

Briefing Paper in advance of NSG10 meeting in March 2010

Spent Fuel Management

NDA Lead:

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Introduction:

For more than a year now, the stakeholders at the NSG have been helping the NDA develop its next Strategy. NSG10 comes at a critical point in this process, giving stakeholders a final chance to input into the NDA's thinking before the Strategy II document is prepared for public consultation. Spent Fuel Management is a Strategic Theme within the NDA's Strategy Management System and presents the NDA with some of its biggest challenges.

Background:

Under the Energy Act 2004, the NDA is responsible for the management of spent nuclear fuel on our sites. The spent nuclear fuels are quite varied in design and properties and, for ease of strategic management, we have put them into three groups:

- Magnox Fuel (from the NDA's Magnox stations);
- Oxide Fuel (from the British Energy owned Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor power stations and from the remaining commercially obligated foreign-owned fuels held by NDA and contracted for reprocessing);and
- Exotic Fuel (generally either prototype fuels or fuels arising from UK research reactors)

Together these three "topics" make up the Spent Fuel Management Strategic Theme.

Many of the areas covered by the three topic strategies above have been discussed at the NSG before, particularly those relating to the Magnox (including the so-called Magnox Operating Plan) and Oxide (including the THORP facility at Sellafield) fuel. Indeed, the Materials Issues Group (a sub-group set up by the NSG) went into some detail on many of the challenges the NDA faces in these areas.

Purpose of the session at NSG10:

At the high level the overarching Spent Fuels Strategic Objective is to ensure all fuels are stored and managed (noting that not all fuel is destined for reprocessing) in a safe and secure way for the lifetime of the fuel. The NDA also has to ensure that the safety management, environmental impact and economic cost of the future treatment of these fuels in spent fuel management facilities and in ultimate disposal is optimised.

At the NSG, we will seek to have a discussion with stakeholders on our proposed approach and underlying principles to achieving this objective

Further information:

Stakeholders are encouraged to look at the "Strategy" area of the NDA website as this contains the latest information on each of the topic strategies within the Spent Fuel Management Theme www.nda.gov.uk/strategy/. In addition, copies of the meeting reports from previous NSGs where these topics were discussed may also be found on the "Stakeholders and Community" area of the website www.nda.gov.uk/stakeholders/nsq/index.cfm