

# Valuing Stakeholder Involvement:

Experience and Findings of the  
Forum on Stakeholder Confidence

*Presented to the Final CARL Seminar*  
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## Outline

- Why stakeholder involvement matters when making management and safety decisions about radioactive waste
- Origin and purpose of the Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC)
- Activities and methodology of FSC
- Observations and findings
- Conclusions and outlook

## International Need For Enhanced Stakeholder Involvement

- Waste management organizations and authorities in many nations now recognize the need to improve their interactions with stakeholders
- Experience has shown that technical excellence alone has not been enough to ensure that society accepts and upholds technically sound waste management decisions
- Stakeholders are demanding better information and more opportunities for meaningful participation
- Nuclear waste laws in many countries require it
- International treaties and conventions call for it

# Stakeholder Perceptions of Waste Management Decisions are Multi-dimensional

- In addition to technical soundness and accuracy, many stakeholders evaluate safety decisions and their acceptability in terms of
  - Fairness
  - Trustworthiness
  - Motivation
  - Integrity
  - Broader context
  
- Quality of interactions with stakeholders matters as much as the accuracy of their substance

## Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC)

- Set up by the Radioactive Waste Management Committee of OECD's Nuclear Energy Agency (2000)
- Serves as a venue for sharing international experience in achieving effective dialogue with the public and strengthening confidence in decision-making processes
- Includes developers, regulators, policy makers and researchers from 15 countries
- Embraces a wider representation of civil society through annual national workshops and community visits that include national and local stakeholders
- Defines “stakeholder” as “*any* organization, group or person with an interest or a role to play in radioactive waste management”

## FSC Membership

- Belgium
- Czech Republic
- France
- Hungary
- Japan
- Spain
- Switzerland
- United States
- Canada
- Finland
- Germany
- Italy
- Norway
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

## FSC Objectives

- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect and learning for waste management practitioners to examine issues affecting stakeholder involvement and communication
- Seek out factors that contribute to effective stakeholder participation in decisions related to radioactive waste
- Collect and evaluate advice on techniques that strengthen confidence in decision-making processes
- Document principles, implications and best (and less effective) practices for engaging stakeholders in long-term waste-management projects

## FSC Activities

- National workshops and community visits
- Annual meetings at NEA headquarters
- Publications



## National Workshops and Community visits

- FSC has held six workshops at the invitation of the host countries and communities
  - In Finland (2001), Canada (2002), Belgium (2003), Germany (2004), Spain (2005) and Hungary (2006)
- A well-tested, interactive format:
  - Presentations from local, regional and national stakeholders
  - Multiple, facilitated roundtable discussions between FSC members and stakeholders

## Annual FSC meetings

- Held at NEA headquarters in Paris, France
- Topical sessions with invited speakers
- Case studies from various stakeholder perspectives
- Desk studies and literature reviews
- Analyses of questionnaire responses from members
- Reports of developments in member countries
- Opportunities for networking
- Planning future activities

## Examples of FSC Topical Sessions

- Tools to Aid Societal Decision-making
- Criteria for Selecting Stakeholder Involvement Tools
- Media Relations
- The Relationship Between RD&D and Stakeholder Confidence
- Addressing Issues Raised by Stakeholders: Impacts on Process, Content, and Behaviours in Waste Management Organisations

## FSC Publications

- FSC is building a publicly accessible data base to be of help to all stakeholders
- FSC studies, reports, workshop proceedings, and topical session summaries are available online at:

<http://www.nea.fr/html/rwm/fsc.html>

## FSC Observations and Findings

- Among the many publications available through our public website, three studies exemplify the FSC's cutting-edge work:
  - Learning and Adapting to Societal Requirements for Radioactive Waste Management
  - Regulators' Evolving Role and Image
  - Fostering a Durable Relationship Between a Waste Management Facility and its Host Community

## « Learning and Adapting to Societal Requirements for Radioactive Waste Management »

- Insights on achieving long-term decisions with societal support. Explores the need to reconcile competing technical requirements, societal and ethical concerns.
- No 'one best way'; decision-making processes benefit from:
  - Clear policy framework that establishes active, complementary roles for stakeholders
  - Blend of formal and informal mechanisms to achieve accountability, flexibility, responsiveness, inclusiveness
  - Sufficient time and resources for stakeholders to identify and to weigh interests and options
  - Provisions to keep the process moving, etc.
  - New tools to forecast and monitor quality of life and social impacts of waste facilities

## « The Regulator's Evolving Role and Image in Radioactive Waste Management »

- Responding to input from workshops and community visits, FSC emphasizes the expanding role of regulators in fostering societal confidence
- Regulatory actions taken within an incremental, decision-making process, open to public involvement, afford regulators the opportunity to assume a higher public profile as 'guarantors' and 'peoples' experts'
- Demonstrated independence, competence, and accountability on the part of regulators build confidence in the decision framework, and earn public trust
- FSC finds that it is of critical importance for regulatory authorities to adopt a culture of openness, and demonstrate that they are learning organizations, prepared to respond to new information in order to protect and interact with the public they serve

## « Fostering a Durable Relationship Between a Waste Management Facility and its Host Community »

- FSC examines the value of cultivating a positive relationship between a waste management facility and the host community
- Relationship must support quality of life *and* enable the community to assume a “guardianship” role
- It is possible to integrate a facility with a host community through design and implementation that provide added cultural and amenity value across the generations
- Features like distinctiveness, aesthetic quality, understandability, multi-functionality, flexibility, accessibility, local utility all contribute to this integration
- Local problem-solving capacity, social capital, and future vision can emerge by deliberating on facility hosting
- FSC highlights the importance of establishing partnerships with local stakeholders early in a facility siting process



## Conclusions – Value of the FSC Venue

- The FSC was created for high-level delegates designated by governments, and has published extensive information for use by governments and organizations, that is also available to other stakeholders
- Evaluation shows that individual delegates have learned and grown through their participation
- The FSC 'Organizational Change' study revealed that member organizations have received benefits as well
- Host nations and communities have cited the value of FSC National Workshops for supporting dialogue and developing insight among national participants
- The FSC was recognized in the European Parliament and at the last meeting of the IAEA Joint Convention

## Outlook – FSC's Program of Work

- Continue to pursue certain themes of investigation:
  - RD&D and Stakeholder Confidence; Tools & Processes to Help Society Prepare and Manage Decisions; Media Relations; Increasing Value of WM Facilities to Communities
- Add new themes:
  - Memory and markers; Use of analogs; International instruments, Emerging environmental law; Understanding the symbolic value of waste facilities
- Workshop, this December, in Paris, will provide an opportunity for FSC members, along with invited scholars and stakeholders, to reflect on and shape FSC's future directions

## Closing Thoughts

- Technical soundness and procedural fairness are of comparable importance
- Stakeholders must have access to understandable information about what is happening and why
- Stakeholder confidence can never be established “once and for all,” but must be earned on a continual basis