



The Land Forum

[link to Land Forum website pages](#)

31st January 2017

The Chief Planning Officer:

County Councils in England
District Councils in England
Unitary Authorities in England
London Borough Councils
Councils in Scotland
Councils in Wales
Councils in Northern Ireland



Dear Chief Planning Officer

National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management (NQMS)

This letter is to circulate information regarding the NQMS, which was launched, by the Land Forum, on Monday 9th January 2017. The scheme has received support from both DCLG and DEFRA and is intended for use by local planning authorities during development of land affected by contamination. The Environment Agency has welcomed the introduction of the scheme and you are hereby invited to participate.

From the 9th January 2017 land contamination documents to be submitted by developers to regulators for development planning can bear an individual Quality Mark. This Quality Mark indicates that the work has been properly carried out and has followed the correct guidance.

One of the scheme's aims is to help Planning Authorities and the Environment Agency prioritise the deployment of scarce public resources whilst reassuring the public that land contamination risks have been adequately addressed.

The Quality Mark will be accompanied by a Declaration of Document Adequacy that is signed by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person (SQP). The SQP is a registered individual who has been assessed as competent under the National Brownfield Skills Framework and will have either undertaken or reviewed the work.

For further information on the Land Forum and the NQMS please visit the website pages maintained by the Scheme Administrator CL:AIRE or contact CL:AIRE directly.

Yours Faithfully

Paul Sheehan
Chairman – Land Forum

Seamus R Lefroy-Brooks
Chairman – NQMS Panel

Enclosed: NQMS Briefing Note

[link to NQMS website pages](#)

(<http://www.claire.co.uk/projects-and-initiatives/nqms>)

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National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management (NQMS)



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

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.

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.