

Northern Regional College addressing Responsible Sourcing of Materials for local construction industry



Northern Regional College (NRC) has campuses in Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey.

Over the past three years NRC has been addressing the issue of Responsible Sourcing of Materials (RSM) in the Construction Industry. RSM is an important aspect of the low carbon economy as it encompasses all stages of material production and use including; sourcing raw materials, manufacturing, product use, recycling and waste management. Within the current economic environment the challenge was to find what NRC could do to help SMEs in NI construction industry show that they are committed to RSM. The RSM Programme was funded by the Department for Employment & Learning (DEL) under the Employer Support Programme.

The challenge was met with a programme of bespoke workshops for contractors and their supply chains. ‘State of the art’ tools were used to assess the participant SMEs for Responsible Sourcing and then to create action plans that would assist them to meet the growing number of RSM requirements set by corporate clients and Government Procurement bodies. Funding for contractors to take part in the training was provided by CITB-ConstructionSkills NI in the form of Tier 2 Grants which are designed to directly fund training delivered to employers at little or no cost.

A total of 150 NI contractors (14 leading main contractors and their respective supply chains) have completed the training over the past three years and now know how they currently perform with regards to

RSM. Two celebratory events have been held to award participants with certificates and acknowledge their interest and success in this increasingly important aspect of sustainable construction. Participants have included Gilbert Ash, McAleer & Rushe, John McQuillan Contracts, Pattons and Henry Brothers.



Left to right: Michael Tennyson (NRC Lecturer and Architect), Scott Bell (health, safety & environmental manager, MSM contracts), Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI, Jim Thompson Maurice Stevenson Ltd and Declan Heggarty (NRC Lecturer and Quantity Surveyor).

Director of NRC Trevor Neilands highlighted how the programme demonstrated the benefits of achieving a greater understanding of the RSM process:

“The training programme is the tool which enables large construction companies and their smaller SME subcontractors to work together to develop a responsible sourcing policy. The construction industry can demonstrate to their clients how responsible sourcing is at the heart of their business process thereby assisting their client’s drive to corporate social responsibility.”

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive of CITB - ConstructionSkills NI, who helped fund the scheme stressed the value of the training programme to the industry:

“In today’s challenging economic climate the construction industry is taking every step to ensure it can secure new business and sustainability is a key factor. I congratulate all those who have completed this programme and are implementing their action plans and new procedures to achieve sustainability.”

NRC have prepared plans to promote the programme further in conjunction with partners across the UK as well as continuing development of the RSM micro-site for use with prospective clients and consultants. Visit <http://rsm.nrc.ac.uk/>

For further information on this programme contact:

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