

International Decommissioning Network

Terms of Reference

1. Vision

The IAEA has a vision of nuclear decommissioning for the second decade of the 21st century in which all nuclear facilities and other premises utilizing radioactive materials have regulatory compliant decommissioning plans in place and are capable, when scheduled, of implementing these in a safe, timely and effective manner. This vision received substantial impetus from the 2006 Athens conference organized by the Agency on “lessons learned” from decommissioning, where it was recognized that an ongoing and self-sustaining forum for the communication of practical decommissioning experience was needed. The IAEA programme has already provided significant support to the achievement of this vision and continues to include activities to aid Member States with less advanced programmes in particular to move towards this vision.

The Agency wishes to enhance its arrangements for working with organizations either currently engaged in, or actively planning to engage in, decommissioning. Consequently it is proposed to establish a network of organizations with an interest in and experience of decommissioning. This response is intended to address the needs of a large number of Member States by accessing the relatively mature nuclear decommissioning capabilities of those with extensive nuclear programmes. In turn, those organizations in Member States possessing a high level of expertise in decommissioning, facilities suitable for demonstration or training, and possessing a willingness to share their experience via the Network, will be recognized by the Agency as “Centres of Excellence” in decommissioning.

The IDN will seek to work flexibly with organizations with existing networks involved in decommissioning, forming in effect a loosely affiliated “Network of Networks”.

It is intended that the Network will provide the mechanism for a full range of mutual support activities to its participants, covering not only current IAEA programmes but potentially also activities similar to those provided to operating plant by existing nuclear power plant organizations. It is anticipated that this vision will take time to achieve and will be best approached by limiting its initial scope and extending it as experience and success is achieved.

2. Name

The Network shall be known as the International Decommissioning Network or IDN.

3. Scope

In principle, the IDN will consider decommissioning issues related to any relevant facility including: nuclear power plants (npp), nuclear fuel cycle facilities, research reactors and other facilities in which radionuclides are utilized for industrial, medical or research purposes. Given the extensive work that has been done in recent years on the planning, and to a lesser extent, implementation of npp and other large facility decommissioning, it is anticipated that the greatest initial benefits will accrue by concentrating on the needs of other, smaller facilities. Nevertheless, it is likely that opportunities will remain for enhancements to large facility decommissioning via the IDN.

The IDN will initially focus on hands-on, site-based training and demonstrations, particularly for research reactors and other smaller facilities such as those formerly engaged in fuel-cycle activities and laboratory or medical facilities. These activities are expected to enhance planning for and project management of decommissioning, use of technologies for safe dismantling and decontamination, the management of materials and wastes arising from decommissioning, the clean up of facilities and associated sites and their release from regulatory control, and may indirectly provide benefit on other issues such as stakeholder-management associated with decommissioning and contribute to the design of new nuclear facilities by ensuring that features to enhance their future decommissioning are addressed at the design stage.

The IDN will work with existing internal and external networks and projects to ensure a mutual awareness of activities and programmes in order to minimize overlap and maximize efficient coverage of important topics.

4. Functions

The IDN is expected to provide:

- a. opportunities to support participating nuclear facilities or Member States, particularly those with less developed decommissioning industries, by providing access to relevant skills, knowledge and projects;
- b. a forum in which specialist advice and technical guidance may be provided on the Agency's programme in the area of decommissioning;
- c. a mechanism whereby decommissioning experts may exchange information under the aegis of the Agency to pursue the promulgation of good practices and the longer term retention of knowledge in support of decommissioning plan implementation
- d. An expanded range of training and demonstration activities, especially demonstration projects with a regional or thematic focus providing hands-on, user-oriented experience.

5. Participation

IDN Participants: Organizations that have responsibility for the decommissioning of nuclear facilities, are actively engaged in decommissioning planning or implementation, and who wish to participate in the activities of the IDN will be known as “IDN Participants”

IDN Members: Organizations (Participants) that possess a demonstrated breadth of decommissioning experience, a record of excellence in a wide range of areas, facilities suitable for demonstration or training and a willingness to share their experience through the IDN, will be identified as “IDN Members” and recognized by the Agency as “Centres of Excellence” in decommissioning.

IDN Participants can come from organizations in any Member State with responsibilities and interests as noted above. IDN Participants meeting the expectations for Members as noted above, will be identified as such and recognized by the Agency as “Centres of Excellence in Decommissioning”.

6. Activities and Methods of Working

Within the IAEA, implementation of the IDN will involve a collaborative effort amongst the Departments of Nuclear Energy, Nuclear Safety and Security, and Technical Co-operation.

The work of the IDN will assist the integration and communication of ongoing work by the IAEA in the area of Technical Cooperation and other Projects. It is not intended that the IDN would take-over direct responsibility for these activities. Rather, the IDN will focus initially on extending the “reach” of current/planned IAEA decommissioning activities through improved co-ordination and dissemination of information concerning these activities. Additional activities offered by Member organizations will be integrated into the schedule of these current/planned activities. Feedback from Members and Participants will be taken into account in defining future decommissioning priorities for activities.

Areas where activities may be offered through the auspices of the IDN include:

- i. The hosting of secondments, training courses or visits by Members or Participants
- ii. The provision of suitably qualified and experienced individuals to support Participants by means of on-site education and training, workshops, peer reviews or other expert missions.

- iii. Providing qualified peers from amongst the Participants of the IDN to support the Agency's efforts on peer review and technical support.
- iv. The use of fellowships, exchanges, coaching and mentoring, both on an individual to individual level and potentially on an organization to organization level.
- v. The provision of expertise to allow the Agency to progress its work programme in areas such as consultancy meetings, document production or Coordinated Research Projects (CRP), and by increasing knowledge of these activities, improve their quality and utilization.

The "Methods of Working" expected to be employed will include a combination of the following:

- vi. The establishment of a website to provide continuity between meetings and facilitate training or exchange of good practices. As well, a number of other practical objectives may be served by the website, such as to highlight upcoming events, facilitate on-line publication of visual information, promote individual contacts and their interests, and post reviews of equipment and notices of availability of used equipment.
- vii. Making available for reuse, redundant instrumentation and equipment that may no longer be required by participants but may have continued value for organizations and Member States with limited resources.
- viii. Where an organization has a demonstrated excellence in a particular topic it may be nominated to lead for the IDN on work in that topic area.
- ix. Specialist groups may be formed under the aegis of the IDN. These may cover topics or facility types of common interest. Where appropriate, Co-ordinated Research Projects (CRPs) may be formed to pursue these topics.
- x. A steering committee, representative of the IDN, shall be formed by the IDN Scientific Secretary, comprised of the Scientific Secretary, the heads of the Departments of Nuclear Energy, Nuclear Safety and Security and Technical Co-operation, or their delegates, and the IDN Members. It shall meet as required and at least once yearly for an annual review meeting.
- xi. Plenary meetings or sessions may be organized for all Members and Participants as a further means of delivering the IDN goals

- xii. The IAEA will provide the administrative and secretariat services required by IDN (subject to the availability of funds) including meeting facilities in Vienna, maintenance of records and distribution of documents. The IAEA will provide the services of a Scientific Secretary from within Waste Technology Section.
- xiii. The Secretariat will provide a system for the recording of meetings and other IDN interactions.

7. Steering Committee Meetings

Meetings will be conducted in English only. The chairperson of the meeting shall be appointed by the members of the meeting. The agenda for the meeting shall be of the form:

- a. Agreement as to chairperson
- b. Review of previous year's activities
- c. Confirmation of current year's programme
- d. Response to IAEA programme of work
- e. Opportunities to improve co-operation with other organizations
- f. Plans for coming year(s)
- g. Drafting and agreement of an annual review document for submission to Deputy Directors General for the Departments of Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Safety and Security. This shall include any information on the proposed evolution of IDN.
- h. Timing and content of next meeting.

8. Costs

The IAEA is not in a position to commit to bearing the travel and other costs of participants to IDN review and plenary meetings or other events. However, the IAEA may contribute to the cost of participants if sufficient funds are available and attendance will provide a significant contribution. Any other costs must be met by the organization attending.