

Activities of the OECD/NEA WPDD in the Field of Decommissioning

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The programme of work of the OECD/NEA in the area of decommissioning is supervised by the Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMC) and carried out by the Working Party on Decommissioning and Dismantling (WPDD). The latter is made of senior representatives from regulatory authorities, decommissioning organisations, policy making bodies, and research-and-development institutions from the NEA countries. It includes also representatives of the IAEA and of the European Commission.

The WPDD supports the RWMC by keeping under review the policy, strategic, and regulatory aspects of decommissioning of shutdown nuclear installations. Its scope of work includes decommissioning and dismantling of shutdown facilities up to and including the release of the site, and the work programme comprises activities in the following key areas: Policy, regulation and strategy; Funding and costs; Techniques; Decommissioning materials management and site release; and Human and organisational factors.

Studies completed during the last 12 months include:

- *'Applying Decommissioning Experience to the Design and Operations of New Plants'*, which found that new plant designs provide for significant improvements in the context of plant operation and maintenance, and many of these will also be helpful for eventual decommissioning. The study report recommends that future deconstruction sequences should be considered as part of the design process, enabling potential future difficulties to be avoided or reduced. This should lead to shorter timeframes for decommissioning and production of less waste in future plants.
- *'Decommissioning Cost Elements, Estimation Practices and Reporting Requirements'*, which recommended *inter alia* that cost assessment methodologies should be continuously updated using cost data from actual decommissioning projects, thus improving the cost assessment by providing better control of uncertainties in the estimate. A further important conclusion of the study is that scope changes and scope growth tend to have the greatest impact on cost estimates and careful attention was therefore needed to identify and control these aspects.

The forward work programme of the WPDD reflects a belief that decommissioning and material and waste management are very interdependent and issues affecting one will generally have implications for the other, e.g. deciding the best strategy for the management of large components from decommissioning requires a parallel consideration of issues relating to dismantling, waste packaging, transport, interim storage and final disposal (including options for reuse). Overall optimisation in the context of this interdependency is a complex issue often involving different national authorities, different political institutions and a variety of stakeholder interests.

The WPDD has recently established task groups to study options for the management of large components from decommissioning, and to address future R&D and innovation needs. A project to revise the "Yellow Book", the standardised list of cost items for decommissioning projects, is being undertaken jointly with the IAEA and the EC and is expected to be completed later this year. It is intended that the cost structure laid out in new Yellow Book will lend itself to greater harmonisation of cost reporting, and will facilitate comparison and better understanding of different cost estimates.