

Recommendation Group 1

In order to select a site for a nuclear disposal in the future, an involvement of all concerned stakeholders is of a great importance. Looking at the experience of most countries, it is obvious that the local communities in dialogue with the implementer play a central role in whether the siting work is successful or not. The local communities have to be empowered to take part in the siting process in a constructive manner. The working group 1 within COWAM discussed what are the overall good practices in involving the local communities being however aware of the fact that each member state has their own administrative traditions and cultural background.

The following has been found to be important when involving local communities and enhancing local democracy:

1. In addition to possible national institutions in charge of the nuclear waste policy, each Member State should arrange a local body with representatives from the community concerned on foreseen or existing sites for nuclear waste management. This local committee would advise the decision makers and ensure local views are taken into account before decision on technological, economic and social topics.
2. The national regulation should define basic criteria concerning ethics, proceeding, rights and duties for local authorities, individual access to information, public health and environment protection. These criteria may be subject to development and revision if necessary.
3. Regional elected representatives, regulatory bodies, the implementer, economical regional forces, local trade unions and community representatives from the public at large take part in local committees.
4. Some of the main tasks for such a local committee are for example the formation of the members, reviewing documents, arranging local debates, summarising argument synopsis, making proposals to be looked at, following the process of decision making and taking on some part of public communication. The local committee informs and consults the population at each step of the process. Elected representatives shall take into account the advice of the local committee before deciding.
5. A national dedicated fund pays for these actions. It is of course important to finance the contribution of the local involvement if there is a genuine will to empower the community to take part in the decision making process.
7. Confidence in decision making process is successful by voluntary bearing of each participant, by shared knowledge of stakes, risks and benefit, and by transparency in proceedings.

The local community will need the support of experts when there are reviews needed on different matters. This will be of course possible only if there is a good funding available.