

Managing Nuclear Knowledge: a SCK•CEN concern

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Managing knowledge can be seen as the processes governing the creation, the dissemination and the utilisation of knowledge. Any organisation and specially a research centre will need a continuously updated body of knowledge as a basis of its sustained existence. Since its very beginning, SCK•CEN has always been a knowledge-based organisation aiming to solve topical problems based on experiences in the field, model-oriented experiments and fundamental research. Preserving and enhancing our institutional memory has become vital for the SCK•CEN. We are therefore pursuing our efforts to *stimulating preservation and sharing of Nuclear Knowledge*.

Our knowledge exists in different forms and formats ranging from dispersed pieces of technical or scientific information on different media to a complex reservoir of people with the required educational background, expertise and acquired insights to apply that knowledge safely and effectively.

SCK•CEN decided in 2001 to tackle this strategic concern by adopting a practical knowledge management (KM) approach. Our programme started in 2002 is built on 'what already exists'. KM activities were identified all over our organisation – building databases, assembling nuclear and technical information, implementing QA procedures, conducting training, writing publications – so that every researcher or technical staff can lay claim to it. However, a co-ordinated approach to Knowledge Management requires an efficient re-use of the recorded knowledge and an effective transfer of the available knowledge. This approach ensures an added value to our research work and guarantees on the long term the preservation of our institutional memory.

The objective of the KM programme is the continuous improvement of the information management coupled with the elicitation of tacit knowledge, the stimulation of collaboration and the knowledge transfer. KM also enhances the information objects by adding or linking related additional information and tacit knowledge.

KM needs were detected and prioritised. The necessary mechanisms and systems were created. In 2002, we decided to sustain existing communities of practice through web-based portals. Those knowledge systems are based on the same underlying content management framework for storing, retrieving and re-use of shared document collections and databases. Those systems offer today such features as personalised interface, editing, version control and collaboration tools for discussion.

In conclusion, knowledge management is essential for a knowledge-based organisation such as a scientific research centre. On the long term, we hope that the effective management of nuclear knowledge at SCK•CEN will ensure the continued availability of essential reservoirs of both technical information and qualified people.