Please see Annex AP4 for supporting information, and the “Introduction” for Health and Safety considerations and advice on the use of the guidance.

1. **Are the proposals based upon standard industry or novel practice**
   Proposals based upon standard industry practice may have a better chance of success than those not tried and tested under commercial site-scale operations. However, well thought out novel proposals should be considered with an open mind.

2. **Are the proposals practical and capable of being achieved**
   It is important that applicants demonstrate that proposals based upon novel or experimental methods are achievable as a commercial site-scale operation. Where such proposals are complex the chances of success may be increased with high levels of staff briefing, training and supervision.

3. **Are the proposals likely to be sustainable**
   Where standard industry practice is not proposed this may result in disproportionately expensive operating costs. Have the applicants taken account of this?

4. **Do the proposals offer opportunities for R & D and/or training**
   Novel working methods may be part-funded as R & D and contribute to worthwhile improvements and advances in the operations of the industry.

**COMMENTS**

**For more detailed information see:**
- [Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils](#) (MAFF April 2000)
- The Reclamation of Mineral Workings to Agriculture (DoE 1996)
- Guidance on Good Practice for the Reclamation of Mineral Workings to Agriculture (DoE 1996)

**Cross references:**
- AP 7, 8, 9
- SW 9
- RN 5, 6, 8
1. Are the proposals based upon standard industry or novel practice

Proposals based upon established industry “good practice” may have the greatest chance of success (Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils (MAFF April 2000); The Reclamation of Mineral Workings to Agriculture (DoE 1996)). Industry experience in operating established working practices is likely to reduce the risk of failure, particularly when undertaking operations such as soil stripping and restoration. This equally applies to the choice and operation of machinery. However, it should be borne in mind that advances in industry practice are to some extent dependent upon trying new methods on a site-scale under commercial conditions, although it should be expected that the proposals have been tried and tested successfully under smaller-scale conditions beforehand. The applicants should provide reasoned justification for wishing to depart from standard practices, and their proposals should be considered with an open mind.

2. Are the proposals practical and capable of being achieved

The industry has widespread experience in a number of well-established methods of working and restoring mineral sites, some of which can be identified as “good practice”. Where novel or complex alternatives are put forward, there may be difficulties in finding staff with appropriate experience to undertake the work on the site to an acceptable standard, and an increased need for staff briefing, training and supervision to maximise the chances of success. The costs of the work may also be higher for unusual working methods and it may take longer to carry out. It is important to remember that it is one thing to demonstrate proposals within a planning application, but another to put them into practice successfully on site. Applicants need to demonstrate that they have considered all these factors in arriving at their proposals.

3. Are the proposals likely to be sustainable

Many operations, such as different methods of soil stripping and restoration, are well-established within the industry and well understood in terms of practice and cost. Where these well-established methods are not proposed, there may be significant implications in terms of cost, time, timeliness and practicality. Contractors may be reluctant to tender for operations, such as soil stripping and restoration, where the contract specifies novel proposals. If these proposals are not fully understood, there may be reluctance to adhere to the specification rigidly, leading to lower standards. Contractors who are not familiar with the proposals may add a significant “premium” for carrying out the work. The applicants should demonstrate that they have taken account of these factors when putting forward their proposals.

4. Do the proposals offer opportunities for R & D and/or training

Industry advances in standards of working and restoration are often achieved following R & D, through work done both in-house by mineral companies and through sponsorship
by industry bodies and Government departments. This research is appropriately
designed, monitored, published and reviewed. However, it is generally not appropriate
for commercial mineral extraction proposals to be based upon practices that have not
been independently tried and tested to establish their effectiveness, at least in small-
scale trials. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that advances in industry practice
are to some extent dependent upon trying new methods on a site-scale under
commercial conditions.