

**Unclassified**

**NEA/RWM/FSC(2001)2/REV2**



Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**06-May-2002**

**English - Or. English**

**NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY  
RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC)**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OF THE RWMC FORUM ON STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE**

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**JT00125703**

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## **Strategic Directions of the RWMC Forum on Stakeholder Confidence**

### **Radioactive Waste Management and Civil Society**

Any significant decisions regarding the long-term management of radioactive waste will be accompanied by a comprehensive public review with involvement by a diverse range of stakeholders. These stakeholders will include not just the waste generators, waste-management agencies, and regulatory authorities, all of whom have a primarily technical focus, but also interested or concerned parties with a non-technical focus such as local communities, elected officials, non-governmental organisations, and the general public. Because any waste-management project is much more likely to move forward when it has the consent and approval of these non-technical stakeholders, the participation of these stakeholders in the decision-making process is of critical importance.

Understanding the factors that influence public perception and confidence in the area of radioactive waste is of strategic interest<sup>1</sup> to the Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMC) of the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA). The NEA strategic plan<sup>2</sup> provides a supporting framework for initiatives in this area. At a broader level, trends towards participatory democracy are more and more evident in OECD countries and the strengthening of public participation, transparency, accountability, and, ultimately, policy effectiveness in Member countries constitute major areas of the work of the OECD.

### **The RWMC Forum on Stakeholder Confidence**

The RWMC has taken up the challenge to understand better the principles of stakeholder interaction and public participation in the field of radioactive waste management. This improved understanding will help the NEA Member countries develop and propose waste-management solutions in a manner conducive to improving the decision-making process to the benefit of all. The Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) is to act, on behalf of the RWMC, as the centre for informed exchanges of opinion and experiences across institutional and non-institutional boundaries, and distil the lessons that can be learnt. The FSC will seek to reach this goal by promoting open discussion across the entire spectrum of stakeholders in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. The FSC mandate covers a period of three years<sup>3</sup>, at which time its efficacy will be assessed.

The FSC is composed of nominees from NEA Member countries with responsibility, overview, and/or experience in the field of stakeholder interaction and confidence. The FSC members may or may not belong to a governmental institution. A majority, however, comes from organisations represented in the RWMC and, as such, they represent, in the main, the views and experience of national safety authorities, implementing agencies, R&D organisations, and policy-making institutions. In order to carry out the

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1. Strategic Areas in Radioactive Waste Management: The Viewpoint and Work Orientations of the NEA Radioactive Waste Management Committee, NEA 1999.
  2. Strategic Plan of the Nuclear Energy Agency, NEA, 1999.
  3. The mandate of the FSC is described in the RWMC document: NEA/RWM/FSC(2000)1

mandate to the advantage of all, additional interaction with civil society is necessary. Workshops in national contexts are identified hereafter as the preferred means for interaction with a broad range of stakeholders. In particular, these workshops will provide an opportunity to view the inner workings of waste-management programs, the methods they have employed for stakeholder interactions, the successes and failures they have had, and hear directly from involved stakeholders their own views about the methods by which they were involved in the decision-making. The aim is for all participants at the workshops to have a possibility to learn how to change their own approach and mindset in order to interact with other stakeholders in a way that enhances understanding and builds mutual trust.

### **Expectations and priorities of the FSC**

Time will be needed for the FSC to identify the best avenues of work and its most important products. Although this document should thus be seen as a “living” document evolving with time, general expectations and priorities can be formulated as follows:

Over its three-year mandate, the FSC is expected to create:

- an atmosphere of trust where information can be exchanged and experiences can be discussed; as well as
- a working environment conducive to tangible results and culminating, at a later stage, with the drafting of a widely agreed upon document on the principles, implications, and practice of technical and non-technical stakeholder involvement in waste-management projects.

The two main priorities of the FSC for the coming years will be:

- To identify specific issues of interest on which stakeholders can learn from one another. Success will be measured by the breadth and depth of participation and by the provision of timely, factual proceedings of the exchanges and dialogues that will be organised by the FSC. This factual information should be valuable to a wide spectrum of stakeholders and decision-makers.
- To distill in a concise form the lessons learnt and provide a fund of information accessible to policy makers and other interested parties in the NEA Member countries. Specific tools that contribute to effective interactions should also be considered and developed.

### **Modus operandi**

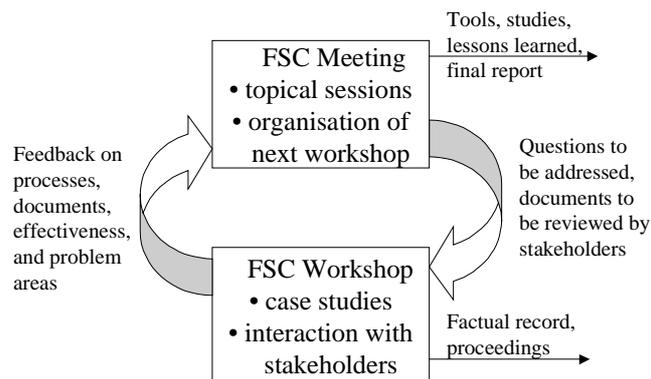
An appropriate method to achieve the strategic goals identified above is to alternate regular meetings of the FSC with workshops held in national contexts at which the additional representation of civil society will be featured prominently. These workshops will serve as a neutral ground for discussion, dialogue, and advancement of knowledge. At the same time, they will provide local stakeholders the opportunity to interact with participants from other countries.

A precedent for these workshops was seeded on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> FSC workshop that took place in August 2000 with participation of 75 attendees from 14 countries and three international organisations<sup>4</sup>. In addition to the regular FSC members, representatives of universities, national academies, and technical oversight bodies participated in the workshop. A mayor from Sweden and a parliamentarian from France were also present. The participants had widely varied backgrounds, spanning both the technical and social sciences.

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4. Stakeholder Confidence and Radioactive Waste Disposal, Workshop Proceedings, NEA 2000.

The regular FSC meetings will take place mostly in the Paris area, where the OECD and the NEA Headquarters are located. These are meant for information exchange and for focused discussion of specific topics. The relationship between FSC meetings and workshops is represented graphically in Figure 1 and is described hereafter.



**Figure 1** Relationship between FSC regular meetings and workshops

At FSC meetings

1. Information is exchanged on stakeholder involvement and interactions in NEA Member countries.
2. Strategic discussions and topical sessions are organised. These are conducted with experts and with specific groups of stakeholders or stakeholders’ representatives.
3. Mandate may be given to subgroups to carry out specific actions/studies for later submission and approval by the FSC.
4. The strategic programme of the next workshop is broadly defined.
5. Reports from workshops and subgroups are discussed.

Appendix 1 collates the input received so far regarding themes and subjects based on which specific products, initiatives, or assessments may be started or topical sessions may be organised.

At FSC workshops:

1. Opportunity is created for the FSC to view the inner workings of waste-management programs, the methods they have employed for stakeholder interactions, the successes and failures they have had,

and hear directly from involved stakeholders their own views about the methods by which they were involved in the decision-making.

2. Opportunity is created for the local stakeholders to interact with participants from other countries.
3. Specific topics are dealt with in depth, taking advantage of the participation of a wide range of expertise and representation beyond the traditional technical specialists.
4. Specific assessments and documentation being prepared by the FSC may be discussed with interested stakeholders before release. These include: documents reflecting the lessons learnt from feedback and experience; tools (techniques, processes, procedures, etc.) that can help support dialogue; methods to help organisations better fulfil their role; etc.

### **Synergies with other institutions, groups, and initiatives**

The Forum on Stakeholder Confidence of the RWMC is one international initiative amongst many dealing with the issue of governance in general and with the issue of approaching decision-making in an open and democratic manner in areas where parties hold radically different views as to how to proceed. Thus, a natural synergy should exist with the other institutions and groups involved in similar initiatives, which include the OECD offices of Public Management and Governance (PUMA) and Public Affairs, and the European Commission (EC). The latter is a statutory member of the NEA and, therefore, of the FSC, and it is understood that strong links to the EC initiatives TRUSTNET, COWAM, RISCO, etc. will exist in order to avoid significant overlap and also to profit from lessons learnt. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is also represented within the FSC.

The FSC also has natural ties to other committees within the NEA. The Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA) and the Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health (CRPPH) have recently taken initiatives in the areas of public trust and public input in decision-making. The Nuclear Development Committee (NDC) is considering taking initiative. The FSC will provide a ground for the experiences of these committees to be discussed as well. A link has already been identified to the Integration Group for the Safety Case (IGSC).

Co-operation will be generally sought in areas such as sharing and reciprocal review of reports and other work products. Briefings and speakers from these and other institutions, groups, and initiatives will be requested for FSC meetings.

## **Appendix 1**

Suggestions for discussion/development within the FSC work programme have been received from the RWM questionnaire, the August 2000 workshop, and from individual contributions. The list of suggestions has been reduced and regrouped hereafter under three main axes. This list is expected to change with time as the work of the FSC progresses.

### **I Process/structure**

- What is the role of the Environmental Impact Assessment as an “umbrella” for the decision-making process?
- Can stakeholder interaction be analysed to determine stages at which trust is particularly important? Could a set of good practices be developed?
- How can a waste-management programme be integrated in a regional development plan?
- What is the role and input of science/technology in the decision making for long-term waste management?
- What institution can ensure the safe management of radioactive wastes on the scales of 100 to 300 years?
- Waste management is but one problem in society where decision-making is complex and where there exist radically different views between parties as how to proceed. The decision-making needs to adapt to this reality. Can lessons be learnt from other areas involving similar issues of governance and management?

### **II Organisational issues/Trust**

- What is “good” organisational behaviour and culture for trust building? Can the FSC propose a list of desirable organisational features?
- What are the characteristics of a “good” institutional framework? And, in particular, what are the roles and organisational characteristics of the various players, including the constraints imposed by the organisational characteristics and/or mandates?
- What is entailed by “stretching” organisations and how is this accomplished?
- How can information obtained from dialogues with stakeholders be integrated into organisational outlook and operations?
- Can the available information on trust be assembled and consolidated into a useful form for the group, e.g. what is trust, how is it achieved and maintained, the role of dialogue/communication for trust building?
- Is it necessary and useful to discuss separately such concepts as “acceptance”, “values” and “trust”?

### **III Stakeholder involvement**

- Who are stakeholders and what is their role in decision making and in implementing decisions?
- Identify and discuss appropriate mechanisms of dialogue with the different stakeholders. In particular, are there ways of consulting and involving a broader segment of stakeholders early in the programme when policy is being defined?
- How can people be convinced to co-operate in a long-term solution to the waste-management issue, independently of their view on the future of nuclear energy?

- Is there more potential for building a higher degree of public confidence when alternatives and/or options to final disposal are kept available? How are issues such as waste retrievability / reversibility to be addressed?
- Can guidelines be developed for improving dialogue on key issues?
- Are there methods to evaluate public interaction programmes objectively?
- What information on waste management do local decision-makers need?
- Can a “Tool Kit” of materials be developed in support of dialogue on radioactive waste management? E.g., by addressing issues of public concern and interest (communicating the results of safety analyses, the issue of time scales, etc.).