

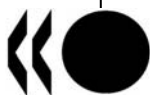
NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY
RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEEINITIATIVE ON LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF INFORMATION AND MEMORY
UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE RWMC

Vision document and questionnaire

At the 2009 meeting, RWMC members were very positive on starting an initiative on long-term preservation of information and memory. The topic is wide and should be addressed in well-defined packages. A topical session is being organised under Item 22 of the RWMC-43 agenda. This document supports the topical session. It is a vision document on how a dedicated project could be set up and started around the topic of an “action plan for long-term information and memory preservation in the field of geological disposal”. It also reproduces the questionnaire sent to all members of the RWMC on this topic. The RWMC members are invited to respond to the questionnaire to comment on the proposed next steps. The Bureau is also asking colleagues for a declaration of interest in participating in a steering group to guide this project.

claudio.pescatore@oecd.org

JT03278055



MOTIVATION AND BENEFITS

Preservation of information and memory across generations is a cross-cutting theme of increasing importance for radioactive waste management. It is a topic that deserves its own dedicated framework initiatives and opportunities for RWMC members to benefit from shared viewpoints and experiences. Because of the experience accumulated by the advanced national programmes that the RWMC represents, and the breadth of its related high-level initiatives, the Committee is uniquely placed internationally to combine resources and help develop state-of-the-art guidance on the long-term preservation of information and memory. In the context of fostering knowledge consolidation and transfer (KCT), the RWMC has already indentified – in its reference document¹ on KCT – the area of *inter-generational* transfer of knowledge as one of two areas needing development.

National programmes would benefit from *a shared, broad-based and documented understanding*, at the international level, of the range of methods and concepts for the long-term preservation of information and memory. Such understanding – technical, institutional, societal and culture-specific – could be used as a reference for those national programmes that are involved in siting and licensing repositories, or that are involved in other long-term projects (whether or not those imply strong interactions with local communities, for whom KCT is a particular concern). Such understanding would foster the development of more robust strategies and regulations for national radioactive waste management programmes whatever their stage of implementation.

The interdisciplinary forum provided by RWMC offers an appropriate venue for exploring and helping to develop guidance on regulatory, policy and technical aspects of long-term preservation of information and memory that are germane to implementation of waste management programmes. Advantage could further be taken of the lessons to be learned, positive or otherwise, from past experience, e.g., in LLW disposal and decommissioning of obsolete nuclear facilities, from nuclear remediation projects (e.g., uranium milling facilities), and from other international work, where it exists, e.g., IAEA TEC-DOC² 1222 of 2001 or the IAEA upcoming report on knowledge management for radioactive waste management³, or the EC (DG-TREN) current study on data collection and maintenance over the first 100 years or so post-closure.

STARTING THE NEW INITIATIVE: MODUS OPERANDI

The new initiative is installed as a series of projects or lines of actions opened by the RWMC and supervised by its Bureau. Each project would be set up to require meeting not more than once a year; emphasis would be on inter-sessional work. In this approach, a Steering Group is formed under the aegis of the RWMC Bureau and identifies a programme of work (PoW); the NEA acts as the organiser of the project on behalf of the Steering Group and the RWMC; a consultant to the NEA is hired. The programme of work would be agreed by the other members of the project, e.g. through e-mail exchange and the consultant and the Secretariat would provide intermittent progress reports. Specific information and directions would be provided at key points and mostly by e-mail and teleconference, with final check and update at the annual meetings.

¹ [NEA/RWM(2009)7]

² *Waste inventory record keeping systems (WIRKS) for the management of radioactive waste*. On the web at: http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/te_1222_prn.pdf.

³ “*Knowledge management for radioactive waste management organisations*”, IAEA, Nuclear Energy Document Series Publication, in press.

SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

It is suggested that, as a first project in the initiative, a survey be carried out of the literature and of the RWMC experience reviewing which are the envisaged elements of an action plan for long-term information and memory preservation in the field of geological disposal and how best to produce and implement a national action plan that has high chances of being correctly carried out. The intent is not to establish a single common approach, but rather to document and reflect upon the range of methods, concepts, and approaches for the long-term preservation of information and memory and the implications of their actual implementation. The first project in the initiative could thus be titled:

International survey and lessons to be learned concerning the elements of an action plan for long-term information and memory preservation in the field of geological disposal.

Aims

- (1) To produce a study report, against the outline developed by a Steering Group and then confirmed by the whole project.**

For example, the report may address the following types of topics:

- Scope of the action plan
- What info should be collected ? for whom?
- Which responsibilities for which actors?
- How should it be preserved? With which information-and-memory reducing scenarios in mind?
- Which countermeasures to foresee to limit loss of information and memory?
- What activities have been undertaken to date? (Where are countries on this?)
- Compilation of national and international bibliographic references

- (2) To organise an international conference in about 2013 that would build upon the survey and the lessons learned in the project.**

Possible Schedule:

- **April-June 2010:** Expression of interest in participating in the project and in being part of the Steering Group.
- **June 2010:** Viability decision by Bureau
- **August 2010:** 1st meeting of Steering Group to discuss PoW and to draft a questionnaire for participating organisations. The questionnaire would build upon the questions already sent to the whole RWMC for the March 2010 meeting (see Appendix).
- **September 2010:** questionnaire sent
- **November 2010:** receipt of answers
- **December 2010:** status review by Bureau
- **January 2011:** 1st analysis of questionnaire; discussions within the project membership
- **March 2011:** Report to RWMC
- **June 2011:** 1st plenary meeting of project members; Topical session on topic to be identified
- **June 2011:** Review by Bureau
- **July-December 2011:** Continued work and review by Bureau

- **March 2012:** Report to RWMC; discussion of possible conference in December 2012 or Spring 2013
- **April 2012 -...:** Completing the report; preparing the conference
- **June 2013: End of the project**

FUNDING

It will be necessary to provide funding for the project to pay for a consultant throughout the project and for the publication of the report. It may be envisaged that, as in the case of the R&R project, a budget of €28,000 - €33,000 per year would be needed, to be borne by a majority of project participants. In-kind contributions, such as providing consultant services or direct support to the project, may also be envisioned. The funding aspect will re-evaluated after receiving the expressions of interest.

Appendix

Questionnaire sent to the RWMC for the March 2010 plenary meeting (item 22).

- *What specific priority areas for long-term memory development have been identified in your agencies/countries? Which are the time scales of largest interest?*
- *Do these priority proceed from good practice or/and from specific laws, regulations, policies exist in your country that set out requirements for long-term memory in long-term waste management?*
- *How far advanced are you regarding establishing an action plan for long-term information and memory preservation in the field of geological disposal? Are you addressing the following RWMC questions:*
 - - *What information should be preserved?*
 - *Why?*
 - *Where?*
 - *How should it be preserved?*
 - *Which target groups?*
 - *Which time horizons?*
- *What suggestions do you have for possible areas of focus for RWMC? (eg an international project that may assist Members?) What are the untapped areas that deserve more attention?*
- *Would you have studies, research, reports, policies that you might share with RWMC members?*