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NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY
RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RWMC Regulators' Forum (RWMC-RF)

2015 WORKSHOP: "CHALLENGES TO THE REGULATOR IN CONSTRUCTION, LICENSING AND OPERATION OF WASTE REPOSITORIES" - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

This document supports Item 9 of the provisional agenda of the 17th session of the RWMC Regulators' Forum, to be held on 24-25 March 2014.

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2015 RWMC-RF WORKSHOP

“CHALLENGES TO THE REGULATOR IN CONSTRUCTION, LICENSING AND OPERATION OF WASTE REPOSITORIES”

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE for discussion by the RF at their March 2014 meeting

1- Background

The Strategic Plan¹ of the NEA Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMC) for 2011-2016 identifies amongst its strategic areas the licensing of the first repository of HLW/SF and the industrial implementation of geological disposal.

A key challenge for some programmes and an important learning opportunity for many others over the next decade will be, indeed, the licensing of the construction and operation of the first deep geological repositories (DGRs) for High Level Waste (HLW) and Spent Fuel (SF). Important changes are already taking place in the waste management and regulatory organisations in the countries most advanced in their geological disposal programmes as they shift focus from mainly research, development and demonstration (RD&D) oriented to industrial development. Issues coming to the fore include industrial feasibility and operations reliability and safety, and with them demands for additional and different qualifications and skills, e.g., project management skills and procedures for construction (incl. procurement activities), increased quality assurance, and new requirements on management systems, in the presence of long-term safety imperatives and demands. Many waste management organisations and regulatory authorities have experienced similar transitions in the case of disposal of Low Level Waste (LLW). Although the change is more substantial when it comes to geological disposal and higher activity waste, experiences on the construction and operation of surface LILW waste disposal and lessons learnt could be useful.

The 2015 workshop is focused on challenges to the regulator in construction, licensing, and operation of waste repositories. A number case study will be needed for presentation at the workshop.

2 – Potential Case Studies

Example cases are as follows:

Belgium: the licensing application of a Cat A near surface repository

Canada: the licensing application of a deep geological repository for waste from NPP operation

Korea: the licensing of a LILW repository at medium depth

Sweden: the general license for a SF repository at depth

Finland: the construction license for a SF repository at depth

USA: the recertification of WIPP at regular intervals

Germany: the licensing of the Konrad repository

Etc.

The above list is tentative – to elicit discussion. It will need to be verified and amended.

¹ <http://www.oecd-nea.org/rwm/docs/2011/rwm2011-12.pdf> (28 July 2011)

3. Potential topics

Topics will be identified by the programme committee. They could include:

- *Preparation of regulators for review of the license application*
- *The role and coordination of multiple regulators*
- *The technical review process in view of granting a license*
- *Dealing with step-wise decision making: how do regulators define and prepare for the later decisions*
- *The role of R&D: how important for the regulators?*
- *On which basis is confidence reached, that the authorization can be granted, albeit with restrictions*
- *QA requirements*
- *Safeguards*
- *Inspections and monitoring : level of detail in regulations and licensing conditions*
- *Records, knowledge and memory during and after operation*
- *ICRP-122: how is oversight to be organised / passed on after closure?*
- *To what extent other stakeholders are involved by the regulators in decisions to go forward?*

3. Desired outcomes of the workshop

There is interest internationally in sharing lessons and understanding commonalities and differences in amongst regulators. At term, this will increase the general level of expertise and maturity in the field waste repository construction, licensing, and operation.

4. Participants

Regulators, implementers, policy makers, stakeholders

5. Venue

Finland – September 2015

6. Programme Committee

Composition is from the RF CG and other willing participants from the RF