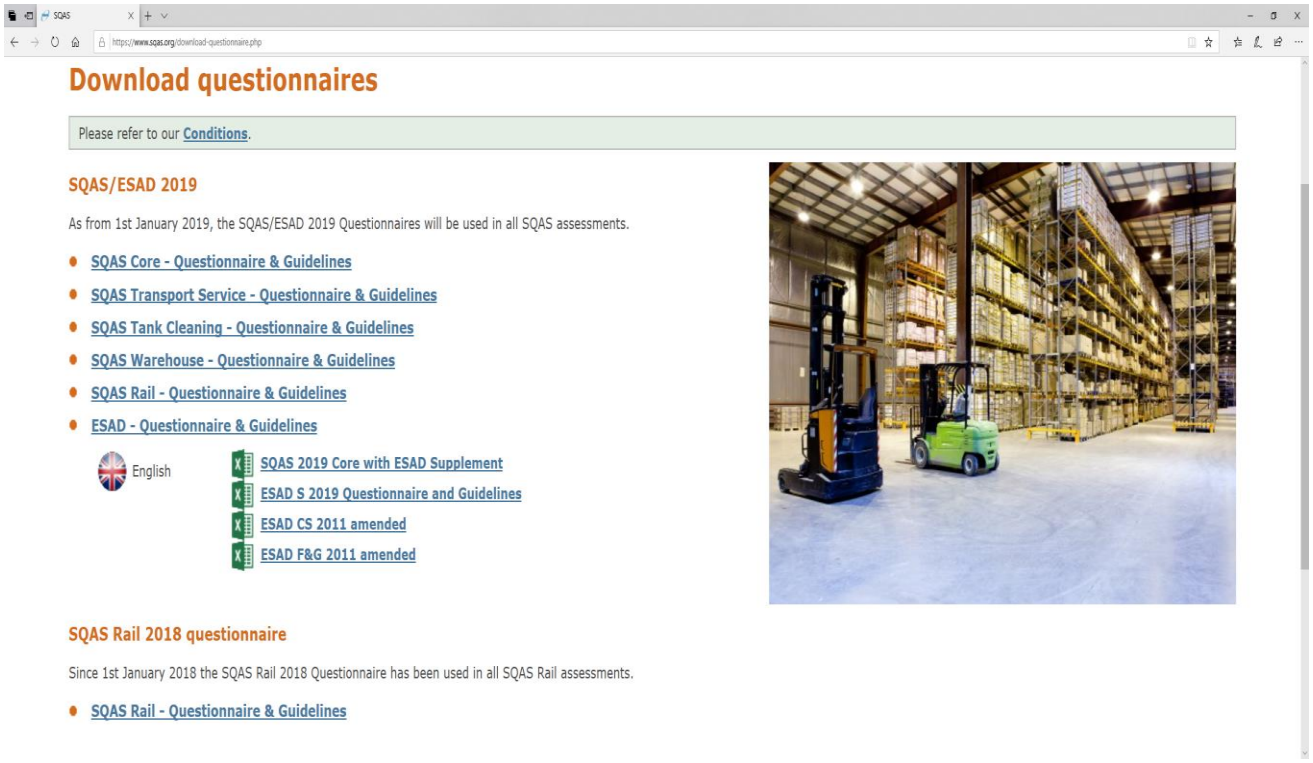
Responsible Care Coordinator should be familiar with the Key Performance Indicators Questionnaire. Before the assessment, it is very important that the company prepares for the process.

FIND A TP ASSESSOR

Click here for a listing of accredited TP Assessors.

FIND THE ESAD QUESTIONNAIRE & GUIDELINES

See below an overview of the different downloadable Questionnaires:



What has to be assessed and how often?

The third party assessment takes place at the site of the controlling office or headquarters and at, where applicable, at least one operational centre, for example a warehouse, tank farm or distribution centre. The assessment will be repeated every three years for each country where the company is applying for the logo and covering all the relevant activities at the site (for example, where chlorinated solvents are handled, section Cs of the ESAD audit should be used as well as the Di section). For companies with more than one operational site in a given country there should be a rolling programme to cover all of them. An office only distributor with no operational sites will only complete the Di questionnaire. A distributor that operates a physical site will normally complete the section Di and S, and add the other parts (Cs, F & G) optionally if activities in the field of these products exist.

Joint Cefic-Fecc Recommendation to combine ESAD with ISO

ESAD assessments are often carried out in companies that are ISO certified (ISO 14001/9001/50001, etc.). In order to increase efficiency and avoid duplication *Cefic* and *Fecc* recommend to combine ESAD Assessments with ISO certification or surveillance audits. For that purpose the assessors

should be both accredited by *Cefic for SQAS* and by the Certification Body who issued the ISO Certificate(s).

3.3 The Verification Process

How is compliance with the Programme verified?

Compliance with the Programme is verified by the *Fecc* Responsible Care Manager. Verification includes an analysis of the Third Party Assessment Report. For the purpose of this analysis, the company gives permission to *Fecc* to access their assessment report.

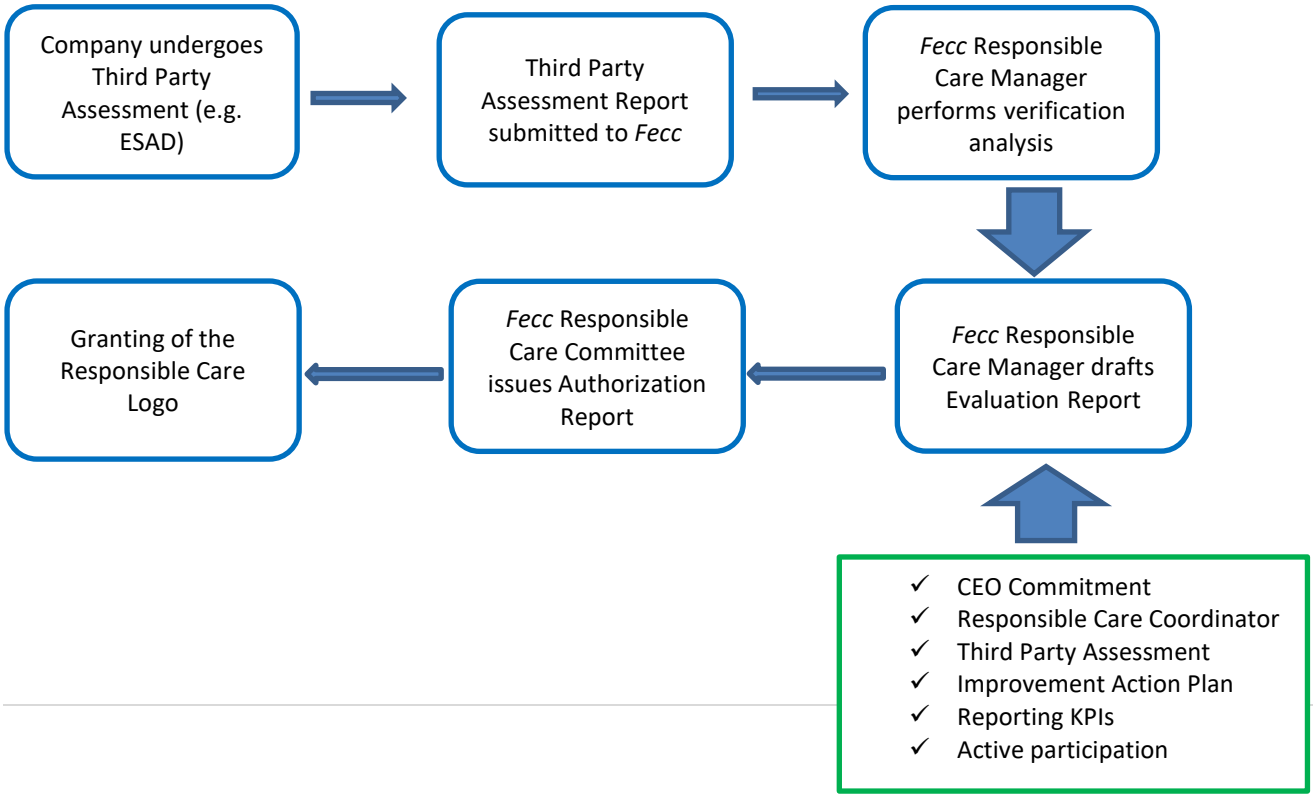
How to demonstrate continuous improvement?

In order to verify continuous improvement *Fecc* will compare scores with previous assessments, review scores on the improvement sections (section 7 of Di - ongoing improvements), and check the presence of an Improvement Action Plan. The company commits to following up on the results and to use the assessment report to evaluate its own performance as well as the quality, safety, security, and environmental strengths and weaknesses. The result should be reflected in the Improvement Action Plan.

What is the outcome of the verification analysis?

On the basis of the verification analysis, the Responsible Care Manager and the Responsible Care Committee decide whether the company has the processes in place to ensure that improvements are made, taking into consideration progress in implementing recommendations from previous verifications. The *Fecc* Responsible Care Manager presents the results in an Evaluation Report which contains a summary of the verification analysis using only aggregated data, to the Association members of the *Fecc* Responsible Care Committee. On the basis of the Evaluation Report and the decision of the Association members of the *Fecc* Responsible Care Committee the Fecc Responsible Care Manager issues the Authorization Report, which grants the Responsible Care Logo.

Flow-chart of the verification process:



The Programme allows, by exception, those companies that meet the following criteria, an exemption from the requirement to undertake third party validation:

- The site is an office-only micro business in its country of operation (<10 employees, and turnover or balance sheet total, ≤ € 2 m), and
- Its country of operation has no accredited SQAS ESAD assessors, and
- Its country of operation has no National Distributor Association.

A company meeting these criteria will satisfy the requirements of the Programme if it continues to provide annually the *ICTA* Self-Assessment Questionnaire, together with the Improvement Plan (based on the self-assessment) and the KPI Report to the *Fecc* Responsible Care Manager who will perform a second party validation of the submitted documents (see Chapter IV.D.).

3.4 Annual Reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Once a year, the company - under the supervision of the Responsible Care Coordinator - must complete the *Fecc* European KPI Questionnaire and send it to the *Fecc Responsible Care Manager*. The first part of the Questionnaire concerns information about the implementation of Responsible Care. The second part covers elements such as Lost Time Injuries, Transport Incidents, Waste, Security, and Community Interactions. KPIs provide accurate and credible information about a company's performance and also benchmarks to measure continuous improvement. Lastly, they allow verification that the storage and distribution of chemicals is carried out in a safe, secure and responsible manner, and with due regard to the protection of people, property, and the environment.

4 Further Key Features

4.1 Communication and the *Fecc* Responsible Care Committee

What is expected in terms of sharing experiences?

Companies commit to proactively share best practices and exchange experiences on the implementation of Responsible Care in the meetings of the *Fecc* Responsible Care Committee which serves as platform to facilitate communications between Responsible Care Coordinators, National Associations and *Fecc* (see Chapter V). In addition, there is also a commitment to communicate the Responsible Care message effectively within organizations, along the supply chain and to the wider public.

4.2 Permission to use the logo

What conditions must be fulfilled to use the Responsible Care logo?

The Responsible Care logo is a protected trademark (see Chapter VI and ANNEX VI). In Europe it is owned by the *European Chemical Industry Council* (*Cefic*). *Fecc* grants permission to use the logo if a company has provided *Fecc* with:

- A Third Party Assessment Report or proof that third party verification has taken place.
- An Improvement Action Plan.
- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- A list of relevant Responsible Care workshops and meetings attended by the Responsible Care Coordinator.

What happens if the rules of the Programme are not respected?

Fecc reserves the right to withdraw the permission to use the logo if the requirements are knowingly and repeatedly breached. Permission may be re-granted, if the company addresses and resolves the issues, following a *Fecc* Board decision based on a recommendation by the Fecc Responsible Care Committee.

4.3 Relation with **National** Responsible Care Programmes

National Programmes in line with the *ICTA* Programme will be considered as also being in line with the European Responsible Care Programme. Companies who received the logo and are part of a national Programme will be regarded as in compliance with the European Responsible Care Programme in those countries. Companies are strongly encouraged by *Fecc* to participate in Responsible Care activities at the national level.

4.4 Product Stewardship

How does Product Stewardship play a part?

Product Stewardship is the industry's management of the health, safety and environmental performance of chemical products throughout their entire life cycle. Responsibilities can be shared between suppliers and distributors so that both deliver their Responsible Care and Product Stewardship commitments. Product Stewardship is Responsible Care applied to products.

[For further details, contact *Fecc*'s Responsible Care Manager Gerhard Ahlbrecht on ++32 2 679 02 64 or email gah@fecc.org.]

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The *European Association of Chemical Distributors* (*Fecc*) is the voice of the chemical distribution industry in Europe. With a growing membership of companies and national associations, *Fecc* represents around 1,600 companies of which many are small and medium sized companies (SMEs). The chemical distribution industry in Europe employs more than 30,000 people and has an annual sales leverage of approximately €28 billion.

Brussels, January 2019