



# Delivering for Northern Ireland ... supporting the recovery

**Quarry Products Association NI**  
**Agenda 2011 - 2015**



# Essential materials... Sustainable solutions

Quarrying is an essential part of our modern society and aggregates are a vital resource for economic growth and development, making a significant contribution to Northern Ireland's prosperity and quality of life not least in helping to create and develop sustainable communities.

It is important that there is an adequate supply of raw materials to provide the infrastructure, buildings and goods that society, industry and the economy needs.

As a result of its varied geology, Northern Ireland has a diverse aggregates base upon which the construction industry has developed. We need quarry products not just for construction and manufacturing, but because they offer sustainable solutions to the challenges of creating and maintaining our built environment and coping with the effects of climate change and a growing population.

The quarry products industry has much to offer in the next four years. We will be in the engine room as the nation recovers from recession. Our relationship with the Assembly, the Executive, Government and Local Government is crucial. Delivery of its aspirations for the built and natural environments is heavily dependent upon our contribution.

We will play our part — but we need support from Government and a willingness to tackle several crucial issues.

**FACT:** Every year, Northern Ireland produces 25 million tonnes of aggregates, supplies materials worth over £600 million, directly and indirectly employs over 4,500 people and underpins the £2 billion construction sector.

**FACT:** Every £1 invested in construction generates £2.84 in total economic activity — construction relies on quarry products.

**Quarry Products:** aggregates (sand & gravel, basalt, gritstone, limestone)... asphalt... cement... concrete... mortar... lime... recycled aggregates.

# 1 Economic conditions that support investment



As the major supplier to the manufacturing and construction industries, we have been particularly hard hit by the recession. A period of economic stability is now essential if our industry is to have the confidence it needs to invest for the future and contribute to the recovery of the Northern Ireland economy.

Too much complexity, cost and taxation acts as a disincentive for investment, especially for international companies who could opt to spend elsewhere.

## We will deliver:

- ◆ A healthy quarry products industry to underpin a well balanced economy
- ◆ Quality and value for money products that meet the design, technical and commercial needs for our clients and customers
- ◆ Continuing investment in NI operations
- ◆ Secure, long term employment in rural areas designated by Government as targeting social need
- ◆ Employee skills programmes that deliver competence and promote sustainable construction
- ◆ Corporate and social responsibility by investing significantly in protection of the environment and protecting the health and safety of all who work in and visit our sites
- ◆ Development of new and sustainable materials and products.

## But we need:

- ◆ A stable economy and political leadership to support investment
- ◆ No new UK taxes or regulations that would damage our competitiveness
- ◆ Better, targeted and lower cost regulation of business
- ◆ Long term investment commitments from Government that convert into actual spending, such as ring fencing the roads maintenance budget.
- ◆ Suspension and review of the aggregates levy
- ◆ The appointment of an independent Performance Delivery Unit to realise savings in the public sector and reinvest in frontline services
- ◆ Focused investment on maintenance activities such as those in maintaining roads, water infrastructure, social housing and schools.

**FACT:** On average, QPANI members deliver approximately 100,000 tonnes of quarry products every working day to support the sustainable development of Northern Ireland.

## 2 Better Government support for an essential industry



Northern Ireland needs a secure long-term supply of quarry products that enhance sustainable development. Our roads, sewers and other vital industries and commercial infrastructures are in need of continual development; our housing stock needs to grow to meet demand and there is a constant need for the repair and maintenance of our infrastructure and buildings. Climate change means that quarry products have never been more relevant. They can protect against floods, boost energy efficiency and reduce the need for air conditioning.

### We will deliver:

- ◆ Quarry products that are responsibly sourced, quality assured and sustainable
- ◆ Reduced use of energy and lower carbon emissions
- ◆ An improving recycling record and optimisation of the reuse of construction materials
- ◆ High-quality land management and restoration and enhanced biodiversity
- ◆ Annual reporting against key performance indicators as clear proof of progress.

### But we need:

- ◆ Increasing awareness of the industry's contribution to the economy and recognition that we are critical to the development of Northern Ireland's infrastructure
- ◆ Better coordination between Government departments and more effective engagement with the industry
- ◆ More rigorous evaluation of the sustainability credentials of building and construction materials to ensure a "level playing field" based on sound science
- ◆ A simpler procurement process that recognises companies who deliver on environmental performance and wider sustainability indicators.

**FACT:** A typical family indirectly demands 3 lorry loads of aggregates each year. A new house requires some 50 tonnes of aggregates.

# 3 A reasonable “licence to operate”



Northern Ireland can only enjoy the considerable benefits of its quarry products if the industry has a sound “licence to operate” that provides reasonable access to the aggregate resources upon which its downstream manufacturing activities and the construction industry rely. We demand a planning system that operates on the basis of identified strategic or local need through a minerals planning policy for Northern Ireland.

## We will deliver:

- ◆ A steady and adequate supply of quarry products
- ◆ Operations managed to high environmental and safety standards
- ◆ Continuing management and protection of the natural environment and further improvement of biodiversity
- ◆ Positive engagement with local communities and other stakeholders.

## But we need:

- ◆ An effective, simpler, more consistent and faster planning service
- ◆ A minerals planning policy for Northern Ireland
- ◆ A minerals planning system based on realistic assessment of future demand
- ◆ A fairer planning fees system
- ◆ A minerals mapping programme for Northern Ireland
- ◆ A fairer permitted planning rights system
- ◆ Higher recognition given to the importance of the industry within planning policy.

**FACT:** In 2010, QPANI dealt with 12 official consultations on planning and environmental issues alone.

# 4 Proportionate legislation and regulation



Every industry needs to be properly and reasonably regulated, and the quarry products industry is no exception. Our concern is with the overwhelming and often conflicting volume of regulation coming from the Assembly, Westminster and Brussels. Often, legislation emanating from the EU can become “gold-plated” or unhelpfully transposed to the UK and locally. Operations whose employee base is already reduced and overstretched by the recession are struggling to cope with ever more excessive and unnecessary demands.

## We will deliver:

- ◆ A positive response to reasonable, proportionate, consistent and effective legislation and regulation
- ◆ Engagement with Government and regulators at an earlier stage to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed regulation and legislation
- ◆ Engagement with regulators and stakeholders to raise awareness about the workings of the industry
- ◆ Advice and information to our industry to highlight best practice and ensure compliance.

## But we need:

- ◆ New legislation that is reasonable, proportionate, consistent and fit for purpose
- ◆ Reduced costs of compliance and more recognition of responsible operators
- ◆ Effective and early consultation and more accurate and realistic impact assessment
- ◆ Fair transposition of EU legislation to the UK and NI - no “gold plating”
- ◆ Legislation that recognises cross-border competition issues.

**FACT:** In 2009 and 2010 QPANI members hosted industry awareness visits for over 75 Government staff.

# 5 Recognition of progress



The Northern Ireland quarry products industry has come a long way in the past 10 years and is now a leader in the fields of quality, value for money, environmental and health and safety management. The constantly evolving built environment is heavily dependent on our products and we are contributing greatly to the challenges that arise from climate change. Our industry is committed to the principles of sustainable development and also to continuous improvement across all aspects of our business.

## We will deliver:

- ◆ Evidence of our ever-improving operational and environmental performance
- ◆ Transparency of our operations through provision of data and performance indicators
- ◆ Expert advice on the sustainable use of our products
- ◆ Positive action on climate change and biodiversity improvement
- ◆ Restoration that benefits nature and local communities
- ◆ Proactive community liaison

## But we need:

- ◆ Recognition of our progress in operational and environmental performance
- ◆ Recognition that quarry products are essential to the construction and manufacturing industries and to the economy
- ◆ Recognition that quarry products issues should be central to Government delivery of its aspirations for the natural and built environments
- ◆ A more informed and committed response from Government.

**FACT:** DOENI records show that, since the Aggregates Levy Credit scheme was introduced in 2004, ongoing work with the operators has reduced non-compliance scores by 98%.

**FACT:** NIEA data shows the compliance level for the industry on water discharge consents now stands at 90.76%. The highest of any industrial sector in Northern Ireland.



# Progress on sustainability

## Headlines from our actions on Sustainable Development

- Since 2004, QPANI members producing aggregates and manufactured products have reduced HSENI reportable injuries by 70 per cent
- The cement industry recorded a 40 per cent reduction in absolute CO2 emissions between 1990 and 2008
- In Northern Ireland we use 14 tonnes of aggregates per head of population, indicating how important the industry is for the local economy.
- QPANI members are working with the NIEA, Woodland Trust, RSPB and other NGO groups to enhance biodiversity
- The Northern Ireland concrete industry is working towards the Government's 2012 target for the responsible sourcing of construction materials
- Our industry has the highest adoption of Environmental Management Systems across all other sectors.

QPANI members represent the whole of the Northern Ireland cement sector, 90 per cent of aggregates production, 95 per cent of asphalt and ready-mixed concrete production and the majority of quarry products supplied to the construction, manufacturing and others sectors of the economy.

QPANI members are:

- Socially and environmentally responsible suppliers and operators
- A valuable and active part of local communities
- Committed to the principles of sustainable production and consumption
- Encouraging and enabling the sustainable use of our products
- Providing a wide range of career opportunities and career developments.



The Quarry Products Association NI is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, concrete and lime industries

For further information visit [www.qpani.org](http://www.qpani.org)

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