



The FSC National Workshops

An opportunity and method for mutual learning and for implementing dialogue

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

The opportunity to hold an FSC workshop and community visit is an example of the services provided by the Forum to member countries. These events provide a platform for direct exchange among stakeholders in an environment of respect and mutual learning. For the host country participants, 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 written 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 among stakeholders.

The FSC

Eighteen NEA member countries with radioactive waste management programmes participate actively in the FSC: Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. They are nominated to the FSC by their

respective governments. The European Commission is also a member.

Through the FSC, members train 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 nine countries, involving local communities, regional actors and national stakeholders concerned with the management of radioactive waste over the long term. Each workshop typically lasts two and a half days, with half a day devoted to a community visit or open event (public meeting or debate). This part of the workshop allows international visitors to gain insight into local circumstances and concerns, and also enables a larger number of local stakeholders to meet and exchange with international visitors. Past workshops have allowed participants to meet both local leaders and interested citizens: elected officials, teachers, heads of local businesses and local associations, and residents who are members of working groups or partnerships for radioactive waste management.

Hosting an FSC workshop indicates a determination to transparently display and discuss the national radioactive waste management process. In some cases, workshops have enabled the gathering of all the different actors under the same roof for the first time.

Organisation

Workshop planning relies on a diversified stakeholder programme committee which is assembled through the main national host of the workshop. The latter is typically a principal player (government, implementer) in the national process and a member of the FSC. The programme committee selects a workshop theme closely related to a significant experience or development at the country or local level. The workshop format includes short presentations, followed by discussions in small groups and then a presentation of the reflections and conclusions in plenary. The programme committee helps to obtain the participation of a full range of national stakeholders, who present and debate the selected theme(s) together with the international participants. International FSC delegates play the role of moderators and rapporteurs. At the end of the workshop, an invited international expert from outside the FSC (usually an academic researcher) presents feedback on lessons to be learnt and on the workshop experience.

Participation

Typically, about 30-40 international delegates, including FSC members and their own invited stakeholders, participate in each workshop. An equal number of host country stakeholders participate, including members of the national waste management organisation, representatives of 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. Other formats can be explored.

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:

- gather 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;

Examples of workshop themes

In the past nine 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, Czech Republic),

Documentation and outreach

The FSC produces a synthesis of the presentations and discussions and it publishes the workshop papers. The workshop documentation is made available on the public FSC webpages. 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.

- 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.

the interaction between stakeholders at the local and national levels (Spain), added value, regional development and the support received by local communities (Hungary, Sweden, France), and organising the reversibility of decisions and retrievability of waste (France).



SÚRAO

The 2012 FSC Workshop in the Czech Republic.

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 see considered. The FSC takes up all proposed themes in a spirit of openness and service to member countries. The FSC offers its workshops as an opportunity and method for mutual learning and for implementing dialogue.