

Nuclear Energy and Civil Society

Radioactive waste management

FSC workshop in Spain

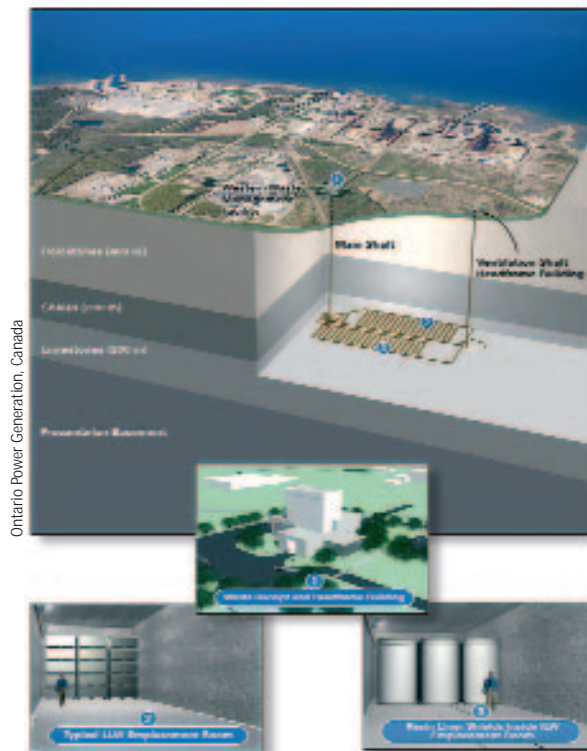
The integration of waste management programmes into wider socio-political considerations is a major challenge for all waste management programmes. Through its Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC), the RWMC provides member countries with the opportunity to exchange information in this area as well as to exchange views with relevant stakeholders. The FSC continues to organise workshops in a national context to provide a basis for helping the national stakeholder dialogue programmes and to gain insight into both country-specific and general aspects and influences of the political, cultural and socio-economic framework. The workshops also provide participants neutral ground for examining controversial issues. FSC workshops in national context have been conducted in Finland (2001), Canada (2002), Belgium (2003) and Germany (2004).

The fifth FSC workshop in national context was held in Hospitalet, Spain. Three Spanish organisations – the association of Spanish nuclear-affected municipalities (AMAC), the Spanish waste management agency ENRESA and the national safety authority CSN – had worked together on a project called “Cowam Spain” to develop a methodology for arriving at facility-siting proposals broadly accepted by society. Workshop participants discussed this new methodology with those of the Cowam Spain project and with Spanish stakeholders in order to offer the results of their reflection to national politicians and administration. These discussions were particularly helpful to the Spanish participants as they provided valuable feedback from the international community and from different points of view. The Cowam-Spain methodology will be applied to the currently proposed national interim storage facility for spent fuel in Spain. The next FSC workshop in national context is planned to take place in Hungary in November 2006.

FSC “value added” project

In radioactive waste management (RWM), the greatest challenge may be to create a local, operating facility that can survive over the generations – in both a technical sense and a societal sense. Alongside scientific knowledge and technical competency, and resources for implementing an agreed approach, there must be a continued willingness to live with and maintain the facility. As part of this, a sustainable relationship between the host community and the installation should be established.

It is in this context that the FSC has undertaken a study of the added value of waste storage or repository projects. The concept is distinct from that of compensation. Socio-economic development packages are recognised to be important, as is the management of social and economic impacts, and work is under way in these areas. However, there has been little inter-



Ontario Power Generation's proposed deep geologic repository for low- and intermediate-level waste at the Bruce nuclear site, Tiverton, Ontario, Canada.

national exploration of what the FSC calls added cultural value and amenity. Added cultural value to RWM facilities and sites may be described as falling into three broad categories:

- design and architectural aspects, amenities, and markers for coming generations (“hardware” aspects);
- “related projects” such as science centres, time-travel museums, and associated research facilities (also “hardware” but extending beyond the facility and the site themselves);
- community identity, image, and profile, as well as messages for coming generations (“soft” aspects that may be developed and enhanced).

All three categories can be legitimate areas for work and investment by communities and implementers. The FSC has therefore proposed, as a service to communities and to national RWM programmes, to facilitate this discussion. As a first step, a desk study and interviews were undertaken in 2005.

FSC project on organisational changes

Institutions with responsibilities for radioactive waste management must be able to accommodate organisational changes in order to carry out the long-term projects for which they are responsible. Institutions capable of achieving and maintaining stakeholder confidence will need focused efforts in the three main areas of organisational aspects, mission and behaviour.

For the purpose of better understanding recent cultural and structural changes taking place within RWM organisations, the FSC launched a process including a questionnaire survey, the preparation of a desk study, a workshop (and/or topical session) and the publication of the main lessons learnt.

The questionnaire survey was carried out with FSC delegates, aimed at eliciting views of FSC members about recent changes taking place in their organisations. Responses were received from most FSC organisations (17 organisations in 11 countries). Key problem areas identified for further investigation include looking at: how the survey results relate to findings in other areas of organisational research, and to what extent do various factors – such as cultural context, political and social environment, legal and policy changes, and local aspects – influence organisational change in general, and RWM organisations in particular.

Beyond the desk study summarising the questionnaire results, it was suggested that these questions should be addressed in a specific workshop or topical session. Organisational scientists specialised in research on these topics will be invited to share their knowledge with FSC delegates.

Stakeholder involvement in radiological protection

The recognition of the need for, and usefulness of, stakeholder involvement in decision making has enlarged the focus of radiological protection in recent years. The CRPPH has for many years focused a significant part of its programme of work on stakeholder involvement, primarily through the series of workshops held in 1998, 2001 and 2003 in Villigen, Switzerland. A key result of these workshops suggests that when stakeholders are involved in radiological risk assessment and management, and science is brought to the service of “inclusive” decision-making processes, the resulting decisions can be of higher quality and greater sustainability than had stakeholders and radiological protection scientists and professionals not worked together towards a solution.

The rehabilitation of contaminated lands and facilities often involves significant stakeholder concerns. Work to rebuild the lives of those living in the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident is a prime example of this, and with 2006 marking 20 years since the accident, the CRPPH has revisited this case. While clearly not all of this experience is applicable to other circumstances in other countries, much can be gained by studying its stakeholder involvement aspects. Particular areas of interest include the interaction of stakeholders with radiological protection specialists, and the development of practical radiological protection approaches (a radiological protection culture) for all those living in a contaminated environment. A broad overview of the situation in the Chernobyl-contaminated areas

has yielded detailed understanding of the magnitude and varieties of problems and issues that would arise in any large-scale contamination situation. This work, performed during 2005, will be documented in an NEA report to be published in mid-2006.

In addition, in order to share the knowledge developed by the Committee, and to remain up-to-date with ongoing work in this area, the CRPPH participated in the 2005 annual meeting of the Japanese Health Physics Society (JHPS), which included a specific topical session on stakeholder involvement. Following this meeting, the JHPS and the NEA jointly organised a symposium at Tokyo University in July on Stakeholder Involvement in Radiation Protection. All presentations made at the symposium were documented in the proceedings.

Finally, following the International Radiological Protection Association session on stakeholder involvement in May 2004, the Spanish Society for Radiological Protection (SERP) consulted the French and the UK Societies to explore opportunities for organising a follow-up international workshop aiming at promoting stakeholder engagement among radiation protection professionals. The three Societies agreed to hold three workshops on this important issue in 2005 (in Spain), 2006 (in France) and 2007 (in the United Kingdom). The first of these meetings, Processes and Tools for Stakeholder Engagement in Radiological Protection, took place in Salamanca, Spain, in November 2005, and included active participation on behalf of the CRPPH and the NEA Secretariat.

Nuclear regulators and the public

Information officers from regulatory bodies meet once a year under the auspices of the Working Group on Public Communication (WGPC) to exchange information and experience related to communication with the public and to carry out related studies. The two main topics discussed in 2005 were the challenges associated with public communication during abnormal situations and the publicity given to regulatory decisions. For further information regarding the activities of the WGPC, see page 17.

Society and nuclear energy policy

The second phase of the NDC project on society and nuclear energy was completed with the publication on the NEA website of a report compiling and analysing 13 case studies from 7 member countries. The case studies describe experiences in communication with stakeholders on nuclear energy projects and issues, and provide policy makers with insights into the challenges involved and examples of best practice. The report complements the 2002 publication entitled *Society and nuclear energy: Towards a better understanding*.