



Quality support for waste-derived products

Welcome to EQual

Spring 2013

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

QP Checker Web Tool

Taking the Quality Protocol route?

EQual will soon be launching its first support tool – the Quality Protocol (QP) Checker web tool. Initially available for compost and secondary aggregate producers, this tool will offer companies already using or considering using the QP route easy, step-by-step guidance on how to meet the requirements of the relevant QP and produce compliant waste-derived products.

It will also do much more than that, however. By improving clarity around QP procedures and compliance, it will support more consistent regulation and provide a template for companies to work with enforcement staff to demonstrate that their product is compliant.

The tool is currently going through a number of testing stages, and we will be asking interested companies to be part of the final testing phase to ensure that it is as user friendly as possible. If you would like to take part in the trials please contact equal@environment-agency.gov.uk

Better and more consistent compliance will also increase end user confidence in QP products, stimulating market demand. Companies who have or intend to invest time and effort in becoming QP compliant will welcome a major push later this year by the Environment Agency to audit current QP compliance and ensure that those who are producing quality waste-derived products have a genuinely competitive edge in the marketplace.

Definition of Waste Web Tool

Calling all waste producers...

Tackling a much wider range of waste streams is EQual's second output, the Definition of Waste web tool. This online tool will help waste producers and regulators with a step-by-step assessment process to establish whether a waste-derived product can be classified as a by-product or has achieved EoW status as set out in the EU Waste Framework Directive.

By taking the user through a series of questions, the web tool ensures that the assessment criteria are covered and provides clear information and feedback to help the user with the assessment. It is being developed by the Netherlands and England/Wales for use in each country, and has the potential to be appropriate for use by other EU Member States.

The web tool is designed to be used either to produce a self-assessment report or as part of the application process to the Environment Agency's End-of-Waste Panel, where it can help the applicant to submit clear, detailed and consistent information to the regulator to better inform and speed up the decision process.

The first prototype version of the web tool is expected to be ready by late Spring 2013, and a piloting programme with interested waste-producers will be rolled out in Autumn 2013. If you would like to be part of this programme, contact equal@environment-agency.gov.uk

EQual Field Trials

Building confidence in waste-derived products

The third element of the EQual programme includes a series of field trials to evaluate environmental and human health impacts of using four waste-derived materials. The aim is to provide data to inform the regulatory approach and underpin market confidence.

The agricultural field trials, which began late 2012, are focused on the application of poultry litter ash (PLA) and paper sludge to arable soils. The work is being carried out by ADAS.

The construction field trials are focused on the use of processed incinerator bottom ash (IBAA) and pulverised fuel ash (PFA) as secondary aggregates. The IBAA trials are under way, being carried out by TRL. We are in the process of appointing contractors for the PFA trials.

The results of the trials will be available Winter 2014/15.

What is End of Waste?

The concept of End of Waste – defining at what point a waste ceases to be a waste and can be classed as a product – began to take shape with the publication by the European Commission of its Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste in 2005.

As well as reducing the negative impact on the environment of waste throughout its life-span – from production to disposal, via recycling – the strategy aimed to develop an approach where every item of waste is seen not only as a source of pollution to be reduced, but also as a potential resource to be exploited.

Accompanying the strategy was a proposal for a framework directive, which became the Waste Framework Directive (WFD). The WFD introduced the mechanism of end-of-waste criteria, the objective of which is: "to remove the administrative burdens of waste legislation for safe and high-quality waste materials, thereby facilitating recycling."

In the UK, EoW is determined using one of three methods:

- Compliance with EU End of Waste Regulations (the legislative platform for the EoW criteria being developed by the Commission). Currently, scrap metal and glass are the only two materials that have been completed and have regulations).
- Meeting a Quality Protocol (QP). The QP programme has produced 11 QPs. We are currently working on further QPs, including IBA, Biomethane and Steel Slag.
- A material-specific submission to the Environment Agency's End of Waste Panel (or appropriate regulating authority in the case of the devolved UK governments).

NEWS

EQual meets with EU regulators

At a recent workshop in Utrecht, members of the EQual project team met with regulators and government bodies from other EU Member States to discuss our approaches to EoW and to showcase the web-tool being developed by the EQual programme to help with EoW assessments.

Countries represented at the meeting included Germany, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands, Austria, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The outcome was very positive, and the initiative has resulted in a new international network of stakeholders interested in EoW developments and in using the EQual web tool, which can be adapted for use by either regulators or industry. As programme moves forward, we will continue to develop this network and widen it to include other EU Member States. As the programme moves forward, we want to develop this EU network. If you would like to be involved, email equal@environment-agency.gov.uk



End of Waste Conference draws a strong crowd

At a packed End of Waste conference organised by Letsrecycle.com recently, Environment Agency EQual Programme Manager Roger Hoare took to the podium to provide an overview of the Environment Agency's approach to end of waste, including the Quality Protocols programme that has helped companies to divert 12 million tonnes of waste from landfill back into quality products and saved £250 million since it began.

Roger also gave a very useful overview of the work of the Agency's End of Waste Panel, which reviews applications on a case-by-case basis for potential waste-derived products that are not covered by either the EU End of Waste Criteria or the Quality Protocols.

EQual Senior Team Leader Diana Bradford rounded the morning off with a presentation explaining how the programme's web tools will help business looking to turn their waste into safe and fit for purpose products and inviting delegates to register their interest in taking part in the forthcoming user trials.

EoW news from the European Commission

Biowaste criteria still under discussion

Concerns have been raised by the UK and other Member States about the Joint Research Council's approach, principally around the inclusion of sewage sludge and MBT outputs. The EC shared the concerns and based on the outcome of a recent Technical Working Group meeting, is now looking to draft regulatory proposals as quickly as possible.

No further materials to be considered for EoW criteria

The EC also said that Member States should not be expecting new proposals for EoW criteria on other materials. The EC's intentions are to continue towards adoption of current proposals on paper and copper and try to finalise work on biowaste and plastic waste.

What this means for Member States including the UK is that there will be more emphasis on developing robust national frameworks for EoW and the EQual programme will play an important part in developing the UK approach.

Forthcoming Activities

Try the webtools and talk to the team at RWM 2013

The EQual team will be at the NEC Birmingham in September demonstrating the QP Checker and Definition of Waste webtools and answering all your EoW questions. Find us in the showguide or visit the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) stand. www.rwmexhibition.com

For more information about the EQual programme go to <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/equal> or call 0117 934 4612

