

**Engaging Citizens,
Dialogue with the Stakeholders is at the Core of AREVA's Strategy - 10389**
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ABSTRACT

Today, information and dialogue are at the core of AREVA's strategy. There can be no taboo when talking about nuclear energy. AREVA promotes transparency in all aspects of our business, including the most sensitive issues. Public concerns must be taken seriously and addressed honestly. This is the key to building solid relations with our stakeholders.

From a practical point of view, this policy translates into a number of initiatives tailored to the requirements of each individual site. Each program is designed to address local issues and meet expectations of local stakeholders. Several of these initiatives are presented in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Back to the Nineties! The nuclear industry was still a secretive world, closed to outsiders and opaque to those without a so-called "need to know". Its communication strategy was designed strictly for defensive purposes. Few knew what was going on inside and the public was told to "trust the experts"!

Fast forward to the 21st century! The landscape has been thoroughly transformed. "Nuclear" is not a word we have to whisper anymore. It is now recognized by the OECD, the International Energy Agency and major industrialized and emerging countries as a solution to win the race against climate change while ensuring energy security. This change is due in part to a new policy of openness and transparency implemented by the nuclear industry over the last decade. AREVA is at the forefront of this effort.

PRESENTATION OF AREVA INITIATIVES TO ENGAGE CITIZENS

Shortly after she became head of Cogema - soon to become the foundation of the AREVA group - Anne Lauvergeon took an initiative which was highly symbolic of this new era of openness: webcams were installed in the control room and the main facilities of the La Hague site in France, where AREVA processes used nuclear fuel for recycling. With these webcams, the public could monitor the site's operations 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Combined with a visit program open to the public at large, these webcams were not just promoting transparency: they were also a clear demonstration that our industry has nothing to hide. They demystified our business in general and AREVA's treatment and recycling activities in particular. Unfortunately, the webcams had to be disconnected for safety reasons after the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States. They were replaced with other dialogue and

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communication measures, which sustain our commitment to meet proactively the public's information expectations.

One of the most remarkable and widely reported initiatives is our online publication of all environmental results for each AREVA production site. In France, these results are submitted to Local Information Commissions comprised of elected officials, NGOs, labor representatives, health professionals, technical experts and other representatives of local stakeholders. These frequent meetings are open to the public and the press. In addition to environmental data, AREVA submits information on site operations, incidents if any, and future projects. The meetings include a Q&A session where we respond to questions asked by the public.

Constant dialogue with our stakeholders is a key component of AREVA's growth strategy. What separates us from most of other nuclear industry players is our true desire to meet our shareholders and hear their concerns. In the US as in Europe, nuclear energy is still an "emotional issue". In many countries, the public has mixed feelings when it comes to nuclear power. Besides, all major infrastructure projects are hotly debated. Nuclear energy is not an exception and this will remain the case for years to come. This is another reason why we must listen, discuss and give honest responses to all. The goal is not necessarily to convince but to have a rational debate, free of emotional baggage.

To be efficient, a dialogue must be organized. To this end, AREVA deployed two specific initiatives in France, the rest of Europe and the United States. The first initiative is the "stakeholder sessions" to engage a dialogue between AREVA's corporate top management and external stakeholders. The second initiative is the "local stakeholder mappings", implemented at each major industrial site.

1. For the stakeholder sessions, AREVA's Executive Vice Presidents and a panel of stakeholder representatives recognized in their field of expertise meet for two half days of closed-door discussions every eighteen months. These sessions focus on the group's social responsibility as part of a process to which AREVA is committed for the long term. A facilitator designated at AREVA's initiative provides assistance to the group in developing a program focused on ethics supported by operational rules.
2. For local stakeholder mapping, an independent third party organizes interviews with a panel of local external stakeholders including NGOs, elected officials, members of the press and other categories of stakeholders. Fifteen to thirty interviews of one hour each are organized, with the number of interviews depending on the specific characteristics of each site. The main objective is to hear what stakeholders have to say, to identify any concern they may have and to understand their perception of local issues in general and the AREVA site in question. The process enables site managers to establish priorities and areas for improvement as regards stakeholder relations. An action plan is also established to resolve issues that have been identified. This assessment is repeated approximately every third year at each site.

The La Hague used fuel treatment and recycling plant was chosen as a pilot site for this AREVA initiative. This site, which is an old favorite of the antinuclear crowd — and therefore the media — is also among the largest employers in the Normandy region. As a result, the initial test proved very useful and a source of many lessons. AREVA was able to restructure the dialogue based on public concerns, which extended beyond the questions usually raised around nuclear sites. Some of most pointed questions related to the plant's workload for the short, medium and long term, and the corresponding recruitment plans. Questions were also raised regarding the possibility of transferring technologies used in our industrial process, in order to promote economic growth in the region, create new expertise centers and encourage new businesses to set up shop locally. Finally, some questions related to the plant's need in terms of infrastructure and skills required to sustain our growth. This well-organized, two-way dialogue led to the design of a true plan for cooperation in matters of education and economic development. Complementing the site's open and transparent communications on its operations, this plan contributed to strengthening acceptance of La Hague in the local population. Public acceptance, therefore, is not only a matter of communications: it also reflects an industrial site's ability to get involved with the community..

The goal for both initiatives is to develop and maintain relations of trust with stakeholders in the group's immediate environment. For AREVA, this means expanding the dialogue with external stakeholders while implementing actions plans to respond to concerns, to meet expectations and improve the company's community involvement. In other words, the primary goal of the dialogue with stakeholders is not to promote acceptance of our industrial decisions but rather to cooperate with stakeholders, as proxies for the diverse components of civil society, with a view to improving effectiveness and responsibility in our organization.

AREVA FOCUS ON WASTE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States has the world's largest nuclear power program, with 104 operating reactors. Waste management is therefore particularly sensitive there, maybe more so than anywhere else. Clear, reliable and durable solutions must be found. But public acceptance not only depends on finding solutions. It also depends on effectively communicating when the solutions are deployed. To succeed, communication must reflect our ability to listen, be transparent open and truthful in our answers. All sensitive subjects can be addressed if we talk honestly about them !

Of course, everybody knows that the United States is currently evaluating the best approach to manage used nuclear fuel. This does not mean that we should not discuss the subject frankly. This is what AREVA does: discussing used nuclear fuel is not taboo. There are solutions, so let's talk about them!

To initiate this dialogue, AREVA is launching two major initiatives:

1. First, we created an information blog made available on the main social networks. Regular communications with the blogging community will be maintained to sustain this effort;
2. Second, we created the AREVA Community Advisory Council.

Of course, these tools are not dedicated exclusively to discussing waste management. But in practice, both allocate a fairly large share of their dialogue areas to this subject, if only because this is a fundamental subject that triggers many questions and that may even look scary.

The AREVA Blog was launched in March 2009. It was at the time the first blog created by a nuclear power company, and one of the first by any energy company. As discussed earlier, the main purpose of this tool is not to promote AREVA news and recent developments. The blog is meant as a platform for discussion, dedicated to our major energy and climate challenges and the main energy sources available, nuclear power in particular. This is also a platform where AREVA may express its opinion on these topics while communicating the positions of other stakeholders and responding to the public's questions and comments. In short, it serves as a forum of discussion for a frank and fruitful conversation, made available on social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

The recently created AREVA Community Advisory Council has, fundamentally, the same goals as the blog, i.e. listening and discussing, even though the format is very different from the blog. At this point, the Council is comprised of a dozen members, mostly national grass roots organizations with local chapters all around the United States, community representatives and think tanks, with whom AREVA meets on a regular basis to respond to questions on AREVA news and practices and to learn the concerns of the communities and the stakeholders they represent, including suggestions for a better approach to the various issues. The nuclear waste conundrum is, without doubt, their number one concern. What are they worried about? That industry, the government and public authorities in general may use their power for impose a waste storage facility or a treatment facility in a distressed area where the population may not be able to defend its interests. This is why it is important that we explain what nuclear waste is, the solutions

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available to manage it, and industry commitment to locate facilities without causing a negative impact for the environment or the health of the populations

Some Council members have already visited La Hague. This was also an opportunity for them to meet representatives of civil society living near the site. Little by little, confidence is growing. The dialogue continues. Does this mean that success is guaranteed? Let's not be arrogant, but let's provide truthful answers, even this means explaining the drawbacks of the various solutions as well as their benefits.

CONCLUSION

This openness and dialogue strategy proved successful. Of course, as indicated earlier, nuclear energy remains topic for debate and discussion. But this is good news. Good news because there is nothing about nuclear energy which cannot be talked about and because debating is healthy. This is what makes us progress!