

Friday 10-Sep-03

Under the Mineral Industry Sustainable Technology (MIST) programme the British Aggregate Association (BAA) have received funding to help engage SME quarry operators in research and development. The project will be run jointly with the Minerals Industry Research Organisation (MIRO).

The project aims to identify opportunities for SME quarry operators to secure economic and environmental benefit by accessing new technologies and information through linkage with national and international minerals sector research networks. It is anticipated that the project will establish a framework for pursuing major public sector research funding in the near future.

The project will consist of three core components as follows:

" Preparation of a concise technical review of innovative technologies and economically viable approaches to environmental sustainability in the SME quarrying sector worldwide " Discussion and review with BAA members to identify aspects of international best practice that may add value to the businesses of UK operators " Preparation of Benchmark Report detailing key issues for UK SME quarry operators with regard to future technological opportunities for promoting environmentally sustainable operations.

The first task is to produce a working document that targets potential technological and management opportunities for operators to minimise and mitigate the environmental effects of quarrying whilst improving financial returns. -This document will then be reviewed by the operators and used to compile information allowing research based activities to be developed. A key element in the project is dialogue with the industry as to what problems are faced and how to develop strategies with which to formulate solutions based on sound science and research.

The project will develop a network within the independent sector. A small amount of funding will be available to conduct site investigation or product trials for e.g. on waste streams. It is hoped that this, along with focussed meetings and site visits, will help engage the independent aggregate operators to become involved in research that is appropriate to their needs, whilst allowing flexibility to enable knowledge and technology transfer between companies. One of the keys to moving to a more 'sustainable' use of mineral resources is the development of appropriate technologies that allow both environmental and economic benefits to be gained.

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