

## WM2009 Conference Panel Report

### **Panel Session 68A: The International Decommissioning Network of the IAEA**

Panel Reporter – Paul Dinner, IAEA (Austria)

In this roundtable discussion, co-chaired by P. Dinner and J. Devgun, participants brought together the discussion threads from previous technical sessions and the opening Panel on international co-operation on decommissioning (Session 4). They were asked to envisage enhancing this co-operation using the International Decommissioning Network (IDN) as a “springboard”. The discussion was spirited, fruitful and provocative, as many, both - panellists and audience – contributed original insights and suggestions.

Panelists included:

- Jas Devgun, Manager, Nuclear Power Technologies, Sargent and Lundy (USA)
- Abrie Visagie, Senior Manager NECSA (South Africa)
- Jean-Jacques Grenouillet, Decommissioning Project Manager EDF (France)
- Vladan Ljubenov, Acting Director, Centre for Nuclear Technologies and Research, Vinca Institute (Serbia)
- Andrew Szilagi, D&D Program Leader, USDOE (USA)
- Greta Rindhal, Inst. For Energy Technology (Norway)

Jas Devgun re-iterated the key emerging theme that nuclear decommissioning must be viewed as part of a continuum of activities involving reconstruction and re-use of facilities and sites, and that this must be kept in mind from initial design onward. In this context, lessons learned around the world need to be effectively and promptly shared.

Abrie Visagie picked up on this theme in his remarks. He first reviewed the emergence of the South African decommissioning programme – the challenges it faced, key issues (such as increased pressure for site re-use), and how NECSA had benefited from international co-operation. Looking forward, he enumerated from his written paper the specific areas where international co-operation would be very beneficial and how the IDN could play an important role.

Andrew Szilagi provided the observation that international networking was a reflection and magnification of the internal process he had experienced within the DOE, and how successful measures adopted in national programmes (such as tools for knowledge management) could be adapted to the needs of the international community. Andrew spoke of the opportunity and challenge posed by going from “giving and receiving” to “collaborating and sharing”

Greta Rindhal stirred the panelists and audience with a plea to balance human and technological factors in our search for best practices. She reminded us that the resulting “total is greater than the sum of the parts”, and that critical human aspects of technological progress include improved communication between problem owners at the practical level, breaking of the “decommissioning mindset” and engaging the next generation on their own terms.

Vladan Ljubenov reviewed some of the challenges faced by the Vinca facility. He emphasized the importance of international cooperation in the safe implementation of planned activities when limited resources and experience are available for the completion of the tasks.

Jean-Jacques Grenouillet stressed the importance of using the appropriate tools from the decommissioner's "toolbox" – for example to open up opportunities for specialist vendors from across the international community in order to obtain the best technical approaches. He recounted "lessons learned" from EDF's efforts at international co-operation in planning the dismantlement of Chooz A, presented in detail in Session 18.

The panellists and audience converged on the following strategic and practical observations for future international co-operation.

1. The "vision" statement of the IDN is clear and moving, and needs to be featured in the Network's regular communication.
2. The IDN is potentially a powerful force for change in the industry. To be effective, it should set out to break traditional "mindsets" by presenting provocative "outlier" views.
3. Development of the IDN's communication tools to strengthen direct communications between participants, promote awareness of successful approaches (and failures), provide a library of "model" decommissioning planning reports, is urgently needed.
4. Promotion of novel "tools" – both "hard" technological tools such as cleaner alternatives to traditional "hammer and chisel" approaches, and "soft" tools such as those facilitating change management should be explicit goals.
5. Effective means for constructive engagement of vendors consistent with the Agency's role of impartiality should be considered.

As this session drew to a close, it became clear that there is a strong underlying core of support for the IDN – individuals and organizations willing to contribute energy and resources to its future success. While new "hands on events" are an important part of the IDN, they must not overshadow efforts to promote its larger goal as a "network of networks"