



# OBRA

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and objectives

This paper is a working document to be discussed at the first workshop of the OBRA project which will be held in Vuojoki, Finland from 31 January until 2 February 2007 and **aims to provide the basis to define the long-term mission, the objectives and the strategy of the proposed Observatory** on long-term governance of radioactive waste management. OBRA project is a 2-year Coordination Action under the EURATOM 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme “Management of Radioactive Waste”.

The OBRA project assesses the feasibility of creating an Observatory as a platform of knowledge management, communication and research on governance of radioactive waste management. The project devotes to the analysis and potential solutions to the concerns and information needs of local and regional communities and universities. The OBRA project is also used as a means to bring together a range of institutions with the purpose to outline the conceptual basis for development of the European Observatory and detail the steps toward its implementation.

This working document is part of a series of background documents, which will be used, in working groups at the creative workshop. Another background document to be used in parallel with this document is the document “Models on Governance” (D1.1.), which explores the alternative governance models and tools existing in radioactive and other hazardous waste management. This background document will be distributed to the participants at the workshop in Vuojoki in February.

Due to OBRA’s nature as a pilot initiative focusing on improving and facilitating the good governance of spent fuel and radioactive waste, OBRA’s first steps i.e. the development of its mission, strategy and objectives is made available to a larger group of interested stakeholders than merely the project partners. A special emphasis in the stakeholder invitations to the workshop was on stakeholders from the Baltic Sea region, which was the underlying reason for organising the first workshop in Finland.

## 1.2 Specific Vuojoki Workshop Goals

In particular, European local and regional communities lack access to an authoritative yet independent platform of experts which could provide them with the sufficient knowledge base as to be able to take sound decisions concerning the long-term issues related to the governance in the field of radioactive waste management. In this regard, OBRA will devise an

Observatory to promote appropriate forms of interaction between stakeholders, mainly local and regional communities and experts but also for other groups of stakeholders like the universities and their students.

As governance is defined as the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented, good governance means that these processes are carried out free of abuse or corruption and with due regards of law.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good\\_governance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_governance))

The objective of this report is to sketch the **idea of conceptual framework of OBRA that is worked further in the Vuojoki workshop**. We include here a preliminary definition of OBRA's scope, content and approach for access to information and expertise that the Observatory may follow to meet the needs and concerns of stakeholders. Such foreseen stakeholders are in particular local and regional communities and universities educating future policy makers and authorities involved in the decision making and implementation.

The workshop results will feed into the "Report on Common Vision and Strategy of OBRA" (D2.4). At the same time as a list of topics and specifications for the trial training package will be produced for developing the content of this trial training by ITC-School (WP3).

Governance issues are present in the management of radioactive waste at many phases. At the **concept selection phase**, the governance issues relate to the choices made between the different concepts on how to manage radioactive wastes. At the **siting phase** that follows the concept selection phase, governance issues are important because the national governments and local communities have a key role in the decision-making process. Often the siting phase is followed by the **licensing phase**, which may include the acquisition and approval of several different types of licences. Finally, the **operation phase** involves the site community and national and local authorities on a regular basis.

The **focus of the Observatory is on the siting phase**, when national implementing agencies have selected their waste management concept and start screening potential sites for disposal and are in interaction with the local and national stakeholder groups to gain knowledge on suitable sites and their social acceptability on local and national level. These agencies and their relevant stakeholder groups are the ones to benefit most from the prior experience and research carried out identifying the governance models and their success.

The RTD of radioactive waste requires a multidisciplinary approach in the natural sciences field, but natural sciences with a positivistic research approach are not sufficient in the siting

phase. Cross-disciplinary know-how is needed to ensure trust in the governance process. Since the questions related to the siting process are not only scientific and technical, also other approaches for answering the questions are needed from social and economic sciences to complement the natural sciences (positivistic) approach. A key objective in OBRA project is to take into consideration the multidisciplinary needs of the stakeholders. In this approach OBRA tries to introduce a novel element to the Observatory in radioactive waste management.

## **2. Developing a Framework for OBRA**

### **2.1 The context**

One of the first steps into the definition of the Observatory is the description of “observatory” for a specific area that is the “governance of radioactive waste management”. What type of “observatory” would fulfil the needs of the stakeholders and whether this type of observatory can be feasibly established and to what extent.

Understanding the concerns and information needs of local and regional communities requires systematic analysis and communication over an extended period. OBRA aims to address this challenge by creating a network of institutions interested in improving the governance of spent fuel and radioactive waste and an infrastructure to support the created network. The desire behind OBRA is to build the information resources to support a long-term collaborative partnership.

In developing the supporting infrastructure, an initial question the OBRA partners need to address collaboratively is the development of a robust way of collecting and providing information on very complex sensitive issues, which is also context-specific. As introduced in the background paper on “Governance Models”, the models as such are universal, but the variation of the legal context, technical concepts and industries are large within Europe. This impacts the implementation of the models on national and local level.

### **2.2 Introducing the idea of an observatory**

The paper on “Governance Models” reviews different European projects that have been carried out on governance of nuclear activities in order to establish a first set of success factors for approaches to governance on radioactive waste management. The elements for the observatory are available in the described models and these are extended in the Vuojoki workshop.

In spite of the above described research efforts, limited progress has been made toward the application of an authoritative yet independent platform of experts to address the concerns of stakeholders in a systematic way.

One impediment has been a lack of work directed to provide local and regional stakeholders with the knowledge generated by successive EU research programmes both in scientific and social sciences fields, thereby fusing the information from natural sciences with that of social sciences and economics.

A second impediment has been a lack of tradition in approaching research questions through the views of stakeholder groups and the general public. A mechanism for coordinated dialogue where the diverse points of view can come together without being dominated by a particular institutional mandate could become a forum or an observatory.

A task for the working group members in the workshop based on their experiences and points of views on governance of radioactive waste, is to explore whether this platform- or forum-to-be could be a vehicle for cultivating ideas and incubating networks around governance.

### **Why is an Observatory important?**

- Networks of interested parties in the field of radioactive waste can make a useful contribution on the current practices of long-term governance.
- Multi-party monitoring and evaluation, including social and natural scientists, experts, universities, local communities potential for siting and the general public.
- Growing attention is paid to the role of knowledge intermediaries\* in controversial fields.
- Need to organise the interface between experts and stakeholders in governance in a systematic fashion and as a long-term collaboration.

(\*) With knowledge intermediaries we mean organisations or persons who work in combination with a technology who facilitate access to and transfer knowledge

## 2.3 Vision and Mission of the Observatory

As a starting point for OBRA, the proposed vision and mission of the Observatory is to bring together technical and scientific expertise with the knowledge held by stakeholder groups and the public in general in the field of radioactive waste management. Multidisciplinary approaches need to complement the technical and scientific expertise.

The forum-to-be would be for collective learning through the exchange of information and ideas and a starting point for the planning of collaboration on governance of radioactive waste. In this context, it is suggested that the **vision of the observatory** is to become the central point of reference for knowledge acquisition in the decision making related to the siting process of the stakeholder groups, experts and the general public.

A special focus is given to local and regional communities and universities to participate in the definition of the vision, mission, scope and content of OBRA. It is in this context that the draft **mission of the Observatory** is defined as: a) to broaden and develop a knowledge base on patterns of governance of radioactive waste management and b) to help the stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the trends and conditions for improving governance patterns in radioactive waste management c) to acquire necessary knowledge to participate in an informed way to the governance of radioactive waste management.

## 2.4 Elements to frame the scope and content of the Observatory

### 2.4.1 Translation of the concept to action

The Observatory is to be developed to primarily support the assessment and monitoring activities regarding long-term governance of radioactive waste management. A subject of debate in the first OBRA workshop is how the conceptual basis translates into the actual activities of the Observatory. The OBRA project must determine which stakeholders and parts or elements of the governance model it wishes to target under the remit of long-term governance of radioactive waste management.

In order to help us sketch out the scope and content of the Observatory, the initial approach has been to list the core activities undertaken by the radioactive waste management agencies represented in the OBRA consortium with regards to governance in the siting phase. These activities are stated in their annual reports from 2005 or other reports and documents obtained from the website of these agencies. These activities relate back to the core activities described in the draft on governance models (D1.1).

Table 1. Legal requirements for governance activities related to the siting phase.

	Finland	Spain	Czech Republic	Slovenia
Statement from the potential municipality as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure.	X			
The locating municipality has a decisive right of veto against the site to be selected.	X			
Local hearing for the residents of the local and neighbouring municipalities.	X			
Regular meetings of local communities or municipalities on selection process with the applicant of siting.	X	X	X	X
Set up ( <i>ad hoc</i> ) Committees / Commissions based on transparency, participation, voluntarism and collaboration among institutions.		X		
Existence of mediator (to set up communication between the agency and interested local communities).				X
Memorandum of understanding with local communities			X	
Provision of information through different media (like internet home pages, magazines or newsletters, information centres, TV, leaflets, films )	X	X	X	X

Source: Data reported in annual reports of the radioactive waste management agencies involved in OBRA (tentative data)

The table does not intend to be an exhaustive list of all activities undertaken by radioactive waste management organisations. Rather the aim is to provide an insight on the current practices of public information and participation related to radioactive waste management.

As a conclusion from the information, one is able to state that actions have been taken by the different implementers to enable local communities to participate in the facility siting decision-making process. In general, implementers in different countries organise meetings with local communities to discuss e.g. progress on certain projects and to provide information on selection procedure (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2005).

For example in Finland, the decision-making process for the site selection process included a step in which the Government requests a statement as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure from the municipality intended to be the site of the planned nuclear facility. The municipality had a right of a decisive veto against the siting of the new facility. In addition, the Government organises a local hearing for the residents of the local and neighbouring municipalities of the intended facility.

In Spain, the implementer ENRESA has set up an ad hoc Committee in order to select a site for an interim centralised storage facility. The interministerial Committee, with the support of a Technical Advisory Committee, defines the basic criteria for the site to locate the storage facility and a technological centre and facilitates dissemination of information to all interested parties (ENRESA, 2005).

Similar mechanisms to communicate with municipalities have been established in other countries like in Slovenia. In the Slovenian case, the mediator takes part in siting a low and intermediate level waste repository through communication with the interested municipalities. The mediator took part in the evaluation of social feasibility of bids from local communities (ARAO, 2005).

In Czech Republic, the communities express their ‘willingness to at least discuss repository options by signing a memorandum of understanding. This then allows RAWRA, the implementer, to design a model procedure to approach the siting issue and to help in creating the right conditions for providing the local population with relevant information. These willing communities reserve a right to reject any further work concerning the siting or construction of deep geological repository in the future. By signing the memorandum of understanding, RAWRA ensures that the interests of the communities concerned will be respected, the provision of information to local inhabitants through information centres, and excursions to relevant facilities. In addition, RAWRA explores in cooperation with the communities themselves the possibilities and conditions to implement an accompanying programme to the benefit of the region concerned (RAWRA, 2005).

The Group of European Municipalities with Nuclear Facilities (GMF) have often stressed that the local level aspires to take part in the decision-making process in the nuclear field and to

receive updated information from the regulatory body and the nuclear power plant operator (GMF, 2006). This concern is expressed despite the above-described activities of the implementers. GMF municipalities assign particular relevance to bottom up, discussion-oriented forms of participatory policy-making before taking decisions, which could affect their territories.

#### **2.4.2 Defining information and training needs of stakeholders**

One of the aims of OBRA is to define approaches for access to information and expertise that the observatory should follow to meet the needs of information and concerns of stakeholders.

The **importance of training** to enhance the role of local actors is highlighted in current debates on governance of nuclear activities (Mutadis, 2006). Strategic and technical training of local actors is necessary in order to properly understand the issues involved in this complex arena. In this regard, access to pluralist expertise is an effective resource for local actors. As described in the IGNA report, in France, local information commissions generally call on experts in radiation protection or nuclear safety who are independent of the operators so as to build up their own point of view on the state of the installations. Therefore, sufficient resources and the existence of diversified and readily mobilised sources of expertise are assumed (Mutadis, 2006). One of the key challenges regarding the quality and reliability of expertise in the eyes of stakeholders is to make it possible for certain categories of stakeholders, to access complementary expert opinion, independent of the dominant interest of the decision-makers (Mutadis, 2006).

Focusing on these ideas, OBRA develops a pilot training course to improve the knowledge and skills of local community's representatives on social issues. The CETRAD project pointed out that social inclusion is an important issue and requires personnel to specialise in these areas; also communication and public relations were seen as a growth area in the education and training needs of personnel in radioactive waste management (Thomas et al. 2005). The findings in CETRAD can be used as one potential starting point for the content definition of the pilot training course (WP3).

In addition, as part of the COASTMAN project, partly funded by the EC within the Interreg III B Baltic Sea Region Programme, KTH from Sweden has arranged an international pilot course on conflict resolution associated with infrastructure planning processes in coastal areas. This international pilot course provides insights on the design of the pilot course in OBRA.

The OBRA pilot training course may potentially focus on communication and public relations. The target group of this training course consists of the stakeholders involved in different aspects of radioactive waste management at local and regional levels. They could be politicians, NGOs staff, academia and students from university, managers from nuclear power plants; people working at radioactive waste management agencies or other interested people. The aim of the course would be to provide deeper knowledge and understanding of social issues in geological disposal programmes from a practical perspective of communication. This will be mainly through discussions of different tools and experiences of communication and participation to build up confidence and trust.

### **3. Questions for the Workshop**

In the above documentation we have identified the following areas for discussion in the Vuojoki Workshop working groups:

- Governance models, their elements and the importance of the different elements for the stakeholders
- Stakeholders of the OBRA project
- The information and training needs of the stakeholders related to the governance of radioactive waste management
- The scope of the OBRA project
- Steps of implementing the idea of OBRA into action (Strategy)
- The means of accessing information needed by the stakeholders
- The forms of access to the information needed

We have identified three potential areas for refinement of OBRA in relation to the above-mentioned areas and for the practical organisation of the working groups the organisers will set up four groups. Each two groups work in parallel on the same topic. Rapporteurs to the groups will be provided from the OBRA project, but each working group is suggested to choose their own chair for the work discussion. The working group topics are:

#### **WG1 and WG2**

**1. Prepare a vision/mission statement for the observatory based on the proposal made in this paper and then a more comprehensive strategic roadmap (how to get there) on the development of an observatory to meet stakeholder's needs.**

**2. Provide an initial guidance for identifying the topics that the observatory should address.** The subquestion for the discussion related to this topic could include e.g.

- Which topics relevant to stakeholders are currently missing in the decision-making process and are not sufficiently covered by current projects on governance?
- Which kind of training courses should local communities expect from an observatory? And which issues are most relevant to them to be trained on?
- How can the observatory contribute to building the skills and capacity necessary for local stakeholders to influence decision-making in radioactive waste in such a way that it delivers better and sustainable decisions?

## **WG3 and WG4**

**1. Prepare a vision/mission statement for the observatory based on the proposal made in this paper and then a more comprehensive strategic roadmap (how to get there) on the development of an observatory to meet stakeholders needs.**

**2. Provide some guidance on how to structure communication and knowledge transfer.**

The subquestion for the discussion related to this topic could include e.g.

- How can the observatory become a useful tool for meeting the information needs and expectations of local and regional communities regarding governance issues?
- How can social science research overcome the gap between the concerns of the public and other stakeholders? How can universities help in delivering e.g. specific interdisciplinary modules as part of masters' curriculum?

How can European cross-cultural differences be taken into account in the make-up of the observatory? How do we take advantage of these differences?

In providing your answers, please refer also to the list of discussion areas in the beginning of this chapter 3.

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