

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Technical Meeting on the “Establishment of an International Decommissioning Network” 29-31 October 2007

Background

Around the world, but particularly in developing Member States (MSs), there are disused nuclear facilities or those approaching the end of their useful lives, for which appropriate decommissioning steps have not been taken, primarily due to limited technical and financial resources or competing priorities. Many of these facilities are small and widely distributed geographically, e.g. ~300 aging or shut-down research reactors. Requests for assistance to address this issue from MSs exceed the capability of IAEA (and others) to deliver. However, integrating individual initiative into a designed-for-purpose network may compensate for these limitations. A Consultancy organized by the Agency in March 2007 indicated strong support for a new initiative amongst organizations from both potential “donor” and “recipient” MSs. This new initiative would take the form of an “International Decommissioning Network (IDN)”.

The objectives of the IDN are to improve the flow of knowledge and experience amongst those engaged in decommissioning, and specifically to enhance the “user-oriented” focus for all IAEA decommissioning activities. It is expected that the IDN will build on the success and principles demonstrated by the IAEA *Network of Centres of Excellence for Underground Research Facilities*. The initial successes of the Decommissioning Network are expected to encourage contributions of organizations in the developed MSs to the activities of those in MSs requiring decommissioning assistance, and to maximize the benefit of Technical Cooperation (TC) activities through integration and improved measurability of results.

Initially, it is anticipated that the IDN will focus on smaller facilities e.g. research reactors, laboratories and other small installations and will expand its membership and activities on an “as-needed” basis to medical, industrial, and research facilities. It will provide a “bridge” between those with specialized knowledge and those that need to apply it, and encourage an exchange of practical knowledge and skills. Links to other organizations with similar goals and interests, e.g. OECD/NEA, will be established.

Purpose of the Meeting

The objective of the Technical Meeting (TM) will be to inform and seek input from senior representatives of organizations from member states concerning the goals, objectives and proposed activities of the IDN. In particular, MSs’ potential and willingness to provide decommissioning knowledge and experience, or to provide a venue/facility to host demonstrations and other related activities will be sought. The initial priorities of the Decommissioning Network and its operational approaches will be defined based on feedback received at the meeting.

Scope of the Meeting

The meeting will encompass the following activities:

1. Presentation by IAEA staff on the objectives of the IDN. (Perspectives of Waste Technology, Waste Safety and TC will be presented). Summary of the main features of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Network. (The draft TOR will be circulated to participants in advance of the meeting – see last point below).
2. Presentation of a summary of current IAEA activities in the field of Decommissioning. Identification of events planned for 2008 which can form part of the IDN.
3. Presentations by potential hosts of training and demonstration activities outlining the scope, importance, timing, and number and type of participants that can be accommodated.
4. Presentation by those able to provide specialized knowledge, expertise or techniques which could benefit other participants in the network, e.g. nature of specialized knowledge/capability, techniques, tooling etc, and suggestions as to how this information can best be shared.
5. Presentations by those from countries facing the challenge of decommissioning, outlining the nature of their challenge, and what specific assistance the Network could provide.
6. Roundtable discussion on the needs, activities, and priorities presented. Confirmation, in a plenary session, of the proposed priorities and discussion of an initial work plan for the IDN
7. Discussion of the draft TOR for the IDN, any proposed changes to it, and the proposed modalities of Network operation (e.g. establishment and duties of a Secretariat)

On the third (last) day a special session will be held to which representatives of Permanent Missions from those countries facing the challenge of decommissioning will also be invited to be briefed on the Decommissioning Network concept and the results achieved in the first two days.

Outcomes of the Meeting

The primary product of the meeting will be a formal record of the discussions and decisions made at the meeting, in particular the expressions of interest in sharing expertise and resources, and in hosting specific activities as part of the Decommissioning Network's programme. A proposed list of actions for the participating organizations and the Agency for the next 12 months will be established. An outline will be produced of desired activities to cover the next 2-3 years. Guidelines for programme development for the longer-term will be established.

Materials to be made available

The following materials will be made available to participants:

- Draft Terms of Reference for the Decommissioning Network
- Summary of Consultancy on the establishment of a Decommissioning Network held in March 2007
- A summary of ongoing IAEA activities in Decommissioning.
- A list of potential subjects and activities for co-operation, with rationale.

Date of Meeting: 29 to 31 October

Place of Meeting: C07-VI

IAEA Scientific Secretary: Mr. Paul J.C. Dinner