

INSTITUTE OF GEOLOGISTS OF IRELAND



**THE QUALIFIED PERSON CONCEPT
SUBMISSION
TO THE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

January 2002



MISSION STATEMENT

To promote and advance the science of geology and its professional application in all disciplines, especially the geosciences, and to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas in relation thereto.

To require its members to uphold, develop and maintain the highest professional standards in the practice of their profession, as described in the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

BACKGROUND

The Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI), which was founded in 1999, is the self-regulatory body for professional certification of geologists in Ireland. One of the driving forces for the development of the IGI is to promote the professional practice of geology.

As part of its drive to improve standards the IGI has adopted, and is developing, codes and guidelines to assist the membership, statutory authorities and the general public. A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme, which is mandatory for its members, comes into effect from January 2002. The scheme requires each member to custom design a CPD plan, to implement that plan and maintain a development record, and to report annually. A Code for the Reporting of Mineral Exploration Results, Mineral Resources and Mineral Reserves has been approved and is binding on the members. This Code was developed in conjunction with the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, European Federation of Geologists and The Geological Society of London. As such it is part of an international initiative to produce consistent standards for reports prepared to inform investors or potential investors and their advisers, or to satisfy regulatory requirements. Guidelines on the preparation of geological reports for inclusion in Environmental Impact Studies are being drafted at the moment and should be released as a Consultative Document in late-January 2002.

QUALIFIED PERSON CONCEPT

The Qualified Person (QP) concept is derived and developed from practice in other jurisdictions, notably Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and South Africa. In those jurisdictions the concept is particularly well developed in the reporting of natural resource related issues.

Those jurisdictions, which have adopted the concept, have concluded that the criteria to define a QP are:

- 1) A suitably qualified professional in the specific field
- 2) A member of a recognised professional association with a Code of Ethics and disciplinary procedure
- 3) A qualified professional who has a minimum of five years professional experience, including specific experience relevant to the matter being reported on.

The IGI believes that the concept should be broadened to encompass all scientific and technical aspects of public reporting and that there should be a requirement that a QP sign off each specialised report. In the geological area this person should be a professional member of the Institute of Geologists of Ireland, or an equivalent professional organisation, with a minimum of five years experience which is relevant to the issues which are being reported.

The IGI suggests that reliance on a QP mitigates the need for regulators to set specific standards in many technical areas. Instead, responsibility is left with the QP to make the necessary decisions and professional judgements according to the circumstances of each specific case.

THE QP and GEOLOGICAL REPORTING

The IGI recognises that most, if not all, reports submitted to the EPA relate to complex integrated situations where several areas of expertise are involved. In many instances, for example, preparation of an EIS is a team effort. In these circumstances we believe that each area of investigation should be delegated to an appropriately qualified professional, who should be a QP in his/her own right. Where there is a clear division of responsibilities within a team, each QP should accept responsibility for his or her particular contribution. It is also important that:

- 1) The QP accepting overall responsibility for an EIS for example, which has been prepared in whole or in part by others, should be satisfied that the work of the other contributors is acceptable.
- 2) The professional geologist should be satisfied that the information in the geological report(s) is faithfully reflected in the final composite EIS (i.e. after any editing), including the Non-technical Summary.
- 3) The compiler of the final report(s) should ensure that each contributor has read and approved his/her contribution as reproduced in its final edited form.

The IGI considers that the Environmental Protection Agency, as the principal front-line protector of the environmental interest of Irish society, has and is setting the high standards required to achieve that objective. We believe that a policy requiring reports to be signed by “qualified persons” would greatly enhance those standards as they apply to geological reports submitted to the Agency.

The IGI recognises that in pursuing these objectives it is part of an international trend. To remain in the mainstream of these international developments the IGI has entered into reciprocal recognition agreements with professional associations in other jurisdictions so that the professional titles awarded provide a technical passport that is recognised internationally as a quality mark.

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