

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 19 April 2007
Agenda Item:	8
Subject:	Involvement in European Initiatives
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on developments in COWAM, CARL, CARD, ARGONA and PAMINA projects

Introduction

NuLeAF is involved in two major collaborative research projects – COWAM and CARL. It has also been asked to respond to questionnaires relating to the CARD and ARGONA projects, and about involvement in the PAMINA project. This report outlines developments.

Recommendation

That the Steering Group endorses the approach being taken to involvement in European initiatives as set out in this report.

COWAM in Practice (CIP)

COWAM (Community Waste Management) in Practice is a three-year project within the Research Framework 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 (France, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the UK). In each participating country a national group of stakeholders will assess, from a local perspective, the governance approaches developed in their country. This group will be supported by a National Facilitator whose role is to organise the national work programme. In the UK, Westlakes Scientific Consulting (WSC) are fulfilling the role of National Facilitator and NuLeAF's Executive Director will chair the UK stakeholder group (UKCIPSG).

An international expert group (the Methodological Task Force, MTF) will give further support by providing research to each national group on issues the national group consider most relevant to analyse its experience. In the second part of the project, the MTF will analyse the case studies and develop guidelines for others to use.

At the time of writing WSC is in the process of inviting stakeholders to participate in the project. Invites are being sent to stakeholders around Dounreay, Hinkley Point and Sellafield sites and to a small group of national stakeholders. It is anticipated that national meetings will be held in July 07, Jan 08, Sep 08, Jan 09 and July 09.

The Executive Director attended the 'kick off' meeting of the European Project Group meeting in Paris in March. This covered the following issues:

- Potential 'success criteria' for the project, including breadth and level of participation in each national stakeholder group; fulfilment of expectations of participants; quality of research in the MTF; and impact (empowerment, improved relations, and on policy).
- The operation of the MTF - the emphasis is on being responsive to the needs of the national groups. The MTF will do some more preparatory work to summarise the main findings from COWAM2 and preliminary thoughts on the topics for investigation (including public and stakeholder engagement, long-term governance issues, local governance and influence on national processes).

It is likely that the agenda for the first meeting of the UKCIPSG will include:

- an introduction to the project
- identification of stakeholder views on key radwaste governance issues in the UK
- introduction to the work of the MTF
- identification of UKCIPSG priority issues and ways of addressing them in the project
- identification of success criteria and
- next steps.

CARL

CARL is a social sciences research project into the effect of stakeholder involvement in decision-making on radioactive waste management. UK participants come from NuLeAF, Nirex, the University of East Anglia and the regulators. A Steering Committee meets twice a year. NuLeAF is represented on the SC by Councillor Tim Knowles from Cumbria County Council.

The final CARL workshop is being held in Oskarshamm in Sweden in September 07. It is anticipated that there will be up to 10 participants from NuLeAF and COSLA. Members that have expressed an interest in attendance are being contacted to confirm arrangements.

CARD

CARD is a shortened acronym for Co-ordination Action on Research, Development and Demonstration (R,D & D) for Geological Disposal of Radioactive Wastes. The purpose of the project is to develop a framework for a sustainable network within the EU for all key elements of the RD&D required to implement geological disposal in EU member states. The network is intended to serve the RD&D needs of implementers, regulators and all interested parties.

Potential benefits of developing a framework are described as including:

- gaining understanding of who is doing what R&D and for what reason;
- having access to information and results from other organisations in very focused, precise areas;
- effective utilisation of resources, e.g. URLs, high activity laboratories, training facilities;
- development and communication of a shared knowledge base;
- identifying and supporting European centres of competence and excellence in specific RD&D areas;
- discussion of RD&D priorities and focus on important common issues, and also on minor but common 'special' issues, e.g. related to particular waste types;
- obtaining consensus and alternative views and perspectives on RD&D topics;
- encouraging forward thinking about RD&D needs and enabling up-stream co-ordination of research programmes;
- enhancing public confidence through demonstrated openness of discussing problems and the RD&D requirements, and developing broadly-based technical consensus on the adequacy of RD&D basis and where uncertainties still remain;
- advising the EC on gaps in RD&D coverage or most relevant topics for wide co-operation within EC programmes;
- up-stream coordination of international efforts and initiatives to avoid duplications and optimise resource utilisation in international cooperation;
- through the improved dissemination of results and information, more rapid responses to such new information in related RD&D programmes.

NuLeAF was asked to complete a questionnaire about development of the framework by 5 April. The Executive Director has replied supporting the development of a framework and highlighting that this should encourage R&D to be responsive to local community concerns that have or are being articulated through siting programmes.

ARGONA

The ARGONA project is also part of the sixth Euratom Framework Programme. It is intended to explore how new approaches to dialogue can be implemented in nuclear waste management programmes and how participation and transparency link to the political system.

NuLeAF has also been asked to complete a questionnaire for the ARGONA project. This seeks views on current and future stakeholder engagement arrangements for radioactive waste management. In response, the Executive Director has supplied the project with copies of NuLeAF Briefing Papers on developing the MRWS implementation framework, and the January 07 Steering Group report setting out member authority views on NDA stakeholder engagement arrangements.

PAMINA

This stands for Performance Assessment Methodologies In Application and aims to improve the way performance assessments for radioactive waste repositories (particularly for long-term safety) are developed and presented. The NDA is an UK partner in the project.

The NDA has asked whether NuLeAF would be interested in participating in a workshop in the autumn and, possibly providing a sounding board for early feedback on ideas being developed within the project. According to the NDA these include:

One aspect of the project is seeking to explore how the inevitable uncertainties associated with long-term safety assessments can be communicated in ways that are meaningful. Rather than just relying on mathematical calculations and computer modelling, we are proposing to explore the use of 'alternative lines of reasoning' to present a much wider range of safety arguments. For example, there are various geological and archaeological analogues that can be used to explain how different aspects of a repository system may evolve over very long time periods. By making such arguments an integral part of the safety case, we hope to develop a safety case that is more accessible to a wider range of stakeholders and thus promote wider debate and engagement with the safety case at all levels.

The Executive Director has responded positively to the NDA about participation in a future workshop, and indicated that there may also be scope for a presentation and discussion at a future Steering Group meeting.