

National Quality Mark Scheme (NQMS)

Environment Agency's Approach

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Outline of Presentation

- *Regulatory role and focus of the Environment Agency*
- *Aspects of interest to us in the NQMS*
 - *Application of good practice and standards*
 - *Process of critical appraisal/auditing*
- *How we will take account of NQMS in our work*
- *What the challenges for the future might be*



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AIMS (ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995)

*“It shall be the principal aim of the Environment Agencyin discharging its functions so to **protect and enhance the environment**, taken as a whole, as to make the contribution towards attaining the objective of **sustainable development**.....”*



Our particular focus on water pollution issues

We are guided by the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (including the groundwater daughter directive) to:

- *To strive to achieve “good status” for water bodies and to prevent deterioration.*
- *To prevent or limit the inputs of pollutants into groundwater and;*
- *Implement measures necessary to reverse any significant and sustained upward trend in pollutant concentrations in groundwater.*



Regulatory regimes dealing with land contamination issues

- *Water Resources Act 1991 (APWN)*
- *Environmental Permitting Regime*
- *Environmental Damage Regulations**
- *Part2A Contaminated Land regime ***
- *Town and Country Planning regime***!*



Aspects of scheme of interest to us

1. *The overall concept/aim to achieve regulatory compliance*
2. *Application of quality assurance process to LCM*
3. *Use of qualified persons and capable teams*
4. *Adoption of appropriate technical and regulatory standards*
5. *Application of auditing / critical principles to any work*
6. *Inclusion of professionalism and ethics*
7. *The goal of better regulation (efficiency & effectiveness)*



Quality Assurance Process

Reports are prepared in line with good practice, checked and signed off by a suitably qualified and experienced person (SQP) who ensures that:

- *Work has been undertaken by competent people*
- *Data has been collected, processed, analysed and interpreted in line with **good practice** and relevant **regulatory standards/advice**.*
- *Conclusions are **substantiated** by the underlying data*
- *Any limitations are clearly identified*



Good Technical Practice

- *CLR11- Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination is the core reference for work carried out.*
- *The CLR11 “info maps” which refer out to the wider range of applicable guidance are to be updated and accessed via a web based information portal/resource maintained by the Scheme Administrator (WALL)*



Regulatory Standards

Any definitive published guidance or advice on the requirements for compliance with a particular regime will be captured and used as core references, whether generic or site specific

**e.g. Any standing guidance from Local Planning Authorities or site specific “pre-application advice”.*



Critical Analysis

The SQP will mirror the process used by regulators in using their experience to ensure that any conclusions set out in a report are fully substantiated by applying a series of audits/checks to the critical decisions that have been made under the CLR11 process



Examples*

Risk Assessment:

- *Have appropriate assessment criteria, tools and parameters been selected...*
- *Are the number, nature and location of samples , proposed testing and monitoring regimes sufficient...*

Options Appraisal:

- *Have appropriate remedial objectives been identified including (where relevant) remedial target concentrations and compliance points?...*

Remediation:

- *Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate remediation is complete and has fulfilled the objectives....*



Taking account on NQMS

1. *Town & Country Planning:*

- *Prioritising our involvement in quality assurance activities*
- *Reliance upon NQMS conclusions and outputs*
- *Continued review for the most sensitive settings (routine auditing)*

2. *Part2A Contaminated Land Regime:*

- *Promotion/requirement for use of NQMS by appropriate persons*
- *Procurement of NQMS Company's for Public Sector work*

3. *Environmental Permitting*

- *Promotion of use of NQMS by Industry Sector groups*



Challenges for the future?

- *Perceptions of cost and effectiveness by clients*
- *Building trust with regulatory bodies*
- *Resistance to qualification by practitioners*
- *Concerns regarding liability*
- *Levelling the playing field economically*
- *Maintaining shared awareness of standards and expectations*



Thank you

