

E-BULLETIN

January 2007,
Issue 4



Welcome to NuLeAF's first e-bulletin of 2007. This issue covers:

- the long-term management of radioactive wastes, focussing on key developments and NuLeAF initiatives;
- the work of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), including the reviews of site 'end states', options for rationalising the storage of intermediate level wastes and stakeholder engagement arrangements;
- NuLeAF involvement in other initiatives;
- appointment of a NuLeAF Project Officer; and
- dates for the diary.

Please check the points highlighted in boxes for information of particular relevance to your authority and for requests for feedback.

Long-Term Management of Higher Activity Radioactive Wastes

Government Response to CoRWM (25 Oct 06)

The UK Government and devolved administration's full response to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) was published on 25 October [for further details visit www.defra.gov.uk/environment/radioactivity/waste/index.htm#corwm]. As anticipated, Government has accepted CoRWM's main recommendations that geological disposal¹ coupled with safe and secure interim storage is the way forward.

The main features of the Government response are:

- it is supportive of exploring how an approach based on "willingness to participate" and "partnership" with local communities could be made to work in practice;
- it has invited local authorities to participate in early discussions to inform development of an implementation framework, which it will put out for consultation in the middle of 2007;
- the NDA is being given responsibility for delivery and implementation of the programmes for interim storage and geological disposal, including the drafting of an "outline repository development plan", which will be consulted upon alongside the implementation framework;

¹ In this context, 'disposal' means the burial of radioactive wastes in a purpose-designed facility in geological formations with no intention to retrieve the waste once the facility is closed.

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- it is pushing forward with the transfer of Nirex into the NDA², which is expected to use a competitive tendering exercise to appoint a contractor to undertake repository development;
- it is reconstituting CoRWM with modified terms of reference and membership to scrutinise the implementation programme and provide independent advice;
- it expects to take decisions on the implementation framework and outline repository development plan in late 2007/early 2008, with the implementation programme starting in 2008.

NuLeAF meeting with DEFRA and DTI (13 Nov 06)

NuLeAF officers met with DEFRA and DTI officials on 13 November to seek clarification of how the Government intends to move forward and to highlight some preliminary points of concern. On the latter, the NuLeAF delegation highlighted the need for:

- Government to show how the disadvantages of the NDA as implementor will be overcome, reduced or managed [see [Implementing Bodies Policy Statement](#) for further details];
- the reconstituted CoRWM to be able to deliver timely advice, for that advice to be given formal consideration and for responses to be published;
- there to be an initial geological screening of the UK prior to issuing invitations to participate in the siting process;
- UK and international experience of partnership working to be taken into account in developing proposals for 'siting' partnerships; and
- Government to address issues of resourcing local government involvement in the steps prior to participation in a siting process.

NuLeAF Regional Seminars (25 Oct – 22 Nov)

The morning sessions of the regional seminars focussed on the long-term management of higher activity wastes. Robert Jackson from DEFRA made presentations on the Government's response to CoRWM at three of the five seminars (Taunton 9 Nov, Preston 15 Nov and Llandudno 22 Nov). CoRWM provided the opening presentations at the other two seminars (Ipswich 25 Oct and London 30 Oct).

Discussion focussed on implementation issues, including: the local government role; initial geological screening of the UK; initial invitations to participate; national framework; guidance to planners; involvement and community packages; siting partnerships; implementing organisation; and overall process. The report of the seminars is available on the NuLeAF website [[Regional Seminars Report 2006](#)].

² The Nirex share transfer to NDA was completed at the end of November. A three month consultation with Nirex staff about their future roles is now underway.

DEFRA Workshop on Implementation (23 Nov 06)

A DEFRA convened workshop took place on 23 November, involving participants from Government departments, the regulators, NDA, Nirex, CoRWM and NuLeAF. The purpose of the workshop was to inform Government's approach to consultation on the draft implementation framework and outline repository development plan.

Discussion focussed on:

- Identifying the key questions that arise from seeking to develop a siting process based on the principles of willingness to participate, partnership working, support packages and right of withdrawal.
- Identifying which questions: (a) should be answered in order to undertake consultation on the implementation framework; (b) should be answered through the consultation process; and (c) could be addressed at a later stage.
- The forms of consultation that should be undertaken on the draft implementation framework and outline repository development plan.

CoRWM's Work Programme (Dec 06 – June 07)

CoRWM's work programme was discussed at its plenary meeting on 14 December [for details see www.corwm.org.uk/content-1120]. The agenda papers include a series of notes to inform discussion of key aspects of the implementation framework. The Committee intends to involve stakeholders in discussion in March and feed its views on the implementation framework to Government by the end of April.

Workshop on Regulatory Guidance on Requirements for Authorisation of Disposal (12 Dec 06)

The environment agencies are undertaking a programme of review and revision of their guidance on requirements for authorisation of disposal of Low and Intermediate Level waste on land. Their intention is to produce two guidance notes, one for near surface facilities and the other for geological disposal facilities.

NuLeAF participated in a workshop in December to review draft specifications for the guidance. It is anticipated that draft guidance will be prepared during 2007, for public consultation in early 2008.

NuLeAF Input to Government (Jan 07 – April 07)

At a meeting on 11 December, the NuLeAF Steering Group agreed that a series of further liaison meetings with Government should be organised to present and discuss NuLeAF proposals for developing specific aspects of the implementation framework.

The schedule for the liaison meetings is as follows:

January 26	Proposals for Siting Partnerships
February 21	Initial Invitations and Local Decision-Making about Participation
March 20	Funding Participation and Enhancing Community Well-Being

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Siting, Planning Requirements and Rights of Withdrawal

Each discussion will be informed by a Briefing Paper setting out NuLeAF's proposals for what should be included in the implementation framework on each of the listed issues.

Draft versions of the briefing papers are circulated for comment. If you are from a NuLeAF member authority and would like opportunity to comment on drafts, please contact christine.delcorral@nucleaf.org.uk.

Implementation Briefing (21 Mar 07)

A briefing for the Steering Group and interested member authorities is being held on 21 March in Manchester Town Hall. It is intended that the meeting will provide opportunity to discuss:

- Environment Agency thinking on: (a) when and how it should become involved in the siting process; (b) the R&D needed to reduce uncertainties in the long-term safety of geological disposal; (c) the development of stakeholder confidence in emerging repository safety cases; and (d) the pros and cons of the phased geological disposal concept.
- NDA thinking on: (a) how functions relating to the long-term management of wastes will be ring-fenced; (b) how it will develop the capacity to work in partnership with local communities; (c) the appropriateness of its current contractor model for repository development; and (d) the draft outline repository development plan (including R&D to reduce long-term safety uncertainties).

The Environment Agency (tbc) and NDA (confirmed) have been invited to make presentations at the meeting.

Member authorities are invited to attend the briefing on 21 March. To register, please contact christine.delcorral@nucleaf.org.uk.

LGA Conference on Implementation (Sept 07)

The suggestion was made at the regional seminar in London that a high profile event be organised for senior politicians and management from local government.

This proposal has been discussed with the LGA who are willing to organise a conference in early September, which should fall within the consultation period for the draft implementation framework and outline repository plan.

NuLeAF has invited the Secretary of State to make the Key Note presentation to the conference.

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NDA Consultations and Engagement

Draft Socio-Economic Policy

This was published on 5 October with a request for comments by 19 January ([NDA Socio-Economic Policy draft for consultation 2006](#)). The draft policy sets out how the NDA intends to work with partners to help mitigate the impacts of decommissioning programmes. It seeks to provide the framework within which organisations near NDA sites will be able to bid for funds for projects that will bring long lasting benefits to communities.

If your authority has comments on the draft socio-economic policy, please send copies to us by 12 January. These comments will be used to inform NuLeAF's response to the consultation.

Site End States

The NDA is reviewing site End States with stakeholders. The review aims to identify the physical condition that a nuclear site should be left in when the NDA has finished its business. The End State (or states) will influence the end uses that are possible on a site. The review involves consultation around each NDA site.

NuLeAF has contacted local authorities containing NDA sites to ask for copies of their responses to the site end use/state consultation. These responses will enable NuLeAF to identify common themes and concerns, which will form the basis for NuLeAF input into discussions with the NDA. If your authority has not already done so, please send copies of your responses to christine.delcorral@nucleaf.org.uk.

Interim Storage of ILW

The NDA is also developing plans for engaging stakeholders in its review of options for rationalising the interim storage of intermediate level wastes (ILW). This review could impact on the location of the site or sites for storing operational ILW from Berkeley, Bradwell, Culham, Dungeness, Harwell, Oldbury, Sizewell, Winfrith and Wylfa, which amounts to about 5% of the NDA's ILW inventory. It is likely that four basic options will be assessed:

- Building stores at each or most of the listed sites
- Building an enhanced store at one of the existing sites in the south
- Building enhanced stores at two of the existing sites (one in the SW and one in the SE/East)
- Taking a centralised approach (eg storage of the wastes at Sellafield)

NuLeAF is liaising with the NDA about next steps and will keep member authorities informed as plans for engagement are developed.

The draft socio-economic strategy, the review of site end states, and the review of options for rationalising the interim storage of ILW were all discussed at the NuLeAF regional seminars. For a summary of discussions see the Regional Seminars Report on the NuLeAF website [[Regional Seminars Report 2006](#)]

Review of NDA Stakeholder Engagement Arrangements

The NDA is undertaking a review of its stakeholder engagement arrangements. These were discussed at the regional seminars, where some participants expressed concerns about the NDA's main mechanisms for stakeholder engagement – the Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) and the National Stakeholder Group (NSG). The specific points made by seminar participants have been fed into the NDA review.

Wider Initiatives

ISOLUS³ Advisory Group Workshop (8 Feb 07)

NuLeAF will be represented at the workshop, which will discuss the establishment of a stakeholder group to feed advice into the Ministry of Defence's ISOLUS Steering Group. The workshop is being held at the MoD Abbey Wood site in Bristol. See [MoD Isolus Steering Group & Advisory Group](#) for further information.

COWAM in Practice (7-8 Mar 07)

NuLeAF will be represented at the first meeting of the project Steering Group in Paris. COWAM stands for Community Waste Management and is a project within the Research Frameworks of the European Commission. The aim of the project is to assess, from a local perspective, the governance approaches for radioactive waste management that are being developed in five participating countries. It is anticipated that the first UK meeting will be held in July 07.

SAFEGROUNDS Conference (12-13 March 07)

NuLeAF will be participating in a workshop on site end states at the SAFEGROUNDS conference. See www.safegrounds.com/news.htm for further details.

Magnox Electric Workshop on Accelerated Decommissioning (15 March 07)

NuLeAF will be represented at Magnox Electric's workshop, aimed at gathering stakeholder views on a range of options available to meet the NDA aspiration for accelerated decommissioning of the Magnox stations.

³ ISOLUS stands for the Interim Storage of Laid-Up Submarines. The project is seeking to identify preferred ways of managing the radioactive wastes from laid-up nuclear submarines.

Appointment of Project Officer

NuLeAF has appointed Jill Sutcliffe as its Project Officer. Jill has a PhD in Environmental Technology and previously worked for English Nature, where she had lead responsibility on radioactivity and wildlife. Jill starts work for NuLeAF on 5 February.

Dates for the Diary

Thur 25 January	NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00am, Endeavour House, Ipswich.
Wed 21 March	NuLeAF Briefing on Implementation of Policy for the Long-Term Management of Higher Activity Wastes, 11.00am, Town Hall, Manchester.
Thur 19 April	NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00am, Town Hall, Manchester.

Representatives from member authorities are invited to attend any of these meetings. To register, please contact christine.delcorral@nucleaf.org.uk.

Contacting NuLeAF

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