

## RISCOM Reference Group Poland

### Case Study: Siting a LLW and ILW repository in Poland

**Country:** Poland

**Due date:** Sept 6th, 2013

#### Background Information:

Since Poland has started to develop a nuclear program and is obliged to adopt the EU radioactive waste directive by 2015, it needs to prepare a clear National Program for Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel Management. The program should specify the activities related to the site selection of the new repository for low and intermediate level radioactive waste disposal, which will likely accommodate the nuclear waste from the new projected nuclear power plant.

A near-surface storage facility for low and medium level radioactive waste (LILW), constructed in an old military fort, has been operational in Rozan since 1961, but will be closed by 2022. That is why a new site for the LILW is required.

In the late seventies of XX century, a study aimed at identifying localities for a LILW repository was initiated in Poland. As a result of this, several potential sites in different host rocks were preselected for a deep geological repository, a shallow underground waste repository and a near-surface repository. At the end of the 1990s, seventeen potentially suitable localities for a near-surface repository were identified within the scope of governmental strategic programme "Management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel". Although the Rozan community is not on the list of potential siting areas, the community still wishes to host any new repository, mainly due to the expected financial benefits that would accompany it. The construction of the new facility is planned to start in 2016 and operation in 2022.

Both tasks, the preparation of the national plan and site selection for the future repository need public involvement from the very beginning. Activities concerning information at potential locations for nuclear power plants carried out by future investor – PGE are carried on. Department of Nuclear Energy in Ministry of Economy is responsible for centrally organized information campaign.

The tender for the selection of the company responsible for the researches on localization of the site for the future radioactive waste repository was announced at the end of 2012, and concluded in March 2013.

The site selection is expected to be finished in 2015. The potential localities were not discussed with the public so far. The first attempt at organising the discussion concerning this issue has been the RISCOM process started under the IPPA project. A RISCOM Reference Group was established in November 2011. The group decides about organisation of various events like workshops, trainings with stakeholders and hearings. On May 8, 2013 the first hearing in the frames of IPPA project was organised. The title of debate was as follows: "Do we need a new repository for radioactive waste?". The hearing with big participation of different groups of stakeholders was successful. Although it was an example of the discussion in the "safe space", it showed potential fields of future conflict, since the opponents of NPP are against the development of the new repositories in Poland, which could contain the waste from the power plant. However they are open for discussion about the repository for low and medium level radioactive waste, which will replace the old repository in Rozan.

#### Phase of decision making process

After site selection, the design of the repository is planned in 2016, followed by construction and putting in operation around 2022.

The process of public involvement, namely information and very limited consultation of the future plans concerning nuclear power plants, is at early phase. The referendum on the location of nuclear power plant in Gaski was ended with negative respond. Questions about the plans for radioactive

waste management have been arising in the meantime, however there is currently no organised campaign besides the RISCOM process concerning that.

### **Formal framework of decision making process**

The adopted framework for development of the new repository for low and intermediate RW is as follows:

1. Selection of three potential sites followed by the choosing one site for low- and intermediate RW repository by 2015
2. Design and start-up of construction of the repository by 2016
3. Launching operation of the new repository around 2022

Construction, operation, closure and decommissioning of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel repositories requires permission of the President of the NAEA.

The formal procedure based on the existing law and Aarhus Convention, as well as on being implemented directive 2011/70 Euratom, assumes the full transparency and active participation of the society in the decision-making process. There is an interest of Polish stakeholders that RISCOM Reference Group could continue its activity after completion of IPPA project. The group would make continuous efforts to involve the local people in dialog and in participation in decision-making process. After selection of three potential sites the discussion with the public will be focused on these localities and will be more intense. At the same time the information campaign will proceed in the potential localities of the future repository.

### **Objectives of the process**

Objectives of the process are:

- To participate in the decision making process according to the Aarhus Convention requirements.
- To improve the decision making process and avoid the future conflict around the siting of the repository that may influence the entire nuclear program.
- To encourage greater transparency and confidence in decision making.

### **Which tool was used?**

The reference group meets twice a year and or more often if it is necessary, to discuss all current issues related to RWM.

**Status:** Ongoing

### **Objectives and outcomes of stakeholder engagement**

One objective is to form the reference group with a wide representation of stakeholders. In future it aims to establish a permanent body representing all stakeholders that may discuss and solve the problems related to public involvement in the process of site selection, followed by the design and construction of the new repository.

The objective of the RISCOM Reference Group, as formulated in its agreement, is *"...to increase awareness of all aspects concerning the problems associated with the choice of a suitable site for a new repository for low and medium level radioactive waste, in order to improve the conditions for transparency and active involvement of the general public in the decision-making process, in accordance with the ITA process<sup>1</sup>."*

<sup>1</sup> For more details about the ITA process see: [http://www.karita.se/our\\_approach/the-ita-process.php](http://www.karita.se/our_approach/the-ita-process.php)

## **Involved Stakeholders**

12 Experts, 7 Decision-makers, 6 representatives of the public.

## **Implementer of the participation process details**

The IPPA partners: Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology with National Centre of Nuclear Researches supported by the Ministry of Economy.

## **Financing**

The costs of the reference group meetings are covered by the IPPA project, no other costs are incurred.

## **Points to consider**

The discussions take place at the national level with limited stakeholder involvement; therefore not all parts are represented. There has been a very limited response from NGOs, namely, nuclear energy opponents. It would be good to have greater involvement of ecological NGOs in the RISCOP process, as well as to find a format for allowing participation by all groups of stakeholders, i.e. to create “the safe space” for all.

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

Workshops, trainings, press conferences, hearings, Homepage

## **Contact details**

[g.zakrzewska@ichtj.waw.pl](mailto:g.zakrzewska@ichtj.waw.pl)