

Training and Audit focus

Suppliers to public sector urged to gain achievable Environmental Management Systems

NQA is calling on supply chain managers in the public sector to encourage their suppliers to gain environmental management system certification using the IEMA Acorn Scheme.

The UK government and public sector currently buy approximately £150 million worth of goods and services each year and have recently launched a sustainable procurement action plan. If the government is to lead the EU in the field of sustainable procurement (essential if energy-saving targets of around 1,000,000 tonnes of CO2 savings by 2020 are to be achieved) then appropriate environmental management

organizations, BS 8555 is a convenient way of implementing an environmental management system because it breaks the internationally recognised environmental management standard down into six manageable phases; you do not have to complete all six, but can choose to go only as far as the level which best suits your needs. Another benefit is that it can be tackled incrementally at a pace to suit the organisation, with the option to complete all phases and gain registration to ISO 14001 if desired. Purchasers can be certain that any suppliers who have attained Acorn certification are managing their environmental impact effectively.

NQA is working with local authorities, regional development agencies and environmental consultants to bring Acorn certification to a large number of

businesses. It is also working with the Society of British Aerospace Companies and British Nuclear Fuels to help them achieve enviro targets.

In Northern Ireland NQA is playing a key role in the innovative STEM project, set up by nine local authorities with the aim of bringing Acorn certification to over 200 organisations. The STEM project is seen as an indicator of how local authorities could work in the rest of the UK.

A number of companies involved in the STEM project, including Techrec of Dungannon, have achieved Acorn Phase 6 equivalent to ISO 14001. Patrick O'Neill of Techrec comments; "More and more tenders and contracts are now decided by the amount of quality assurance systems you have attained and these usually include an environmental management system. We were therefore keen to take part in the STEM project and

implement an EMS system at Techrec. Our involvement with the STEM project has been a rewarding and financially beneficial experience and I would advise any company to get involved in this or a similar scheme." <http://nqa.com>

teaching in soil and vegetation management for rural areas, is increasingly being asked to apply such skills to urban areas.

In response to this growing need and building on research into the use of soils and vegetation in the build environment, Cranfield University has accepted the first students onto its Ecotechnology for Cities postgraduate course, an option of the MSc Land Management programme. The Course Director, Dr Paul Burgess explained that 'Ecotechnology', short for ecological technology, integrates the skills of ecological engineering with those of ecological management.

He explains, "The course takes an ecosystem approach to understanding our environment, and combines an applied understanding of the natural processes affecting our cities with urban policy and legislation, and design. As part of the course, students undertake group projects with external organisations such as The Parks Trust in Milton Keynes".

Implementing effective sustainable urban development involves the careful integration of skills from a range of professionals from urban planning and policy makers to brownfield developers, construction professionals, and environmental experts. The course promotes innovative thinking and aims to develop an international group of specialists who can successfully manage and work with people from across these disciplines to create soil and vegetation systems for sustainable urban ecosystems.

Sean Case, a student on the Ecotechnology for Cities option, is well aware of the rising interest in ecotechnology and the potential for a fast track career in this area. "There's been a lot of interest in this area from engineering consultants. A member of staff from here at Cranfield is working on a project in China with Arup to design a self-sufficient city from the ground up."

The potential for this sector in terms of employment is huge. For Cranfield's Land Management programme, students have gone on to work as managers, engineers and scientists for consultancies such as Arcadis GMI, ERM, Golder Associates, Land Use Consultants, and MWH, as well as for government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

For further information on this and other environmental Masters programmes, visit www.cranfield.ac.uk/sas/environment.

Environment Awareness Training video seen by over a million

Green Training Works has announced the latest release of 'A Working Environment'. This trilogy of DVD video programmes produced by Shot in the Dark is designed to help environmental trainers raise awareness of green issues. This classic series has undergone some major changes with new content, illustration, and graphics.

Video 1 - the latest version of the stimulating and thought provoking 'One World is Not Enough' to



MANN Construction Ltd took the strategic approach to managing their environmental impact, by implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS), resulting in the official accreditation of ISO 14001 by certification body, NQA.

Simon Whelan, Environmental Manager at MANN Construction says, "during the tendering stage of business, more often than not, we are asked to provide our environmental policy, our NQA certification and any good practice and environmental plans for the job. Having a library of environmental matter to hand makes a big difference.

"Ensuring our sites are regularly inspected by environmental

management representatives, in addition to our own site managers, helps us to continually maintain our high environmental standard."

MANN Construction was awarded the Environmental Supply Chain Award by Wilmott Dixon in 2006, and achieved the Fuel Champ Gold Medal for improving fuel economy, after successfully completing a Fuel Efficiency Review programme 2007. They also continue to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by the introduction of a Mixed Waste Recycling Scheme at their head office in March 2008. This scheme continues to be very successful with support from all staff involved.

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must be encompassed in every aspect of public sector procurement.

BS 8555 and the Acorn Scheme are one of the cornerstones of a sustainable procurement strategy and offers businesses a straightforward method to improve environmental performance and demonstrate their environmental credentials through the simple, cost-effective phased programme. NQA is the UK's leading Acorn inspection body and has to date supplied over 150 companies with Acorn certification with a further 50 plus inspections currently being undertaken by NQA.

For small and medium sized

Addressing the 'ecotechnology' skills gap

Around 50% of the world's population now live in urban areas and the environmental pressure created by such areas is increasing. Cranfield University, which has a successful track record in research and