

PROJECT: RC 164

OPEN ACCESS WEB SITE FOR PROMOTING GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL
PRACTICE IN THE UK MINERALS INDUSTRY

FINAL REPORT on

www.goodquarry.com



Open Access Website for Promoting Good Environmental Practice in the UK Minerals Industry

INTRODUCTION

The University of Leeds led this project to develop a major new national resource for the UK aggregates sector. The project received co-funding from the Minerals Industry Sustainable Technology Programme (MIST) and the ODPM ALSF Programme and has delivered a comprehensive environmental good practice data library that is fully accessible to all organisations and individuals through an open access website. The facility provides for the first time a “one-stop-shop” from all parties with an interest in the UK aggregates industries.

The principal deliverable is the website which can be accessed at www.goodquarry.com. This URL gives full access to the information resource. The website covers the effects of Air Pollution (Dust & Odour), Blasting, Cultural Heritage, Ecology, Mineral Wastes, Noise, Restoration & Rehabilitation, Social & Community, Traffic, Visual & Landscape Amenity, and Water. It also contains a series of case studies as well as a detailed list of references and comprehensive glossary.

Extensive consultation with industry, mineral planners, regulatory organisations, NGOs and the general public led to the conclusion that environmental good practice information in the UK was held in a wide range of locations in many different formats and with limited accessibility, particularly to the public sector. The website developed by this project provides a single point of contact for all parties interested in accessing good practice information in a form that is supported by high quality presentation and technical input.

The partners in the project included Geoffrey Walton Practice, Silkstone Environmental, Exchem Explosives, HJ Banks, Doncaster College, MPD - Leeds City Council, Hanson Aggregates Coldstones Quarry, MPD - Leicestershire County Council, Wright Rain, Eurogauge, ACE Plant, Oil Pollution Environmental Control, Wakefield MD Environmental Health Serv., Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group, Hankinson Duckett Associates, Hepworth Acoustics, Hanby Dust Monitoring, Gridline Services, Foster Yeoman Ltd, RMC Industries, Aggregate Industries, Humphries Rowell Associates, Lafarge Aggregates, and Tarmac Limited.

WORK PROGRAMME COMPLETED

The work was carried out in accordance with the Programme of Work in Schedule 3 of the Memorandum of Agreement between MIRO and the University of Leeds. The following task items relate to that programme.

1.1 Establish Steering and Management Committees

Both the committees were established by MIRO and the University of Leeds and ran successfully throughout the duration of the contract.

1.2 Project Management Committee Review Meetings

These meetings have taken place at the University on 8th May 2003, 30th July 2003, 1st September 2003, 28th November 2003 and 2nd March 2004. At each meeting, progress has been reviewed and decisions made on the management and development of the project.

1.3 Steering Committee Meetings

These meetings took place at the University of Leeds; the first being the official launch on 13th May 2003, with others on 3rd September 2003, 2nd December 2003 and the last on 5th March 2004. The Steering Committee helped shape the project as it developed, making a number of important decisions including accessibility options, website structure and design, relevance of certain material, and publicity strategies.

1.4 University Recruitment

The University was able to employ appropriate people to work on the project, all of whom contributed significantly to the success of the website.

2.0 Establish IT Infrastructure

The first server in the University had a terminal failure so a replacement had to be obtained. This second server ran smoothly with the security rigorously maintained to the end of the project, March 2004.

2.1 Construct Website Platform

The Web platform was completed on schedule.

www.goodquarry.com was chosen as the URL, and the licence purchased for 10 years.

The simple log-in system in operation during development has now been removed and so the website is truly "open-access". Users are requested to select a box to identify their user classification.

2.2 Implement Information Handling and Audit Procedures

Leeds University established a system for requesting and receiving information from the project partners, which was implemented successfully.

3.0 Design Best Practice Website

The basic design of the website, including the subject areas to be covered, was agreed and partners identified who could contribute to each of these areas. All sections were completed by the end of the project.

The "image" of the website was developed with the arrival of a Graphic Design Technician at the University of Leeds. Images were standardised and drawn or prepared so that they are small in memory and therefore fast to load.

The Introduction and Help section gives good back up to those who may not be particularly familiar with the internet.

The Glossary and Reference sections have continued to expand with a growing number of URL links to related websites of help and interest.

A Case Studies section was added, which contains short (2 sides A4) summaries of particular examples of good practice. This contains pre-existing publicity material in addition to new material which has been put together specifically for the website.

3.1 Launch Trial Website Platform

All partners had access to the website after the Steering Committee meeting on 3rd September 2003. A few other interested parties were also given access to provide review and comments on the site.

4.0 Collect Material – Industry Partners

All necessary material was received from the industry partners.

4.1 Edit and Prepare Material

The material was collated, edited and prepared by the team at Leeds University, with assistance from Gordon Riddler at MIRO.

4.2 Beta version of Website Release

It was decided not to formally release a beta version of the web site for a number of reasons. Firstly, much material was still being edited so there were gaps and inconsistencies on the web site. The management team also believed that the benefits of a formal pre-public launch were limited as there was already a broad range of parties who had access to it and were feeding back information. The website was therefore “password protected” until the public launch on 11th February 2004.

4.3 Website Modifications

A number of minor modifications were made to the Web site structure and content during development. A number of sections were added or enlarged as outlined in Section 3.0.

4.4 Place Material on Website

All the material provided by partners was placed on the website.

4.5 Final Testing of Website

Full testing of the website took place in the weeks leading up to the Public Launch on 11th February 2004. A number of small errors were discovered and corrected, but the website platform itself ran without technical problems.

4.6 Commission Full Website

The web site was fully commissioned at the Public Launch on 11th February 2004.

5.0 Promotion, awareness and Marketing campaign

The University has consistently communicated on the development of the website to its many links across the industry. The Public Launch was widely advertised in the trade press and in MIRO’s mail shots. Articles about the website appeared in the Mining Journal publications, MIRO News, Geoscientist, MQR magazine and the Quarry Management website. MIRO produced posters and flyers for use at conferences and broader dissemination through the MIRO networks.

5.1 Build Demo and CD for Hillhead Quarrying and Recycling Show

A display and demonstration attracted much attention at the MIRO-Leeds University stand at the Hillhead Show. Copies of a demonstration CD of the website were widely distributed.

5.2 Web site Launch Conference

An extremely successful Web site Launch Seminar was held in Leeds on 11th February 2004. Over 50 delegates attended from across the industry and were given a comprehensive demonstration of the Web site, as well as hearing some very interesting and encouraging perspectives on the Site from a number of different contributors. Some helpful comments were made during an open discussion that followed, some of which have been included in the Web site while others were incorporated in the proposal for an extension. The seminar was supported by Sir Crispin Tickell who added valuable comments regarding the necessity to raise public awareness of the website.

6.0 Final Report

This report is a brief summary of the work programme, prepared by Leeds University and MIRO. It has not attempted to duplicate the content of the main deliverable, the www.goodquarry.com website to which readers are directed.

6.1 Marketing Website

Promoting the Web site has already begun, with a number of presentations to industry groups and professional organisations.

6.2 Website Statistics

Systems were developed to measure how many 'hits' the site has had and, if users are willing to log in under a category, so that assessment can be made of the interests users have in the industry. The initial results for the three weeks after the public launch are given below. The numbers are based on the number of selections made by users from different IP addressed computers. A computer on a network will have a fixed IP address, whereas a computer on a dial-up modem will have a different address each time.

Total number of hits:	750+
Total number of different users:	273
Student/Teacher	27
Minerals Operator	90
Consultant	34
NGO	12
Minerals Planner	19
Other Regulator	22
General Public	10
Supplier	6
Left Blank	53

7.0 Project Management

MIRO had responsibility for the financial and administrative management of the project. Leeds University supplied all the information required at the time requested. The website was delivered to schedule and on budget.

FEEDBACK and POST-PROJECT ACTIVITY

The new facility will be maintained and managed for an initial period of three years through a commitment from the project partners and MIRO. It is anticipated that the information resource will be linked to formal education programmes in quarrying through links with environmental management components of courses at Doncaster and new distance learning developments at the University of Leeds.

A number of points were raised at the Website Launch Seminar and in subsequent user communications and feedback, these are listed below.

1. **Planning Section.** It was suggested at the launch that the website would benefit from the addition of a dedicated section on the Planning framework for quarries. This is mentioned in some of the subject areas, but is not described in any detail and so the references that do exist lack a context. There should be a section, which draws these references together and puts them in a wider Planning context. Mineral Planning Officers have also commented that there is a need for such a section within the Planning community, as it would form an ideal training resource for new Planners. At a subsequent Steering Committee meeting it was agreed that this should be a first priority.
2. **Broader Contribution.** A letter was received from the Mineral Resources Planning Associates Ltd, which suggested the Web site was somewhat "introverted". It was suggested that expanding the partners would help to bring in a wider range of contributors to the text and the Case Studies, to help remove any "bias" that might be perceived.
3. **Maintaining Standards.** The Steering Committee has ensured the highest editorial standards have been applied to the material on the website. It is eager to ensure that this is maintained as material continues to be added after the end of the existing project.
4. **Promotion.** A major question at the launch seminar was how the website would be publicised, particularly to the general public. Press articles have been published and leaflets have been sent out across the industry as part of the existing project, and word of mouth and internal company announcements all are resulting in a rapidly growing number of "hits". It was agreed that further work was needed to promote the website, if it is to realise its full potential. Further promotion, particularly in the public sector and to local communities is required.
5. **Subject Summaries.** It was suggested at the launch that the weakest parts of the website were the Subject Summaries. These were still based largely on material from "*Environmental Effects of Surface Mineral Workings*" and still contain information, which in some cases is out of date and in others contains wording which is too prescriptive, i.e. "you should".
6. **Benefit to Society.** Some feedback received through the "Comments" box on the website has suggested there should be more information on the benefits and contribution that aggregates make to society.
7. **Case Studies.** Suggestions have already started to be received for further inclusion in the Case Studies section, which the Steering Committee has agreed should be expanded significantly.
8. **Emerging Good Practice.** A number of other MIST funded projects and work supported by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund are producing results

which may enhance existing good practice. It was agreed by the Steering Committee that these should be reviewed to determine their suitability for incorporation into the website. Good practice may also emerge from other sources such as the QPA's Showcase awards, and this could also be included.

9. **Educational Aspect.** A number of responses have indicated that many already recognise the educational value of the website and have suggested publicising it within the education environment. The Steering Committee recognise that there is already material for Primary schools, but the website is probably more suitable for Secondary and Tertiary education. It was agreed that further interactive features would benefit both formal and informal education.

The response to these comments and suggestions received from existing partners, stakeholders and www.goodquarry.com users, will form the basis of an extension to the project so that the website fulfils its full potential. Such an extension is fully supported by the existing partners, the Health and Safety Executive and the Quarry Products Association (QPA). It is hoped to include further partners that represent other stakeholder interests to broaden website perspectives and contributions.

31st March 2004