

# Nuclear Energy and Civil Society

## RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

### Waste agencies and the repository host communities

The Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) published two major reports in 2007 (both available in English and in French at [www.nea.fr](http://www.nea.fr)). The first was *Fostering a*



*Durable Relationship Between a Waste Management Facility and Its Host Community*. Any long-term radioactive waste management project is likely to be operated and monitored for decades to centuries. It requires a physical site and will impact in many ways the surrounding community over that whole period. The societal durability of an agreed solution is essential to success. The report

shows that a durable relationship between the facility and its host community can be achieved by improving prospects for quality of life across generations. This may be as straightforward and relatively inexpensive as providing a special coat of paint (as at the Vandellós site in Spain), or as complex and rich as engaging community processes to design an integrated radioactive waste management project (as in the "local partnership" approach created in Belgium). A number of basic design elements that would favour building a durable relationship between the facility



ENRESA, Spain

The "special coat of paint" at the Vandellós site in Spain.

and its host community are identified in the report based on the analysis of numerous stakeholders' input and FSC experience. These design elements include functional, cultural and physical features.

The second report concerned *Cultural and Structural Changes in Radioactive Waste Management Organisations: Lessons Learnt*. In recent years the socio-political environment of radioactive waste management has been changing in a significant way. Stakeholder dialogue has become a lead principle. The FSC surveyed members to learn how radioactive waste management organisations have adapted to this societal transition. How do they balance the requirement of openness and the increasing concerns over the security of facilities? Are there organisations that have successfully changed from a technical to a customer-focused culture? What resistance was met? Which tools and instruments helped organisations evolve? The report documents the changes observed by managers and sets them in an organisational sciences framework. All those who are intent on learning about the changes that have taken place in the field of radioactive waste management, or whose own organisations in any sector must adapt to societal demand, will be interested by the experience and insights reported here.

### Stakeholders and decommissioning

The expectation that significant numbers of nuclear power plants will reach the end of their operating lives in the coming decade or so, or will be shut down for economic or other reasons, is resulting in increasing emphasis being given in member countries to the involvement of stakeholders in the associated decision procedures. The NEA Working Party on Decommissioning and Dismantling (WPDD) in cooperation with the Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) completed a study on this issue in 2007, resulting in the publication of a report entitled *Stakeholder Involvement in Decommissioning Nuclear Facilities: International Lessons Learnt*.



The study concluded that, although those likely to be most affected by a decision to shut down a nuclear facility are those living nearby, such decisions will sometimes have wider consequences, perhaps even at a national level (for example in the event that alternative sources of electricity need to be found to replace that from the shut-down plant). In these situations, there is also a need to consider the views of stakeholders, which represent local and national interests. As the decision process moves

from issues concerned with the shutdown of the plant to strategies for its dismantling, the importance of purely local interests becomes greater. For this reason, it is necessary to develop dialogue and co-operation among regulators, implementers and local stakeholders as early as practicable. The host municipalities for nuclear facilities tend to focus their attention on the day-to-day issues arising from the activities at the plant and, as regards decommissioning, will generally favour the early reuse of the site for economic or cultural purposes.

## 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. In keeping abreast of experience in this evolving field, the NEA Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health (CRPPH) has worked to remain involved in key discussions. On the specific item of promoting stakeholder engagement among radiological protection professionals, the CRPPH and the NEA Secretariat actively participated in three meetings organised by the national radiological protection societies of Spain (2005), France (2006) and the United Kingdom (2007) to develop a "Code of Conduct" for stakeholder involvement and a "Declaration of Commitment" from radiological protection experts entering into stakeholder discussions, describing the processes and rules to which they are willing to commit. The group preparing the Code of Conduct aims to produce a draft in time for circulation and discussion at the May 2008 meeting of the CRPPH. This involvement will complement other work by the Committee focusing on consolidation of a more open and interactive approach by radiological protection institutes with respect to stakeholders, particularly beyond the stakeholders traditionally involved in radiological protection.



A. Gonin, CEA, France

Radiological protection at Saclay, France.

The CRPPH Working Party on Nuclear Emergency Matters is now planning a workshop on stakeholder involvement aspects in consequence management, modelled on the successful Villigen series which addressed stakeholder participation in radiological decision making. As noted earlier, the CRPPH is also carrying out a scoping study to look into how various national radiological protection organisations are managing to incorporate stakeholder involvement the most effectively in their processes, and what, if any, structural implications this may have.

## NUCLEAR REGULATORS AND THE PUBLIC

Information officers from regulatory bodies meet once a year under the auspices of the Working Group on Public Communication of Nuclear Regulatory Organisations (WGPC) to exchange information and experience related to communication with the public and to carry out related studies. The main activity in 2007 was the organisation of a workshop on the transparency of regulatory activities which was held in Japan in May. This workshop attracted



JNES, Japan

Workshop on the transparency of regulatory activities, Tokyo and Tokai-Mura, Japan.

communicators and technical staff of the nuclear regulatory organisations together with a number of top regulators. The workshop addressed the understanding of transparency; stakeholders' expectations regarding transparency; the conditions for ensuring the transparency of regulatory activities; changes in regulatory practices for ensuring transparency; and methods for evaluating transparency. The proceedings of the workshop have been published.