



Q & A: VERSION 5 and CEEQUAL

On the panel:



Roger Venables,
CEEQUAL
Chief executive



Ian Nicholson,
CEEQUAL
Technical Manager



Mike de Silva,
Crossrail
Sustainability Manager



Tertius Beneke,
Network Rail
Environment Manager

Eric Hughes: When choosing your designers and contractors, does their experience in the use of CEEQUAL take part in the selection process?

Mike de Silva: It wasn't a specific question in the appraisals for the designers or the contractors but it was a contract requirement. They needed to demonstrate their expertise in CEEQUAL by providing a named Assessor in the company who has acted as lead Assessor on at least two major projects.

Tertius Beneke: In our tender documents we asked for some examples of previous CEEQUAL schemes that they have delivered. We also undertook a CV evaluation. So yes we did ask about previous CEEQUAL experience.

Online attendee Lara Rusby (Quintain): If schemes like CEEQUAL have so many benefits, why doesn't the government make them mandatory?

Roger Venables: The government has not made it mandatory, because especially for the current government, it an unlikely product they would grasp hold of. We have not encouraged any government to make CEEQUAL mandatory. At the moment CEEQUAL is a tool that stretches performance, and is used by leading edge organisations to push their envelope.

We have a great fear that if CEEQUAL is made mandatory it will turn the tool into a chore. If we make CEEQUAL into a chore it will stop stretching and differentiating organisations within the industry. Even as Chief Executive of CEEQUAL, I do not think the government could justify the spending required in CEEQUAL fees to have every part of civil engineering assessed and ratified under CEEQUAL.

At the moment it is a very open process, we encourage our clients to contact us with ways can improve CEEQUAL. Another major reason for leaving CEEQUAL as a voluntary tool is this open process would become extremely complicated.

However, if a major client like Crossrail decide it will be mandatory on their project it makes it mandatory for the designers and contractors involved on the project. I believe this leaves the decision of when it is to be made mandatory with the right people, the clients.

Mike de Silva: It's the way one might chose to use CEEQUAL. For one organisation, having the ratified score of each project and a certificate to prove it has gone through the Assessment procedure is very important. Another organisation might take a view that they are experienced at using CEEQUAL and they know what is required of

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them so they might use it as an internal process to make sure that they are being robust and consistent in the way we evaluate projects. In this way they might be getting the best value out of CEEQUAL.

Tertius Beneke: Definitely helps to have the appetite for it. If it forced on you it runs the risk of lips service. If you have the appetite for it then people do deliver and the tool works for itself. I do not think there would be a cost-benefit to have every single civil engineering project assessed under CEEQUAL.

Roger Venables: CEEQUAL have developed a 'programmes methodology' where major clients with a significant number of projects will use CEEQUAL on all the projects, but only a selected number are ratified. Therefore, CEEQUAL is used as an internal benchmarking tool which allows you to assess the deliverance of different project teams.

However, some organisations may want all projects in their organisation to be ratified. I was in Belfast last month and I was explaining to someone at Belfast City Council and he wanted all his projects assessed and verified under CEEQUAL in order to show that these controversial projects had been dealt with in a sensitive way.

Jim Pearson (Network Rail): I am currently trying to drag the Health & Safety team at Network Rail into the 21st Century in regards to sustainability. If viewing this tool, they may say that it is an environmental tool. Is there some nervousness in calling this a sustainability tool at this time? How far down the road are we in calling it a sustainable award?

Roger Venables: I think calling CEEQUAL a sustainability tool is a fair description. As Ian Nicholson (Technical Manager, CEEQUAL) previously explained we are not assessing the 'trips & falls' aspect of health & safety performance, but rather the general health, welfare and social benefits of the project in its entirety. In Section 1, CEEQUAL is asking the user whether the project is helping people live more sustainably and improving a community's wellbeing.

Introducing in the guidance, at what geographical and time location boundary do you make the judgement on whether your project is bad or not. For example, a social impacts assessment set within the right boundary would not only look at the impact during and after construction on the neighbours, but also the community, workforce and the operational staff.

Using a four track railway as an example, currently when you want to work on one track you close down all four tracks for the safety of those who are working on the railway line. This forces all train passengers to travel by road. CEEQUAL is challenging our users to come to a judgement on whether you increase the risk of your workforce by a margin, and open two tracks for public use. Or to decide that the risk of the passengers, now on the road, are a justified risk, to ensure the safety of your workforce.

The Project Strategy section is asking the organisation to put the greater good risk around the right boundary: around society, not just around the workforce.

Online attendee Charles Wedgewood (University of Leeds): Question for Crossrail – does CEEQUAL reduce the potential for creating an atmosphere of ingenuity and innovation because it is so prescriptive?

Mike de Silva: No I don't think it does stifle innovation. I think CEEQUAL creates a framework to ensure that our projects are being assessed under a rigorous and robust process, but to look at innovation as well. I think how a client brings together the teams has a factor in this. For example, Crossrail brings in our CEEQUAL community in

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the form of collaborative meetings and workshops help stimulate innovation. I would urge other organisations to look at their practice and how it can work in the context of CEEQUAL to get most out of the process.

Tertius Beneke: I do not think it stifles innovation, I believe it is the opposite. CEEQUAL gives me the framework to push the environmental and sustainability agenda. I am not above taking some of the questions and highlighting those that benefit my pet projects and telling my director we need to acquire more points on certain questions. It depends on how you work the system.

The question set is a fixed entity; the innovation you want to build into the projects gets you more points.

Bruno Guillaume (AL Environmental Services): We hear about the 'Excellent', the 'Very Good' projects but not of 'just good enough' or the 'mediocre'. We do learn more from our mistakes than our successes, I wonder if you have a provisional information to enable CEEQUAL users can learn from their mistakes?

Roger Venables: The absence of 'Pass' results on the website are a consequence of CEEQUAL being voluntary. A potential benefit of CEEQUAL being mandatory, would be when a project team is faced with only receiving a 'Pass' for their work it may force them to lift their performance.

In regards to the programme Methodology, it will act as an internal benchmark to the organisation and show internally which project teams need additional help in raising their performance.

Ian Nicholson: If you view our website, there are not many mediocre projects that have submitted a case study. This is because people look at their performance and they do not want to publicise it, and we cannot force them to produce a case study. I have just stepped down from my three year term as Chairman of the Environment Panel at the ICE where we have been trying to encourage project teams to create case study material from 'not-so-good' practice. Unfortunately, people in our culture are very reluctant to share this information. If you have the answer on how to overcome this, please let us know!

It may be that the discussion forum on CEEQUAL Online might help encourage CEEQUAL Assessors to discuss these practices in a less public environment.

(Said later)

*****Paul Tomlinson (URS):** In regards to Bruno's question raised earlier. As a Verifier we do hear a lot from the CEEQUAL Assessors about what works and what doesn't work. Each project assessment is confidential so we cannot speak about them specifically, but I think it is important as a Verifier to relay achievements to a wider audience. For example, one project team punctured paint cans in a sealed container in order to capturing the propellant. They were therefore able to dispose of the cans as inert waste rather than hazardous waste. These messages are relayed to the wider community either through scoping meetings of subsequent projects and into CEEQUAL guidance revisions.

The relationship between CEEQUAL and BREEAM needs to be made more widely understood in regards to their scope and boundary. This is especially applicable to local authority clients as in tender documents they do require both assessments.

Roger Venables: One of the continuing challenges CEEQUAL faces is explaining when CEEQUAL or BREEAM is more applicable for projects, such as a train station. I view them as a civil engineering work with a roof covering it. But for people who are more accustomed to using BREEAM assessments, they see a building rather than the civil engineering works occurring within the building, and therefore that CEEQUAL is more applicable to use. This is not a competitive comment, but rather the applicability of each assessment.

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Online attendee Ged Mitchell (BEAR Scotland): There has been no mention today of CEEQUAL for Term Contract or CEEQUAL for International Projects. Does this manual follow the same Version 5 format?

Roger Venables: The Version 5 Methodology will be available for CEEQUAL for UK & Ireland Projects and CEEQUAL for International Projects. We will be producing a Version 5 equivalent for CEEQUAL for Term Contracts at a later date. We are currently waiting for a large trial to terminate, before we embark on this process. We aspire that Version 5 will be available to Term Contract users by the end of the year.

Mahmood Siddiqi (The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea): From the Panel's point of view how appropriate is the philosophy of CEEQUAL for use on comparing options at an early project stage, such as feasibility stage? Take for example, Boris Island or Heathrow's 3rd runway.

Ian Nicholson: There have been many discussions in CEEQUAL's Technical Advisory Group about benchmarking and how you compare options. In detail, this may come in future Versions of CEEQUAL. With the addition of the Project Strategy section, CEEQUAL has started to address this in regards to questioning the user on what is the right project and solution. With Version 5 we have the starting point of this thought process.

Mike de Silva: I have never viewed CEEQUAL as an optioneering tool in that way. I have not fully reviewed the 'Project Strategy' section, but I think it could be used as an optioneering tool if you are able to omit the other sections.

Tertius Beneke: I would not use a full CEEQUAL Assessment on all the options of Crossrail. If we were able to solely use the 'Project Strategy' section of the tool I would be a lot more comfortable suggesting CEEQUAL as an optioneering tool. But as it stands I would not use the whole CEEQUAL Assessment to assess options.

Roger Venables: We never set out to make CEEQUAL an optioneering tool. We anticipated, and now know, that it influences decisions made by the project team. This is originally triggered by CEEQUAL Assessors who wanting to maximise the scores they deserve. They liaise with the project team about what evidence is required, and when it needs to be recorded in order to acquire the maximum number of points. This is particularly evident in questions that have sliding scales of performance.

We have no seen CEEQUAL used as a comparison tool but a number of Client & Design Interim Awards have been used as evidence for planning permission of projects.

Online user Maxine Ashton (Myerscough College): Has there been any approaches for CEEQUAL Assessments in connection with the proposed HS2 development, particularly in connection with Environmental Impact Assessments?

Roger Venables: Yes, we are awaiting on a meeting to discuss this.

Tim Broyd (Halcrow): Tertius, Mike can you please tell us the ease or difficulty on using two types of Assessment methods (BREEAM & CEEQUAL) on different components of the Crossrail project? In retrospect, do you wish you used one?

Mike de Silva: It has been an interesting debate, as BREEAM had not been used on an underground station
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before. Upon discussion with BRE, a new bespoke criterion was made for Crossrail to assess the underground stations. We are the first organisation to have used the new criteria, which is not perfect. We have used the Methodology in anger, some of how the criterion has been developed we don't necessarily agree with. We have been working with BRE on amending those.

The bigger debate is whether an underground station is actually a building, and therefore is BREEAM the appropriate assessment tool to use. However, using BREEAM to assess the works has worked well. I think we could have used CEEQUAL to assess the work, but if we had I would have liked to see a set of criteria developed around operational energy usage that more mimicked how a building would operate. This is the only section where I do not think CEEQUAL is particularly strong in applying it for a station environment.

Tertius Beneke: On our South East spur we are applying CEEQUAL to the whole spur which includes the Abbey Wood station rebuild. We are also using BREEAM on Abbey Wood Station. Network Rail is also currently debating what a Station is: a building or is it a transport hub? We are going to run both and see how it goes.

Tim Broyd (Halcrow): Is it messy to use two types of schemes on one project or do they dove-tail well?

Tertius Beneke: We see the two assessments as two separate projects. So the scope for CEEQUAL is very different from BRE.

Ian Nicholson: There have been a number of projects where CEEQUAL has been used for the infrastructure element of the project and BREEAM has been used for the buildings. I have not seen any major technical issues from our Assessors or Verifiers about the overlap between the two schemes. It is important to be clear about the boundary around the two aspects. For example, energy in use: CEEQUAL is the energy in the infrastructure (street lighting, sewage pumping station) not the PV cells on the building.

Roger Venables: Crossrail project one of approximately ten projects that is a multipart project. This is where parts of the whole scheme are being assessed separately. These scores are then stitched together to award the whole project a CEEQUAL score. However, we have not found a way of stitching together the scores for two different types of schemes (for eg: combining a CEEQUAL and a BREEAM score).

Online attendee Glen Hedges (Thiess Pty Ltd): Congratulations CEEQUAL for your continued efforts in driving sustainability in construction. I imagine clients, governments and entities that provide funding for projects would take up CEEQUAL more if they appreciated the value proposition of sustainability outcomes being advocated by CEEQUAL (both short term and long term). What is CEEQUAL doing to help these organisations understand the qualified value proposition?

Roger Venables: It is one of the major objectives of CEEQUAL to better explain the value proposition of CEEQUAL to the key influencers. We need to explain that although they have to pay a CEEQUAL fee to undertake a CEEQUAL Assessment our growing experience shows there is significant value becoming an influencing role in civil engineering. Clients are better able to put a PR end of the spectrum. We have a growing number of examples of expressed savings that have been triggered by the use of CEEQUAL.

It continues to surprise us that even in sophisticated organisations with sophisticated environmental management systems, there are some bit in the question set of CEEQUAL that triggers them to improve their system. This shows that CEEQUAL is an improvement tool and influencer which does hold a lot of value.



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It is something that we need to do more of, not only for the uptake of CEEQUAL but to increase the value of existing users to do the right thing.

Barry Wood (CJ Associates): The 'Project Strategy' section has got wide implications. The DfT webTAG evaluates and assesses social benefits at an earlier stage, the 'Project Strategy' section may allow for the project team to benchmark the social benefits against what was originally anticipated in a less demanding way. How do you assess it?

Roger Venables: We are not seeking for CEEQUAL to have a rigorous set of benchmark type answers. CEEQUAL is made of a mix of outcome questions, but deliberately has a significant number of process questions (this is because we have one question set for all projects). The process questions force a project team to think through issues that they have not considered. The 'Project Strategy' section contains process questions, but they have challenging scopes. Our expectation is that by going through those processes we will result in better projects.

I have showed the 'Project Strategy' section to a few individuals, and have already received the comment that some projects will not undergo a CEEQUAL Assessment because the 'Project Strategy' section stretches them too far, others have said it gives people the opportunity to assess whether the wider benefits of the project.

For future examples we may have some outcome questions, but in order to have outcome questions we first need to set the industry norm.

Eddie Mewies (MEC): Will the ability to print a pdf of the CEEQUAL Assessment from CEEQUAL Online, and guest logins be available for projects being assessed under Version 4? Also, some questions are set where the project team can only receive zero or a certain number of points (for example 20 points). Is there a way of grading these questions?

Ian Nicholson: I am pretty sure that user access and the ability to make pdfs will be available for Version 4 users. If not, we will work on making this available as soon as possible.

In regards to grading of questions, there are a number of issues associated with this. Firstly, the question points are associated with the embedded weightings and the relative importance of the question against the rest of the section question-set. Secondly, if it is genuinely a Yes/No answer, by including partial Yes options we are beginning to remove the benchmarking possibilities. This is detrimental to the CEEQUAL Methodology as we start losing the ability to compare like with like.

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