

National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management (NQMS)

Seamus Lefroy-Brooks

SAGTA 23rd February 2016



Background

“The selection of consultants can be complex because there are large variations in the competency of companies offering contaminated land services, many of whom offer extensive services on the basis of only limited resources or experience. There is no single directory of specialist consultancies nor any unified registration scheme which validates their competence.”

1997 CLR12



English Partnerships Brownfield Conference (March 2008)

established

- national brownfield strategy
- national skills framework
- national brownfield forum



National Brownfield Forum (February 2009)

“The forum's remit is to oversee the implementation of the national brownfield strategy, to improve co-ordination on contaminated land and brownfield policy between Government, devolved Administrations, regulators and practitioners, and to encourage the exchange of best practice and knowledge.”

(House of Lords Hansard 21st April 2009)



The Land Forum (July 2011)

- discuss brownfield issues
- support the development of best practice by regulators, practitioners and problem-owners
- identify key challenges
- seek appropriate resolutions



Land Forum Membership

AGS



HCA



RSC



BLRS



ICE



SAGTA



CIEH



IEMA



SEPA



CIWEM



Land Trust



SOBRA



CL:AIRE



Local Authority

SiLC



CLG



Contaminated Land Regulators

Strategic Forum



DEFRA



NHBC



TCPA



EA



Northern Ireland

UKCG



EIC



Government



UKELA



EPUK



NIEA



Voluntary Land Forums

Geol Soc



NRW



Welsh



HBF



RICS



Government



NQMS Aims

To ensure that a satisfactory standard of work is undertaken and provide confidence to regulators about the quality of submissions made under the planning system (NPPF).

The scheme is voluntary and the procedure is simple.



NQMS Objectives

- to improve the quality of reports delivered by the contaminated land industry to a level whereby Developers and Regulator(s) can better rely upon the conclusions put forward without the need for further scrutiny or auditing.
- to provide assurance to Developers (who retain the legal responsibility for adequately dealing with land contamination problems) and to Regulator(s) that the risks arising from land contamination have been adequately assessed and dealt with by competent people.



NQMLC Scheme

Reports are checked to ensure that:

1. The work has been planned, undertaken and written up by competent people
2. The underlying data has been collected in line with established good practice.
3. The data has been processed, analysed and interpreted in line with good practice and any specific advice provided by the relevant regulatory authorities.
4. The report sets out conclusions or recommendations that are substantiated by the underlying data and are based upon reasonable interpretations.
5. Any limitations in the data or uncertainties in the analysis are clearly identified along with the possible consequences of such limitations.



SQP Role

- SQP is an individual, approved and registered by the scheme, who checks the report and whose judgement can be relied upon with some degree of finality.
- SQP will ensure that the key aspects of the report have been either checked directly by themselves or by individuals with a requisite level of capability.
- SQP signs a declaration form to this effect.
- A separate declaration is required for each document, which may then bear the National Quality Mark)



SQP eligibility

An experienced chartered professional

- Bound by a professional code of conduct
- Sufficient specialist contaminated land experience to have a good overview of
 - The requirements of the various regulatory regimes and
 - What is required to effectively assess a site and remediate it to a suitable condition.



SQP eligibility

So 'suitably qualified' can essentially mean someone who has:

- a thorough knowledge of all the relevant legislation and guidance and
- demonstrable understanding of the relevant issues and their implications and
- demonstrated substantial, relevant and current experience



Brownfield Skills Development Framework Assessment

SQP competence assessment is made on the basis of the Brownfield Skills Development Framework.

The skills framework has 5 levels of capability

- SQPs will need to demonstrate Level 4 or higher in a range of roles
- they may only be able to delegate individual tasks to persons with a capability of Level 4 or higher in delegated roles (eg SoBRA DQRA).



Brownfield Skills Development Framework

<p>Process Implementation</p> <p>Specify Methods and Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bioremediation – Soil washing – Soil stabilisation / solidification – Vapour extraction – Etc <p>(Level 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is able to construct, maintain, operate and monitor process systems/techniques in line with relevant designs and performance criteria - Is able to compile comprehensive information on technique performance ensuring that project/systems are auditable and compliant with legislation and project specific requirements - Is able to design and undertake sampling and other investigations to verify the effectiveness of a remediation scheme against its remedial objectives - Is able to compile comprehensive information on technique performance ensuring that project/systems are auditable and compliant with legislation and project specific requirements 	<p>Assessment to confirm understanding of key principles AND provision of examples of structurally sound designs</p>
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EXAMPLE OF SKILLS FRAMEWORK



Brownfield Skills Development Framework

SiLC, as nominated SQP provider, are extending their training to enable potential SQPs to demonstrate possession of the required level of skills.

The SOBRA accreditation scheme has been designed using the SDF and will dovetail into the proposed NQMLC scheme.



NQMS Timeline

January 2014

Land Forum discussion regarding the best way to improve standards in our industry led to establishment of working sub-group.

(sub-group included EA, HBF, local authority, SILC, AGS, SOBRA and SAGTA)

June 2014

Sub-group drafted briefing the Land Forum meeting on 25th June when a resolution was passed to proceed with the scheme development.

October 2014

Sub-group reached agreement on draft eligibility criteria for SQPs to sign off reports and developed a draft declaration.

November 2014

The Land Forum agreed to adopt the National Brownfield Skills Development Framework as a basis for judging the competence of contaminated land professionals.

December 2014

Sub-group revised documentation for consultation



NQMS Timeline

March 2015

Public Consultation

August 2015

Development of the Environment Agency's regulatory position on the scheme

July 2015

Review of consultation responses and final scheme development
SQP capabilities and examination procedures

October 2015

Selection of Scheme Administrator (CL:AIRE) & SQP Provider (SiLC)
Administration and funding arrangements for the scheme
Definition of standards and project auditing procedures

December 2015

Definition of standards and project auditing procedures
Development of the communications strategy
Sub-group assembly of final scheme documentation



NQMS Timeline

March 2016

Land Forum approval of finalised NQMS
(including SoBRA scheme)

Summer 2016

Training and promotion of scheme

Autumn 2016

Scheme launch



Thank you

