

# Industry Flocks to Water / Wastewater Monitoring Event

Marcus Pattison & Graham Meller

**WWEM 2006 took place in early November and was almost unrecognisable in comparison to the inaugural 2005 event. WWEM was initially created to provide a vehicle for discussing and dispersing information on the Environment Agency's monitoring certification scheme, MCERTS. However, on the evidence of WWEM 2006, it has become a red letter diary entry for anyone involved with testing or monitoring water. With a choice of conferences, twice as many exhibition stands and four times as many visitors, WWEM has become a meeting place for the whole sector.**

**VISITORS TO WWEM 2006 LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM THE CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS ON OFFER AND MANY COMMENTED ON THE USEFULNESS OF THE EXHIBITION.**

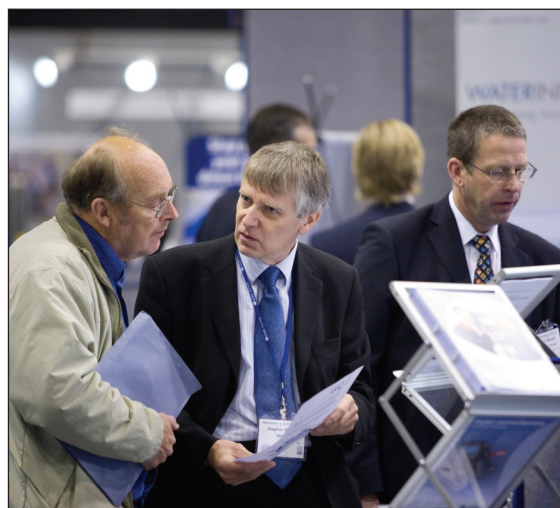
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In addition to an update on MCERTS, one of the key issues to emerge at WWEM was the Environment Agency's plans for modernisation of regulation. This was explained by Policy Manager Andy Rogers, who said "Whilst river and bathing water quality has been improving and the number of pollution incidents has fallen in recent years, there is still a great deal more to do. As a result of the Hampton Report the Agency is looking to simplify regulation and move to a more risk-based approach, so that resources can be applied where the environmental threat is the greatest. This will be facilitated by the 'OPRA' (Operator and Pollution Risk Appraisal) risk screening tool. Outputs from this methodology are already built into the charging scheme for the PPC regulatory regime and it is now being developed for discharge consents to water.

The OPRA scheme has five attributes. Three reflect the environmental hazard of the operation (including its location); the fourth measures Operator performance. Each attribute has been divided into five bands A to E, where A equates to the need for lower regulatory oversight required and E the need for more regulatory oversight required. These bands are then carried forward to generate the OPRA Banded Profile for the discharge consent.



*In depth conversation at WWEM*

The fifth attribute only comes into effect when the consent is issued and measures the compliance of the operator with the consent conditions. This score is combined with the OPRA Banded Profile to increase the overall score for poor performers and decrease it for good performers.

Operators will be able to reduce charges if they can lower their OPRA score. The Environment Agency will use OPRA scores to target compliance assessment effort. In addition it plans to revise the approach to compliance assessment with an increased reliance on process control and self-monitoring. The Environment agency will be consulting on its proposals for OPRA and compliance assessment at the end of November, this year. OPRA will apply to all regulatory regimes by 2008"



*Paul Wiggins during his presentation*

Paul Wiggins from the Environment Agency has been responsible for the implementation of MCERTS in the aquatic sector. His presentation outlined the list of instrument manufacturers that now have MCERTS certificates for their products explaining "MCERTS is implicit within process authorisations so these companies can hope to benefit as a result of their certification."

Since the introduction of MCERTS over 2000 operator flow (site specific) monitoring inspections have taken place, mainly in the water industry, but the scheme is now being rolled out to the rest of industry. This includes the Agency's audit scheme for self monitoring 'OMA' which has revealed considerable numbers of areas for improvement and some organisations have even included the results of the OMA in their performance related pay.

WWEM included a Gala Presentation Dinner at which Catherine Wright, Head of Monitoring for the Environment Agency, thanked the industry for all of its help and cooperation in the development of MCERTS.

Product MCERTS certificates were awarded to HACH LANGE, Partech, Teledyne ISCO, Aquamatic, Pollution and Process Monitoring and GE Sensing.

In addition, three MCERTS certificates were awarded to effluent flow monitoring installation inspectors.



Comedian Jimmy Carr and Catherine Wright

The evening was wrapped up by Jimmy Carr who had the assembled guests in fits of laughter suggesting that nothing has changed in the monitoring of water since "some old bloke, several hundreds of years ago, noticed that water rose in his bath when he got in". The audience doubtless begged to differ, but wisely kept their opinions to themselves.

Visitors to WWEM 2006 learned a great deal from the conferences and workshops on offer and many commented on the usefulness of the exhibition. James Carlyle, General Manager at Ashted Technology Rentals said, "I have never seen such a comprehensive assembly of everyone involved with water monitoring. I was able to view many new technologies first hand and will be making several additions to our instrument rental fleet as a result"

Robin Lennox at South West Water also visited WWEM and commented afterwards, "WWEM has now become established as the most useful



Catherine Wright presenting an award to Aquamatic

exhibition and conference of the year for those involved in measurement and instrumentation in the water industry. With industry practitioners and decision makers well represented real progress can be made in the development of ideas for this area of business."

The date for the next WWEM conference will be 5-6th November at Telford International Conference Centre.

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