



Quality support for waste-derived products

Welcome to EQual

Winter 2014/15

EQual is a major LIFE+ programme that will support and encourage the use of products made from waste. It is being led by the Environment Agency, with partners CIWM, Energy UK, ESA, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Organics Recycling Group (part of REA) and Rijkswaterstaat, the Dutch environmental regulator. The output from the programme will help companies seeking to achieve end of waste status for their waste-derived products, support a more consistent and streamlined regulatory approach, and improve end market confidence.

Deriving value from waste by turning it back into useful products is an increasingly important activity for both economic and environmental reasons. Whether the rationale is to increase resource efficiency, improve the bottom line, reduce reliance on landfill or diversify into new markets, the EQual programme will offer support to businesses in a range of industry sectors while at the same time ensuring that waste-derived products are safe and fit for purpose.



The EQual programme is made possible with the contribution of the Life+ financial instrument of the European Community

EQual reaches a major milestone



Paul Leinster - Chief Executive of the Environment Agency

EQual reached a major milestone at the end of last year with the launch of the IsItWaste online tool in the Palace of Westminster

EQual in Europe

EQual presents project outputs to European regulators

The EQual Programme hosted a workshop event for Impel delegates in November 2014. Impel is the EU network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (<http://www.impel.eu>)

The event was supported by 13 member states, all contributing to discussions relating to end of waste issues across Europe. UK, Latvia, Bulgaria, Malta, Portugal, Poland, Estonia, Norway, Belgium, Northern Belgium (Flemish), Switzerland, France and Netherlands.

The **IsItWaste** tool and the **Quality Protocol Checker** tool were demonstrated and all member states expressed an interest in potentially adopting the tools for use in their own countries.

to a packed audience of MPs, policy makers, industry leaders and the media.

Outlining the Environment Agency's approach to End of Waste and emphasising its commitment to supporting business resource efficiency, Chief Executive Paul Leinster explained that the free **IsItWaste** tool "helps businesses to navigate a complex area of legislation as they seek to transform their waste into useful products. This has environmental and economic benefits."

He was joined on panel by two influential speakers from the world of business: Gary Crawford Vice President of Emerging Markets for Veolia and Peter Young, chairman of the Aldersgate Group, an alliance of leaders from business, politics and civil society that drives action for a sustainable economy.

Mr Crawford stressed that a stable and coherent policy framework is essential to underpin better resource efficiency and transition towards a more circular economy and said that the **IsItWaste** tool will help businesses to better understand and follow waste-to-product legislation, lighten the regulatory burden and remove the waste 'stigma', and build market confidence in quality secondary materials and products.

Mr Young added that it would help to improve resource husbandry by creating supply chain information to maintain and improve product quality for end of waste. He said the tool fits very well within Defra's SERR (Smarter Environmental Regulation Reform) programme of smarter guidance and data and should make it easier for businesses to do the right thing, whilst making abuse more transparent. He also added that this initiative is a great example of regulators listening and responding to business needs.

The launch of the **IsItWaste** tool was also welcomed by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. England's Resource Management Minister Dan Rogerson said: "This government is committed to ensuring we use our resources more carefully and the UK is now producing less waste than ever before. This reflects a lot of hard work by local authorities and businesses, and a desire from householders to cut down on waste.

"We all have a responsibility to tackle waste and I congratulate the Environment Agency and their partners on the new 'Is ItWaste?' service which can help businesses save money and create new products from existing materials to generate growth and new jobs."

Since its launch, over 300 companies have registered to use the tool and started an assessment. The **IsItWaste** tool is currently applicable for England only as it is based on English case law; however, a Dutch version has also been launched as the tool was developed in close co-operation with project partner Rijkswaterstaat (the Netherlands' Ministry of Infrastructure & the Environment). Launched a few weeks after the UK version, the Dutch tool has already had over 150 companies registering to use it and 25 assessments completed. The team at Rijkswaterstaat has also modified the tool to meet new regulations on requirements for use of recovered materials as a fuel, and the Flemish waste agency OVAM has requested permission to use the tool.

The EQual Programme has shared the presentation and the workshop report on the Impel 'base camp'. This online forum will continue to be used to support best practice relating to end of waste issues.



Northern Ireland Environment Agency takes the initiative

EQual partner NIEA was busy over Summer and Autumn 2014, with four events promoting the outputs of the programme.

At the end of July, an interactive workshop for around 20 NIEA staff from the waste regulation team and the Environmental Crime Unit covered both the **Quality Protocol Checker** and the **IsItWaste** tool. Representatives from Michelin attended to help frame the business benefits of the tool and there was positive feedback on the IsItWaste tool from the Irish Environmental Protection Agency too.

The Environment Ireland Conference in Dublin in September was an ideal opportunity for NIEA to take a stand and promote EQual, particularly as both the NI Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government in ROI were speaking about the importance of resource efficiency and effective management of residual wastes.

Attended by around 300 delegates, the Business in the Community Responsible Business conference on the 16th October provided an opportunity to reach

The **IsItWaste** web tool and accompanying guidance is available at <https://isitwaste.org>



EQual attends major European shows

EU Green Week

Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency & Waste was the theme of the 2014 EU Green Week, the biggest annual conference on European environment policy which took place from 3rd to 5th June in Brussels.

EQual teamed up with two other LIFE+ projects, edoc (electronic duty of care) and CLEARInfo, to exhibit at the event and the projects attracted good numbers to the joint stand and resulted in a number of high level policy, academic and industry contacts being made. It also provided the opportunity for the team to gain a better understanding about the approach to End of Waste in other Member States.

RWM 2014

EQual joined forces once again with edoc and CLEARInfo to take part in this year's RWM event at the NEC Birmingham in September. The aim was to provide the 13,000 or so visitors to the event with the opportunity to see the QP Checker and prototype IsItWaste online tools in action.

Particularly relevant given the Circular Economy theme at this year's show, reaction to the EQual programme was very positive, with over 100 show goers enjoying live demos of the tools and providing feedback.

potential users of the two EQual on-line tools, and the final event was an interactive workshop in November. This session was targeted at waste industry companies interested in how they might use the tools to assess their own materials, as well as consultants and advisers who saw the potential of the tool in providing a service to their clients.



EQual field trials nearing completion

Fieldwork on the agricultural and construction field trials is now complete, and the final stages of the data analysis and reporting are being carried out.

The trials have been very successful, having improved understanding around the environmental risks of using the four waste-derived materials in real applications and provided robust data sets for use in future risk assessments. The final reports will be available in Spring 2015.

Information on End of Waste and links to the EQual online tools can be found at

<http://www.gov.uk/ea/EQual>

