

Moving Forward Together: Canada's Plan for the Long-Term Management of Used Nuclear Fuel



A further milestone was reached in the NWMO's process to select a site in an informed, willing community for Canada's repository for used nuclear fuel. On September 30, 2012, the NWMO suspended the "expressions of interest" phase for communities wishing to engage in the site selection process for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel Repository and Centre of Expertise.

In May 2010, the NWMO initiated a site selection process for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel Repository and Centre of Expertise for the long-term management of the country's used nuclear fuel in an informed and willing host community. The nine-step process to select a site will take 10 years or more to complete, and begins with a community expressing interest in learning more about the project, the NWMO and the site selection process. Interested communities are the focus of a progressively more detailed set of scientific, technical and community well-being studies, and phases of learning to assess the suitability of the community for the project. Communities may leave the site selection process at any time up until the signing of a final agreement, which is still many years in the future. An expression of interest by a community triggers a process of broad outreach and discussion of the project with neighbouring communities and potentially affected Aboriginal peoples.

In March 2012, the NWMO gave a six-month notice that it would suspend new expressions of interest effective September 30. As of September 30, 21 communities are engaged in learning more about the project, the NWMO and the process. The total includes several communities that have asked the NWMO to begin more detailed preliminary assessment studies (Step 3), as well as communities that have requested information and briefings.

The suspension of the expressions of interest phase of the site selection process is intended to help ensure that the best knowledge and expertise are brought to each of the studies that are conducted. It is also intended to ensure that the communities involved in the site selection process continue to be fully supported by the NWMO in their exploration of the project, and are informed, as early as possible, whether they are on the short list of strong candidates for the project. The suspension of the expressions of interest phase will also help the NWMO plan for and fully support the involvement of surrounding communities and potentially affected Aboriginal peoples. It will be important for the NWMO to engage potentially affected Aboriginal peoples to understand and fully respect their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and how Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge can be applied.

The NWMO is optimistic that the studies initiated with communities that have expressed interest to date will identify viable options for implementing this project. However, until this work has been completed, the outcome of these studies is uncertain, and it may be necessary to study other communities and sites as potential hosts for this project in the future. The NWMO therefore reserves the option of reopening the process to expressions of interest by new communities in the future.

For more information:

Mike Krizanc
Manager, Communications
Tel: 647.259.3043
Fax: 647.259.3692

Nuclear Waste Management Organization
22 St. Clair Avenue East, 6th Floor
Toronto, ON M4T 2S3
Canada

Email: learnmore@nwmo.ca
Website: www.nwmo.ca/sitingprocess