

PROJECT PROFILE

Title	Bridge inspection competence and training	
Contractor	DfT (for Bridge Owners Forum)	
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Start date	Apr-10	
End date	Mar-11	
Status	On-going	
Type of project	Collaborative project with BoF - Contractor TBA	
Project reference	BoF	

Description	<p>Bridge managers use a range of activities to ensure that the bridge stock is maintained in a condition that is safe for use and fit for purpose. At the forefront of these activities is formalised bridge inspection regime. The information collected during these inspections is vital and increasingly necessary to support the wider range of activities such as financial planning, asset depreciation/valuation and an ongoing works programme. Bridge managers are required to demonstrate that they are employing suitably experienced and competent personnel. However, there is no common method of assessing competence for bridge inspectors and the standards can vary considerably. Some sectors of the industry (such as rail) have clearly defined competence standards, while others do not. Several studies to determine the consistency of bridge inspections have shown that when a group of similarly experienced bridge inspectors inspect the same group of structures, there is often significant variation in the reports produced. As a result there is often a lack of confidence in inspection results by bridge managers and this makes it very difficult to set budgets and programme work with any degree of confidence.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objectives of this project are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To review the bridge inspection regimes used in the UK and Ireland ; 2. To define and agree an appropriate hierarchy of different levels of inspector; 3. To develop competency standards for each level of inspector; 4. To develop a framework for appraisal of bridge inspectors; 5. To produce a training manual; 6. To set up an accreditation scheme; 7. To determine the most appropriate mechanisms for the electronic dissemination of training material and implement the agreed solution.
Benefits	<p>The project will bring all sectors of the industry up to the same standard of competence and provide, where applicable, common training and qualifications. The various bridge owners on the UK and Ireland have recognised and support the need for a formal qualification and accreditation system for bridge inspectors, not only to address the above issues, but also to help raise the profile of inspectors. The project output will provide a mechanism for consistency and reliability in inspection results and will enhance the level of safety of these critical components of the transport system.</p>
Outputs	<p>The outputs of the project include the definition of appropriate competence levels for bridge inspectors, the type of qualification and accreditation, and a training framework including manuals, electronic system for recording and updating training and qualifications.</p>