

THE FSC NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

AN OPPORTUNITY AND METHOD FOR MUTUAL LEARNING
AND FOR IMPLEMENTING DIALOGUE



The Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) is an international working group of the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) of the OECD. The FSC is, above all, a place of learning. Efforts are focused on developing a dialogue among stakeholders and on seeking to build durable confidence about management solutions. The stakeholders include any person, group or institution that has an interest or a role to play at any stage of the decision-making process.

The FSC organises workshops in a national context to provide a framework for direct exchange amongst stakeholders in an environment of respect and mutual learning. For the host country participants, the FSC workshops are an opportunity to present and analyse their own experience in a neutral setting, to benefit from international feedback and to leave a record of their viewpoints. International delegates gain a better understanding of the history and practice of radioactive waste management in the host country. All participants improve their knowledge of the factors influencing public confidence in the domain of radioactive waste management. The workshop is an opportunity to reinforce or create ties amongst stakeholders.



The FSC

The members of the FSC represent 16 countries with radioactive waste management programmes: Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. They are nominated

to the FSC by their respective governments.

Through the FSC, its members continue to train themselves to become better actors in open governance. Their commitment helps to promote a cultural change in their organisations and home countries.

FSC national workshops

A well-established practice

The FSC has held workshops in seven countries with local communities concerned with managing radioactive waste over the long term. Each workshop lasts typically two and a half days, half a day being dedicated to a visit of the local community or host territory. Past workshops have allowed the participants to meet and listen to both local leaders and interested citizens, namely: elected officials, teachers, heads of local businesses and local associations, and resident members of working groups or partnerships for radioactive waste management. In some cases, the workshop made possible the gathering of all the different actors under the same roof for the first time.

Organisation

A workshop theme is identified that closely relates to the latest developments at the country or local level. The workshop format includes short presentations followed by discussions in small groups followed in turn by discussion of the main points in plenary. The

FSC members from the host country help to obtain the participation of the full range of stakeholders, who present and debate the identified issues together with the international participants. International FSC delegates play the role of moderators and rapporteurs. At the end of the workshop, invited international experts from outside the FSC (typically academic researchers) present their reflections on lessons to be learned and on the experience of the workshop.

Participation

About 30-40 international delegates, including FSC members and stakeholders from their own national contexts, participate in each workshop. An equal number of host country stakeholders participates, including members of the national waste management organisation, representatives of the local communities and members of the public concerned, members of safety authorities, public decision-makers, and R&D specialists as well as members of civil society organisations.

Documentation and Outreach

The FSC produces a synthesis of the presentations and the discussions and it publishes the workshop papers. The workshop documentation is made available to all on the public FSC website. It provides

a historical archive of the opinions and perspectives of all stakeholders. All participants continue to stay up-to-date on international developments and lessons to be learnt by receiving periodic information from the FSC.

Experience so far

FSC workshops and visits have proven to be constructive in fostering national dialogue and helping frame the issues that stakeholders wish to see considered. The neutral platform of the FSC makes it possible to:

- get all stakeholders from the host country under a single roof;
- help new actors, or those who are not members

of an established organisation, to enter the process;

- help initiate a new phase in an existing process of reflection and exchange;
- give local stakeholders the possibility to meet international delegates and to share experience;
- record the views of all types of stakeholders.

Examples of workshop themes

In the seven past workshops a broad range of themes were discussed, including stepwise decision making (Finland), local and national considerations in the restoration of contaminated sites (Canada), the methodology of local partnerships (Belgium), site selection procedures (Germany), the interaction

between stakeholders at the local and national level (Spain), regional development and the support received by the local communities (Hungary). At the latest workshop (France, 2009) the theme was "Repositories and Host Regions: Envisaging the Future Together".



Spain, 2005

THROUGH ITS INITIATIVES, THE NEA FORUM ON STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE (FSC) CONTRIBUTES TO A NEW APPROACH TO DECISION MAKING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE. FSC WORKSHOPS AND VISITS HAVE PROVEN TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE IN FOSTERING NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND HELPING FRAME THE ISSUES THAT STAKEHOLDERS WISH TO BE CONSIDERED. THE FSC TAKES UP ALL PROPOSED THEMES IN A SPIRIT OF OPENNESS AND SERVICE TO THE MEMBER COUNTRIES. THE FSC OFFERS ITS WORKSHOPS AS AN OPPORTUNITY AND METHOD FOR MUTUAL LEARNING AND FOR IMPLEMENTING DIALOGUE.