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## Current News.

Just a short update during these unprecedented times!

As you are aware, SEAI issued updated guidance re the COVID-19 emergency on April 3<sup>rd</sup> last advising that “SEAI believes that, in general, Building Energy Ratings are not essential”. In light of the Government update issued on May 1<sup>st</sup> last, it appears clear that Reopening Phase 1 (May 18<sup>th</sup>) will allow phased return of outdoor construction workers, while Reopening Phase 2 (June 8<sup>th</sup>) will allow “Limited return of onsite working subject to compliance capability”. It would appear reasonable to conclude that Assessors may proceed with surveys from that date, where social distancing & other de-risking measures are being observed. Of course, the stated dates are subject to change, depending on possible updated COVID-19 guidance.

As with all other sectors of the economy, the short-term outlook for Assessors is not particularly promising. We do not know what the prognosis is for the construction & property industries for the foreseeable future. However, we have to be hopeful that, as efforts take place to restart economies, Government & EU will invest heavily in green & sustainability initiatives. So, the medium- to long-term future may be more promising.

In fact, RENOVATE EUROPE is currently campaigning for a post COVID-19 Renovation Fund. Please check out <https://www.renovate-europe.eu/about-the-campaign/renovation-fund-for-all-europeans/> and considering offering your support.

However, the mantra that you should never waste a crisis is not lost on BERAA & Assessors. BERAA has been lobbying strongly with SEAI over recent weeks to mobilize long-overdue action on QADP, Exams etc. We are happy to report that, following a recent exchange of letters with the Interim-CEO of SEAI, a tender process was initiated to engage a consultant to review all QA matters in respect of the BER Program. We are advised that a number of detailed tenders have been received by SEAI & that these are being reviewed at the present time, with a view to early commencement of the process.

We are of the definite opinion that there is now acceptance within SEAI that a more holistic approach to QA needs to be adopted going forward, rather than a disproportionate focus on DP - it is encouraging that the voices of BERAA & Assessors generally are being finally listened to in this regard. We trust & earnestly hope that this review process will see the

beginnings of a new, mutually-respectful, non-adversarial relationship between SEAI & Assessors. This would be a most positive development, particularly in light of the enhanced role envisaged for BER Assessors within the Climate Action Plan. **Ní neart go cur le chéile.**

We are also advised that submissions will be invited from the Assessor community – BERAA is currently in the process of preparing a draft submission. We will be consulting with our Members shortly on this matter.

On another matter, you may have noticed a media article in recent days (Sunday Business Post May 3<sup>rd</sup>) highlighting concerns raised in a recent report by the European Court of Auditors in respect of the Warmer Homes Scheme. In essence, it is being submitted that “the energy rating of most of the supported households did not improve after the project, confirming that investments did not yield much in terms of energy ratings”. A spokesman for the DCCAE confirmed that “The audit findings will be considered in the context of the development of future energy efficiency schemes”.

In light of this article, UCC researchers drew attention to an academic paper that they published at the end of 2019 on the matter of better informing energy retrofit decisions. They question the validity of the current unfettered manner in which homeowners can choose retrofit measures, from a menu of grant measures, without recourse to validation of technical feasibility or financial cost-effectiveness of same. As things currently stand, projected energy savings are only calculated & disclosed after the event (post-works DOW). They further submit that there is a strong argument for basing the grant value on the projected energy savings, thus prioritizing less energy efficient homes.

**The upshot of both of the above reports is that pre-works BERs & technical assessments should be carried out in order to establish the optimum retrofit measures, in advance of grant approvals. BERAA will be making this case strongly to SEAI.**

## Contact Us

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## Webinars

BERAA has facilitated a number of extremely well-received webinars for its members over recent weeks:

Mike Teahan April 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>: *Heat Loss Calculations & Emitter Design* (total Attendees 160 approx)

Walter Stephen, Panasonic April 17<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>: *Air-to-Water heat Pump Technology* (total Attendees 145 approx)

Raymond Madden Xtratherm May 1<sup>st</sup>: *Thermal Bridging & Y-Value Calculations* (total Attendees 145 approx)

We are extremely thankful to the above presenters & their organizations for giving freely of their time to assist Assessors & BERAA.

If you wish to get access to papers or videos regarding the above webinars, please check out our webpage  
<https://berassessors.com/media/>

We are also happy to confirm that BERAA will be facilitating a webinar on tomorrow (May 8<sup>th</sup>) on *Mechanical Ventilation Systems to meet Part F*, presented by Tristan Healy of Soler and Palau.

We can also confirm that BERAA will be facilitating a webinar presented by Grant Engineering over the next week or so.

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## Discussion Forum

BERAA has recently set up a Members-Only Group on Facebook. The intention of this group is to facilitate discussion around technical issues and/or general issues facing Assessors. The group will be moderated by the BERAA Administrator – the purpose of the group is for work-related discussion only.

Please request to join the group today:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/257616965268983/>

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## New Members.

**Please support the work of BERAA by joining today:**

<https://berassessors.com/apply-for-membership/>

Kevin Curtin, Chair

7/5/2020



**BER Assessors  
Association of Ireland**