

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 18 September 2017
Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	NuLeAF involvement in ENWD: Options paper
Author:	Philip Matthews
Purpose:	To provide more information on the ENWD and seek member approval for further involvement in the network and discussions with Government, RWM and NDA.

Introduction

NuLeAF participation in the **ENWD (European Local Network of Radioactive Waste Dialogue)** was discussed at Steering Group on the 19th July, following the attendance of the NuLeAF Chair at a meeting of the network in Brussels in June 2017.

It was agreed that NuLeAF should continue to explore options for possible involvement in the ENWD and associated processes, and report back to the next Steering Group on the 18th September.

Since July, NuLeAF's Executive Director and Chair have continued to engage on this topic with RWM, BEIS and ENWD:

- RWM has indicated that they are interested in the potential that ENWD offers in maintaining UK engagement on nuclear decommissioning post-Brexit.
- The UK Government (BEIS) has been made aware of NuLeAF's dialogue with ENWD. Their response has been positive, recognising the value of such involvement in a Europe-wide network.
- NuLeAF's Chair and Executive Director met with the ENWD General Secretary in Manchester on the 14th September to seek clarification on aspects of how the organisation operates, its budget and forward work plan. As this meeting was held after the publication deadline for Steering Group papers, a full verbal update on the meeting will be provided to Steering Group.

Following the Steering Group, NuLeAF's Executive Director will hold another meeting with RWM to update them on discussions, and it is also hoped to raise the issue with the NDA's Head of International Relations. NuLeAF's Chair and Executive Director will attend the GMF/ENWD AGM in Madrid on the 5th and 6th October.

This paper provides information on the ENWD and sets out recommendations on further action for Steering Group to consider.

Recommendations:

That NuLeAF members:

1. Approve NuLeAF membership of the ENWD for the next year. The cost of this is c£1,000 and this single payment provides membership of the network for all NuLeAF member local authorities. NuLeAF has the funds within this years' financial settlement to make this payment.
2. Support continued discussions with ENWD, RWM, NDA and BEIS to determine whether there is scope for NuLeAF to play an enhanced role in the network in future years. Any proposal for an enhanced role will require that adequate funding is provided, in addition to that needed to fulfil NuLeAF's existing responsibilities. No decision on this will be taken without further discussion and approval by Steering Group.

1. Background

Over the years, NuLeAF has engaged on radioactive waste management with a range of European projects and networks. In recent times, these have included **IPPA** (Implementing Public Participation Processes in radioactive waste disposal), **E-Track** (Energy Transparency Centre of Knowledge) and events run by **EURADWASTE** (European Commission conferences on Radioactive Waste Management and Disposal and Decommissioning). In all these cases, RWM has provided additional funding to support NuLeAF's participation.

These meetings, supported by the European Commission, proved useful in promoting dialogue and exchanging experiences with communities in other nations. However, Commission events have tended to focus on the concerns of academics and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) rather than local authorities.

With the UK about to embark on a new Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process; the wider NDA decommissioning mission progressing; EDF stations nearing the end of their operational life; and with current negotiations around UK involvement in Euratom, this is an opportune time for closer and better engagement by NuLeAF in European networks, particularly those with a local government focus.

To this end, NuLeAF has been in contact with the ENWD. This network represents municipalities and regions across the continent which already host a radioactive waste repository or are involved in a siting process for a Low-Level Waste (LLW), Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) or High-Level Waste (HLW) facility.

NuLeAF's Chair and Executive Director initiated contact with the ENWD General Secretary, Maria Vila D'Abadal Serra, to discuss the scope for UK involvement in the network. ENWD expressed their interest in forging closer

links with British municipalities and invited NuLeAF to participate in their meeting in Brussels on the 28th June. NuLeAF Chair Cllr Brendan Sweeney attended and delivered a presentation on the work of NuLeAF, the political framework for radioactive waste management in the UK, and plans for a UK GDF.

This was warmly received and NuLeAF and ENWD are currently continuing discussion on the scope for formal involvement in ENWD. NuLeAF is also engaged in dialogue with the UK Government (BEIS), RWM and the NDA, and there has been some indication that they understand the value of such engagement and may be willing to support it financially.

ENWD is part of a wider network – the **GMF (Group of European Municipalities with nuclear Facilities)**. The potential benefits for NuLeAF of involvement in ENWD/GMF include:

- The sharing of information around socio-economics, engagement and planning to enable best practice examples to be used to advance local outcomes;
- The strengthening of engagement with transnational companies i.e. those with nuclear operations in a number of nations such as EDF;
- The development of better information tools and a community of interest;
- The development of visits and exchanges, to enable UK local authorities to learn from and share information with others that host a decommissioning site or a potential GDF. In terms of the UK GDF siting process, this could be a useful way of enabling local councils and communities to understand both the technical aspects of GDF development and the political and socio-economic challenges and opportunities;
- The strengthening of ties to provide a stronger voice to the European Union and Commission; and
- The maintaining of dialogue with other European countries post-Brexit.

This paper provides an overview of the GMF and ENWD, considers options for NuLeAF engagement and proposes a way forward.

2. Overview of GMF and ENWD

In 1993, European municipalities near nuclear facilities began working together to enhance their ability to engage with and influence decisions being taken by the European Union. Over time this evolved into the formalised Group of European Municipalities with Nuclear Facilities (GMF). It is understood that the GMF has been in operation in its current form since 2013, with Swedish municipalities having an important role in establishing the network.

The GMF has identified the network's key concerns as:

- The provision of information to enhance knowledge and understanding on nuclear issues. It is understood that engagement is generally with nuclear communities rather than the whole population.
- The future of host municipalities after a nuclear plant shutdown and the development of economic capacity for municipalities in order to promote some kind of alternative economic development.
- Management of radioactive wastes in a safe manner, in particular their long-term storage and disposal.
- Increasing the participation of municipalities in the decision-making process as a guarantee of respect to the principles of local democracy.

The GMF objectives are:

- Ensuring that European nuclear municipalities take part in existing discussion forums and in decision-making processes that are being carried out in the European Union.
- Sharing information among its members about the nuclear reality in every European country and about municipal experiences in relation to territorial arrangement, economic development and civil protection.
- Carrying out future projects with the participation of all or part of its membership in order to favour their integration in the European Union.
- Organising meetings so that European municipal authorities can gather and exchange information.

At present, around 100 municipalities are direct members of the GMF or are affiliated through a national network. Members are drawn from Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Meeting attendance is generally good, with around 50 delegates at the last meeting in Brussels and around 90 expected to be attending the October meeting in Madrid.

The GMF is overseen by a general assembly and the current President is Roland Palmquist from Sweden. There is a part-time staff of two supporting GMF, led by General Secretary Mariano Vila D'Abadal.

Under the umbrella of the GMF, a **European local Network on radioactive Waste Dialogue (ENWD)** has been established, and has met annually since 2014. The network is intended for municipalities/regions who already have a repository or are in advanced siting process for LLW, ILW or HLW. The objectives with the network are to:

- exchange knowledge and experiences among politicians and civil servants
- share and spread "best practice" or good examples for citizen dialogues

- empowering the municipalities by improving the processes in each nation
- be a speaking partner and a platform to the EU Commission

The ENWD has a separate Chair from the GMF, although this post is currently vacant. The network is supported by the GMF secretariat.

In support of the GMF and ENWD, the secretariat:

- Organise an annual General Assembly of the GMF which is combined with a ENWD meeting;
- Organise a separate ENWD meeting, usually 6 months after the General Assembly, and support participation in other meetings and site visits on an occasional basis; and
- Manage the GMF website. This provides links to news items of interest, information on meetings and background on the organisation.

In discussion with other ENWD members it is clear that there is recognition that the network has significant value but that it is in need of reinvigoration. It was suggested that meetings could be enhanced, the website was in need of updating, and the organisation could benefit for clearer work planning and better engagement with members.

3. NuLeAF: potential future involvement in ENWD and GMF

Membership of the network would appear timely and offers potential benefits to NuLeAF and English and Welsh local authorities. As noted above, it has been suggested that NuLeAF consider (a) joining ENWD/GMF and (b) exploring the scope for further involvement in future years if suitable funding is provided. Further involvement might include NuLeAF taking on responsibility for chairing the ENWD and providing the secretariat support.

It has been estimated that the role of Chair of ENWD would require around 0.5 days per week, although the amount of time required is likely to vary significantly from week to week. The GMF currently has two staff working two days per week to support the GMF. The proportion of this time that is used in supporting the ENWD will be discussed at the meeting with the GMF General Secretary on the 14th September and members will be updated on this at the Steering Group meeting.

Clarification on the organisations income and expenditure, and thus the need for any financial support from a third party is being sought, and any further information gained from the meeting on the 14th September will be shared with members.

4. Suggested next steps

If support is given for NuLeAF to proceed in line with the recommendations within this paper, NuLeAF will join the ENWD. This will initially be for one year. At the end of the first year the value of membership will be assessed and a decision taken as to whether to continue to affiliate to the network.

NuLeAF will also continue dialogue with ENWD, RWM, NDA and BEIS to determine:

- If there is scope for NuLeAF to adopt a more active role in the network from 2018/19
- What the costs and work commitments of this would be, and whether financial support, in addition to that provided for NuLeAF's core functions, is available.

If there does appear to be potential for enhanced involvement, and this appears to be in the interests of NuLeAF as an organisation, a paper will be presented to a future NuLeAF Steering Group to enable members to further discuss plans and to seek approval for such a course.