

CORWM MEETING WITH NDA ON IMPLEMENTING RWMD R&D PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL, 28 JANUARY 2010.

Secretariat, Task Group 1

CoRWM Attendance

Andrew Sloan	Francis Livens
Mark Dutton	Rebecca Lunn
Simon Harley	Tarsam Bains (Secretariat)
William Lee (Chair)	Simon Mussett (Secretariat)
Fergus Gibb	

NDA Attendance

Andrew Parkes
Cherry Tweed – via telephone
Sarah Vines
Neil Smart

Summary

1. The purpose of the meeting was to give the NDA early feedback on the RWMD R&D programme to support geological disposal. CoRWM were provided with a draft copy of the NDA document Geological Disposal Overview of R&D Programme along with R&D programme diagrams and Prioritisation tables. The draft programme was well received and gives a good idea of RWMD's approach.

Discussion

2. Members said that the programme was large, ambitious, and possibly too detailed; the issue of funding was also raised.
3. Members were noted that there was no R&D in the programme lasting longer than 10 years; the timing of some R&D will not be fixed and may have a long lead time.
4. There was discussion on the process for starting an R&D project and whether it was tied to a critical path. Members expressed their concern that the importance and timing of the prioritisation process was not clear. It was stated that prioritisation had been carried out in the programme; the current state of knowledge was established and required work identified.
5. Members said that the planning and prioritisation should identify required R&D and any associated issues, then identify skills gaps. Members expressed that there was no indication that the programme was building up the current skills set. There may be some things in the programme that need to be done earlier, not because of urgency, but to develop the skills necessary. It was also stressed that the required skills are very specialist and there is likely to be large competition from some of the other industries (oil, gas) and areas (C capture).
6. Members highlighted a fundamental challenge that arose mainly within section two (Context) but also in other sections that RWMD are trying to plan for disposal without a site or concept and geology. These are uncertainties and the report should be restructured around them.

7. Members expressed that there was a lack of consistency in the details of the programme; some topics are covered in too much detail whilst other are more generic.
8. There was a discussion on using reference concepts to build and formulate the R&D programme; Members commented that there are too many uncertainties and time and money could be wasted. There was an over reliance on the KBS3 concept in the report but NDA said that they were considering a number of internationally developed illustrative concepts appropriate to a range of potential UK geological environments and UK wastes types to aid development the research programme appropriate to the current stage of the programme.
9. Members said that section three (Structuring our R&D Programme) was good. There was discussion of how the decision will be made to classify R&D for impact, knowledge, timescale and urgency as high, medium and low. Members commented that it was not clear on what basis and how this decision will be made. It was suggested that this could be included within the additional points section of the tables.
10. The target audience of the programme was discussed. NDA said that it was targeted at stakeholders who have some understanding of the area but that it was available to everyone for the sake of transparency. It was suggested that this could be further explained in the introduction of the document.
11. The following general comments were made by Members on the format of the document:
 - The tables are very helpful and informative
 - The diagrams were confusing and contained too much information.

Actions

- 12. Members to provide any further comments to Cherry Tweed by email.**