

WM2012 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 049: International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation (IFNEC)

Co-Chairs: John Mathieson, *NDA (UK)*
Paul Dickman, *Argonne National Laboratory*

Panel Reporter: John Mathieson, *NDA (UK)*

Panelists:

1. Ed McGinnis, *IFNEC Steering Group Chair and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, US DOE (USA)*
2. Kazuhiro Suzuki, *METI Japan, Co-Chair Reliable Nuclear Fuel Services Working Group (Japan)*
3. John Mathieson, *NDA, Co-Chair Infrastructure Development Working Group (UK)*
4. Irena Mele, *Head of Waste Technology Section, Division of Nuclear Fuel Cycle and Waste Technology, IAEA (Austria)*
5. Hans Codee, *Managing Director, COVRA (Netherlands)*

This panel provided a general introduction to the activities of IFNEC and reported on the waste management aspects. IFNEC is the successor to Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) and is a grouping of nearly sixty participants and observers from countries interested in developing or expanding nuclear energy. At the working level IFNEC has two major working groups to look at infrastructure and development of reliable fuel supplies.

The International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation

Presented by **Edward G. McGinnis**, the first paper was a general presentation about the origin of IFNEC and the development of on-going actions in light of the Fukushima accident. Key point raised was: IFNEC is the only ministerial level forum for nuclear energy advocates and emerging nuclear energy states to meet and discuss common issues and exchange practices and concepts.

Reliable Nuclear Fuel Services Working Group

Kazuhiro Suzuki presented the next paper which discussed the IFNEC Reliable Nuclear Fuel Services Working Group and the working group's Terms of Reference and summaries of their meetings and workshops.

Infrastructure Development Working Group

John Mathieson discussed the IFNEC Infrastructure Development Working Group (IDWG) which has seven key areas of focus including Human Resource Development, Radioactive Waste Management, Small Modular Reactors, Support for Participant Countries (which includes financing arrangements), and needs for an International Nuclear Fuel Services Framework.

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IAEA - IFNEC Relations

Irena Mele presented a discussion on the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as an active observer in IFNEC. IFNEC allows multinational organizations such as the IAEA to participate in the meeting as observers and to make presentations in the working groups. IAEA has participated in workshops on specific topics: SMRs, Emergency preparedness, HRD for nuclear power infrastructure.

Waste Management for a Small Country. Small is Beautiful?

Hans Codee discussed the hurdles associated with establishing a multinational repository and the roll of IFNEC in bringing attention to the importance of waste management planning and infrastructure to new entrant states.

Summary of Panel Q&A

There were a number of questions from the audience which stimulated discussion on the role of financing and waste management. Regarding financing, Mr. McGuiness indicated this was a major issue for new countries and a potential unexplored source of financing could be the World Bank and Regional Development Banks. These aspects would be discussed at the upcoming IFNEC financing workshop to be held in London in May. Dr. Codée's presentation stimulated discussion on the role of regional repositories in helping to solve the waste problem but it was recognized that while this provided a cost-effective solution, politically it would be difficult to implement. Additionally, the concept of "one-time use" repositories was discussed. In this concept, materials would accumulate until sufficient volume made it economically viable to construct a repository and then close it rather than continuing to operate it.

It was also noted that when vendors were proposing new reactors in new countries, the waste management issues were not necessarily addressed adequately and there were examples of new countries having a de facto "wait and see" policy for the back end. However, it was stressed that financial provision for decommissioning and waste management should be part of the financial provisioning during the operational life of a station.

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