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NE(87)6

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STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY

PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE FUTURE  
OF THE NEA DATA BANK

Opinion of the Performance Assessment Advisory Group  
of the Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMC)

(Note by the Secretariat)

1. At its meeting on 16th-18th March 1987, the RWMC Performance Assessment Advisory Group (PAAG) reviewed the proposed plan for computer-based activities and cooperation with the NEA Data Bank in the field of radioactive waste management [see NE(87)6, Section V.A]. This review was based on previous consultations with consultants, members of the RWMC and of the Executive Committee of the International Sorption Information Retrieval System (ISIRS) and PAAG members themselves. The present document reflects all these consultations and particularly the discussions at the PAAG meeting.

2. The Performance Assessment Advisory Group confirmed the need for the high priority to be given to activities related to long-term performance assessment of disposal systems and the associated computer-based techniques. Noting that the NEA Data Bank has already begun to support on a modest scale a number of well-established projects within NEA, such as the ISIRS System, the Thermochemical Data Base (TDB) and the work of the PSAC User Group (Probabilistic Systems Assessment Codes User Group), PAAG strongly supported the proposals concerning the future of the NEA Data Bank in the area of radioactive waste management. In particular, PAAG welcomed the role of NEA and of the Data Bank as a catalyst and coordinator for international activities on performance assessment and agreed that increased efforts in this field would enhance considerably the credibility of performance assessment tools. PAAG also agreed in general with priorities indicated in document NE(87)6 with regard to the work on data bases and on computer codes and with the type of services to be provided by the Data Bank. However, the group advised the Secretariat to carefully keep under control the amount of work involved. It was also confirmed that NEA itself would probably not play an active role in the carrying out of actual performance assessment calculations.

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3. As a conclusion, therefore, the need for NEA to reinforce its competence and resources in an area of high priority and under rapid development was clearly recognised, particularly if the Agency is expected to continue to remain at the forefront of activities in the field of performance assessment through PAAG and the RWMC. A great deal of efforts is currently devoted at national level to the development of improved methodologies and scientific tools for performance assessment. In this context, it appears desirable for NEA to aim essentially at upgrading these efforts through international cooperation that will promote increased confidence in data bases and computer programmes being used for performance assessment.

4. The Steering Committee is invited to take note of the views of the RWMC Performance Assessment Advisory Group as expressed above in its discussions of document NE(87)6 on the future of the NEA Data Bank.