

## Local Partnership

**Case Study: Site selection for final disposal of LLW and ILW**

**Country: Belgium**

**Due date: March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

### Background Information:

Following the decision by the Belgian Government that local stakeholders must be involved in the site selection procedure for a final repository for LLW and ILW, “Local Partnerships” were established in three communities which had previously declared their interest in participating as a candidate site.

### Phase of decision making process

After the failure of earlier trials the Belgian government decided in 1998 to concentrate the site selection process on nuclear and volunteering sites and to involve the relevant Stakeholder in the process. Therefore local partnerships were initiated by ONDRAF at sites which were willing to volunteer. In total 3 local partnerships were created during the site selection phase: STOLA in Dessel from 1999 till 2005, from 2005 continued as STORA, MONA in Mol from 2000 ongoing and PaLoFF in Fleurus-Farciennes from 2003 till 2006. Based on the proposal of the local partnerships the Belgian government selected Dessel as the site for final disposal for LLW and ILW on 23rd of June 2006.

### Formal framework of decision making process

Each local partnership signed a memorandum with ONDRAF. The local partnership had to agree on a concept for the final disposal which is developed by the local partnership and the operator ONDRAF. The municipal council had to approve it and then Belgian government decides finally which site will be selected. For further work a license and EIA is required.

### Objectives of the process

Local Partnership had the mission to study the possibility of hosting a LILW repository and to develop an integrated project proposal. The objective was to involve the public directly in developing both the facility design and a socioeconomic package for their area in order to gain acceptance for the project.

### Which tool was used?

In Belgium, local partnerships were established to actively involve local stakeholders in the discussion of alternatives and the development of the best solution. The local partnerships provided detailed proposals to the implementer/ decision maker. Detailed discussions took place in working groups which focused on several specific topics. The local partnerships were coordinated by two full time project managers, responsible for administration and communication. Guidelines for collaboration were agreed between the stakeholders and the implementer.

Status: completed

## Objectives and outcomes of stakeholder engagement

Objectives:

- To develop an integrated disposal integrating both technical (concepts, safety, environmental and health requirements) and social implications (socio-economic added value and ecological preconditions);
- To conduct research in the field of radioactive waste;
- To be a forum for structured project negotiation and local consultation;
- To encourage communication with and information of the local inhabitants;

Outcomes:

- The local partnership provoked some changes to the generic design of the ONDRAF/NIRAS basic proposals; Each partnership signed a memorandum;
- Stakeholder selected after wide consultation in the community;
- The municipality has to approve the concept developed by local partnership and the operator and Belgian government decides on the basis of the proposals;
- Voting of the general assembly of the local partnership and the municipal council indicated local acceptance: In Dessel voting of the general assembly of the local partnership and municipal council in full agreement, in Mol big majority of general assembly for final disposaltext (27) with 4 contra and 1 abstention and in the municipal council with only 2 abstentions).

## Involved Stakeholders

After wide consultation within each community, a proposal composition of their local partnership was drafted by the accompanying universities of Antwerp and Liegetext

## Implementer of the participation process details

Implemented and funded by ONDRAF, the implemeter.

## Financing

Each partnership received an annual budget of approximately 250.000 EUR from NIRAS/ONDRAF. Additionally a one-off budget of 150.000 EUR was set aside for the elaboration of the project proposal (STOLA for instance used some of this money to have an animated film made of the repository concept) and for socio-economic studies. This budget was managed by the executive committee. The annual budget served to cover general expenses such as the salaries of the project coordinators, all communication-activity and all 'operational costs' (stationary, telephone bills, mailing, electricity, ...), as well as logistical support for the working groups.

## Point to consider

- Public was not included in phase of problem identification,
- Local Partnership PaLoFF in Fleurus-Farciennes ended in 2006 because the municipal council of Fleurus did not approve the proposal.
- Methods for involvement of the public developed by university of Antwerp and Liege,
- throughout the process the universities acted as neutral monitors and advise,

- each member of the General Assembly of the local partnership plus ONDRAF signed a memorandum which fixed the formal rules of the cooperation,
- two fulltime project coordinators were funded,
- process was open,
- no important limitations on the concept to be developed, but search focused on nuclear sites,
- Local partnerships of Dessel and Mol (which is still affected because the site selected is in direct neighbourhood) were continued after the site selection

### **Further tools used in this case study**

Homepage of ONDRAF and the Local Partnership, Newsletter, Press information, Different working groups of the local partnership