



PRESS RELEASE

PROCEDURE FOR IMPORTATION OF FERTILIZERS SUBJECT TO MBS CERTIFICATION

The Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) would like to remind stakeholders that through the MBS Act, the MBS is mandated to check the conformance of designated imported products to relevant Malawi Standards, through the Imports Quality Monitoring Scheme (IQMS), in accordance with the Imports Quality Monitoring Regulations.

The MBS would therefore like to inform traders and the general public that various fertilizers are designated under the Imports Quality Monitoring Regulations for mandatory conformance assessment before the fertilizers are allowed for use in the country. In addition to this requirement, importers of fertilizers are expected to obtain an import licence from the Ministry of Trade.

In view of this, the MBS would like to inform affected stakeholders regarding the procedure for importation, supply or distribution of fertilizers that are designated under the Imports Quality Monitoring Regulations in Malawi, as below:

- 1. Pre-shipment Sample:** When an individual or organisation wants to import fertilizer for the first time, or from a new supplier, he/she must request the supplier to send a pre-shipment sample directly to the MBS through a recognised courier service. The pre-shipment sample should be accompanied by details of prospective importer in Malawi including his or her contact details, certificate of analysis and material safety data. The prospective Malawian importer will be contacted by the MBS after receipt of samples (using details provided by the supplier) for payment of conformance assessment fees, which comprise registration, inspection, testing and reporting plus 16.5% VAT. The sample will then be subjected to conformity assessment based on relevant mandatory Malawi Standards and the results shared with the prospective importer and relevant stakeholders. An approval allowing importation is only issued following conformance of the fertilizer to relevant Malawi standards. If the fertilizer does not conform to the standard, importation of the fertilizer is not allowed. Another pre-shipment sample will therefore be required following redress of non-conformities by the supplier.
- 2. Application for an import licence:** Once the prospective importer obtains a clearance from the MBS on the conformity of the pre-shipment sample and an indication that they can import the fertilizer, the importer will then have to apply for a licence from the Ministry of Trade, attaching the proof of conformity of the pre-shipment sample from the MBS. The Ministry would then issue the import licence based on the fulfilment of the application requirements, including the conformity assessment report from the MBS.
- 3. Importation:** Upon receipt of the import licence from the Ministry, the prospective importer may proceed importing the fertilizer. Prospective importers are however

notified that the MBS would again carry out conformance assessment on the imported consignment before it is permitted to be distributed or sold in Malawi.

4. **Handling of the fertilizer at ports of entry:** Prior to arrival of the product consignment at the port of entry, the importer shall declare it to any of the MBS offices located in Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Dedza, Mwanza, Mchinji, Muloza Songwe, Liwonde, Chileka Airport or Kamuzu International Airport through commercial invoice and/or bill of landing from the supplier. MBS officers will then provide an Import Inspection Registration form for the importer to fill in required details as captured on the commercial invoice and the MBS will determine how much fees would be required for conformity assessment of the product. The charges currently comprise of registration fee (K8,266.61, inspection and sampling fee (calculated as 0.65% of the FOB value of consignment, with K25,000 minimum and K500,000 maximum), testing fee (ranging between K19,500 minimum and K45,000 maximum based on type of fertilizer) and reporting fee (K9,183.90) plus 16.5% VAT. The importer then pays the charged fees upfront (before release of the consignment from the port of entry) at any of the above mentioned MBS offices.
5. **Conformance assessment:** Following entry of the fertilizer consignment into the country, the MBS shall inspect, sample and assess the product based on relevant mandatory Malawi Standards and provide feedback to the importer on the compliance of the product. At this point, the importer is not allowed to distribute, use or sell the product until it receives a communication from the MBS on the outcome of the conformance assessment. An Import Batch Conformance Certificate is issued to a complying product and a mere report or rejection order to a nonconforming product. The complying product will then be allowed to be distributed in the country, while applicable sanctions as per the MBS Act will be meted on the non-conforming product.
6. **Annual Waiver:** The MBS has an arrangement to issue Annual Certificates on consistently complying products. During the period of validity of the certificate, the MBS waives IQMS fees on all importations of the products. The requirement is that the product should have passed on four consecutive importations (evidenced by availability of four Import Batch Conformance Certificates) and originate from same supplier and same country. The annual certificate is issued at a fee and is valid for one year after which the assessment cycle resumes. The annual certificate is renewed when the product is found to be compliant on two other consecutive importations.

Affected stakeholders are therefore requested to take note of this procedure and to ensure that they abide by it to avoid inconveniences.

For further information and clarification, please contact the Director General, Malawi Bureau of Standards, P.O. Box 946, Blantyre. You can also call on **0887376/444/445/446/447** or email us at mbs@mbsmw.org alternatively visit our website at www.mbsmw.org

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