Framework and Challenges for Initiating Multinational Cooperation for the Development of a Repository Programme

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Convinced that radioactive waste should, as far as is compatible with the safety of the management of such material, be disposed of in the State in which it was generated, whilst recognizing that, in certain circumstances, safe and efficient management of spent fuel and radioactive waste might be fostered through agreements among Contracting Parties to use facilities in one of them for the benefit of the other Parties, particularly where waste originates from joint projects;
IAEA documents addressing multilateral issues
Three basic concepts (TECDOC- 1413):
- Cooperation scenario – partner countries cooperate in developing a repository jointly, one of them becomes a hosting country or each country takes one type of waste
- Add-on scenario – the host country offers to dispose of imported waste from other countries
- International scenario – repository fully in the hands of international body, the host country effectively cede the control of the siting area
Main observations

- Implementation challenging but feasible
- Enhances safety and security by making disposal options timely available
- Benefits potentially large and possibly outweighing drawbacks
- Discussion on multinational (MN) concepts can be initiated by interested countries without prior definition of host country
Pros and cons

• Member States have different views on MN repository:
  • Advanced programmes afraid that their national programmes would be jeopardized
  • Several countries introduced ban on RW import
  • For regional/multinational repository political decision and support needed
  • Small programmes interested in principle but no serious commitment and so far no interest to host repository
  • Concerns that multinational initiatives just misused to remain in-active in searching for disposal solutions
Current situation

• In spite of recognized benefits no real progress in sharing repositories among established nuclear programmes:
  • Initiative limited mainly to geological disposal (GD)
  • Time distant plans for GD – no time pressure for action now
  • No national GD implemented yet
  • No real political support
  • Negative public perception

• But:
  • new countries coming on board – facing similar problems and having similar infrastructure needs at the same time
  • renewed concerns about proliferation
  • safety and security concerns

• Current publications offer:
  • considerations of potential safety, security and economic benefits
  • but limited investigation of political, public and institutional aspects

• The need for more guidance on how to consider these issues in relation to multinational cooperation identified
New document

• New document on multinational cooperation to be published soon:
  
  Framework and Challenges for Initiating Multinational Cooperation for the Development of a Repository Programme

• Intended to decision makers and experts involved in organizing or implementing RWM programmes to allow them:
  
  • to understand the background and challenges related to multinational cooperation
  
  • To understand the extent of commitment for the development of shared facility
Main objective

• The document is building on previous publications but focusing on prerequisites and practical/formal issues

• Main objective of new document:
  • To explore in more details political, public and institutional aspects of multinational disposal project
  • To provide information on decisions needed
  • To analyse greatest challenges and risks

• It provides clear message that:
  • Participation in collaborative repository project does not remove the requirement for a national policy
  • Regardless of the approach a national policy and strategy/national programme for RWM is needed
Issues addressed

• It describes phased approach and decisions needed for multinational project:
  • undertaken by partners within a national context and
  • In the scope of a joint endeavour
• It addresses wide range of:
  • Legal and institutional aspects, including contractual obligations among partners
  • Economic and financial arrangements
  • Liabilities
  • Nuclear security
  • Regulatory aspects
  • Waste transportation arrangements
  • Social matters
• Special chapter on uncertainties and risks
What is in the report?

• Study case – reference scenario presented:
  • Based on partnering approach between countries (host, partner and transit) in the same region
  • addressing various issues, relevant for multinational project
• Repository siting approach
  • Goals and guiding principles
  • Based on volunteering approach
  • Timescales
• A staged approach to multinational repository implementation
• Chapter on risk management in the multinational project (technical, financial, institutional, socio-political)