

# National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management (NQMS)



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**Aim** The aim of this industry led scheme is to ensure that all legislative requirements connected to the management of land contamination are met.

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**Details** The NQMS is a system designed by the industry led Land Forum to ensure that land contamination management work meets the necessary technical and regulatory standards. It applies in particular to the presentation of environmental information to the regulator in the form of reports, setting out both factual and interpretative information.

Reports are prepared in line with good practice and signed off by a suitably qualified and experienced person registered under the NQMS who ensures:

- The work has been planned, undertaken and written up by competent people who have relevant experience and/or qualifications in their respective disciplines.
- The underlying data has been collected in line with established good practice procedures and its collection has been subject to control via established quality management systems.
- The data has been processed, analysed and interpreted in line with established good practice and any specific advice provided by the relevant regulatory authorities or regulatory bodies.
- The reports set out recommendations or conclusions that are substantiated by the underlying data and are based upon reasonable interpretations.
- Any limitations in the data or uncertainties in the analysis are clearly identified along with the possible consequences of such limitations.

The scheme is voluntary and the procedure is simple. It has been designed to minimise costs and maximise benefits by operating alongside and within existing quality management systems. The scheme is being administered and supported on behalf of the Land Forum by CL:AIRE and SiLC who are the leading organisations in their field for implementing better regulation initiatives and assessing professional competency. The website is [www.claire.co.uk/nqms](http://www.claire.co.uk/nqms).

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**Benefits** Significant economic benefits are achieved by “getting it right first time” without the need for lengthy negotiations and detailed auditing by the regulator. In particular, planning applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning regime should benefit significantly from speedier resolution if NQMS is involved. Use of the NQMS will also assist in the prompt discharge of subsequent planning conditions.

Projects and developments that meet the standards for regulatory compliance incur less costly delays and are not subject to enforcement action. The scheme helps the Local Planning Authorities and the Environment Agency prioritise and maximise the deployment of scarce public resources whilst reassuring the public that land contamination risks have been adequately addressed.