

Project VIA – Valuing Intellectual Assets in Renewables Companies in the Highlands and Islands

Company Profile



Background to the Company:

Highland Quality Construction Ltd (HQC) is one of several businesses which together comprise the MacDonald Group of companies. The company was originally set up during the 1990's by the present managing Director, Gary MacDonald, and has since grown rapidly through a combination of organic growth and acquisition.

HQC's activities are at the leading edge of civil engineering and construction services. As well as servicing clients in the North of Scotland, HQC has expanded the scope of its operations across the UK. Its construction activities in the renewables sector have been associated with the Glendoe Hydro-electric power station and the installation of wind turbines. HQC is seeking to build on this success by winning further contracts in the Renewables sector. Following contact from the Intellectual Assets Centre (IA Centre) to explain the project's terms of reference, Rennie Spence the company's Business Development Manager realised that Project VIA would provide an ideal opportunity to learn how it might leverage its Intellectual Assets (IA) to underpin its plans for growth in the sector.

The Engagement:

Initial discussions were held with the IA Centre's consultant, [Maurice Alphandary of Collier IP Management](#). The information from these discussions together with the information provided by the IA Centre's Benchmark Tool and an initial IA Audit, resulted in developing an action plan that would help to secure and to realise the full value of HQC's IA. HQC received further training and support through a series of 1:1 discussions and workshops which addressed many of the principle elements underpinning the company's IA and its importance to its growth strategy.

Outcome:

Unfortunately, a combination of factors largely resulting from the recession meant that the Macdonald Group of companies underwent significant restructuring during the course of its engagement with Project VIA. This meant that there was insufficient time that could be spent addressing the key actions that were identified as a result of the initial IA audit and benchmarking exercise.

However, HQC's engagement with the project did result in the following:

- A new advertisement was developed for placing in the local press which focused on how a particular wind farm had benefited from HQC's intangible assets. The advertisement had significant impact in highlighting the significant breadth of HQC's capabilities in the Renewables sector, resulting in several enquiries for future wind farm projects. These enquiries were from developers who previously were unaware of HQC's capabilities and

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have resulted in opening up opportunities for involvement in 3 new wind farm projects, each of which is at a different stage of negotiation.

- A new process has been developed which is now driven by administrative staff, that has expanded and enhanced the scope of Customer lists to capture more data that are key to the smooth operation of client contact
- Clarified Intellectual Property (IP) ownership issues associated with the company website and its content
- Developed and rolled out an Intranet system to share knowledge across the company
- A new training company plans to be set up outside the Macdonald Group, leveraging its specialist knowledge in Health, Safety, Environment and Quality.

HQC also plans to use the results from the IA Benchmark and Risk Tools to develop and underpin a strategy that will enable the company to secure and develop its IA in a manner that will allow it to build on its success in the renewables sector.

“From my initial engagement which I thought would be informative, boy was I right. I quickly realised how vulnerable our IP and IA was, from the content, the 1:1 interactions and presentations on this programme. We have started corrective action, and have developed systems and hopefully a change of mindset to take us forward in the Renewables Market for 2010 and beyond. My thanks to the IA Centre and Collier IP Management who have helped us through our Course of study”. Rennie Spence, Business Development Manager, HQC