

Involvement of local citizens in (nuclear) emergency planning

STORA partnership, Dessel, Belgium



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Dessel

- Belgium
- 9000 inhabitants
- Nuclear industry since 1950s
- 'Temporary' storage of nuclear waste since 1950s
- Disposal project for low level waste : now in licensing phase – construction starts 2019?

How did we get involved?

- Purely technical approach in the 1980s-90s was proven unsuccessful
- 1998: start of societal approach: 'local partnerships' on voluntary basis
 - +- 70 volunteers each partnership
 - local organisations, companies, trade unions, political parties, individuals
 - Recognition of local knowledge and expertise in technical and societal matters
 - > several engineers with experience in civil engineering and concrete

Involving larger population

- newsletter door-to-door
- article in municipal information periodical
- website
- information campaigns at local events
- polls & debates



Integrated approach

- Task partnership (1999-2004): assess technical and social feasibility. Is a disposal facility in our community:
 - a) technically possible?
 - b) socially acceptable?
- Result (2004) : Yes, BUT! => conditions
- 2006 : government decision :
 - disposal site in Dessel
 - all conditions must be met
- 2006-today : planning and preparing the project, including all conditions



Conditions

- Safety
- Communication
- Funding of community projects
- Memory (knowhow)
- Continued participation
- **Optimising emergency preparedness**
- ...

Emergency preparedness

- Roles
 - STORA/MONA : define condition
 - NIRAS : facilitator
 - University of Antwerp : coordinator
- Neither of the above have any official role/authority in emergency planning

Optimisation in progress...

- 2014 : exploratory investigations
- 2015 : workshop #1
- 2016 : workshop #2
- 2016 : list of local concerns and recommendations for the authorities
- 2017 : meetings with local / provincial / federal authorities



Exploratory investigations (2014)

- Coordinated by University of Antwerp
- Objective : framing the problem
 - Determine whether the local concerns are legitimate
 - Investigate potential solutions, problems, conflicting viewpoints,...
- How?
 - Interviews with involved parties at all levels, operational and political
- Result
 - List of items to be optimised + recommendations

Workshop #1 (29/1/2015)

- Bring all parties together, operational and policy/politics (56 participants – 1 half day)
- Clarify and discuss the items from the exploratory investigations
- Listen to / try to understand each others' points of view
- Try to come to a common understanding

Workshop #2 (19/4/2016)

- Evaluate emergency preparedness exercise held in local nuclear facilities
- Same as workshop #1 : continue and finalize the presentations, discussions and clarifications



Concerns & recommendations (2016)

- Based on the discussions in the workshops,
- a list of concerns & recommendations was drafted
- and sent to the local / provincial / federal authorities (each level has its own roles and responsibilities)

Meetings (2017)

- Meeting with local authorities : 2016
- Meeting with provincial authorities : 30/3/2017
- Meeting with federal authorities : 29/6/2017

...to clarify and discuss the list of local concerns and recommendations

...to try and find a remediation for the concerns

Conclusion

With the support of NIRAS and the University of Antwerp, it was possible for the local community of Dessel (and Mol), even in the absence of a formal role or responsibility, to participate in a meaningful and constructive manner, to integrate societal concerns in emergency preparedness.

Thank you!

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