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**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION
ADVICE FROM THE NUCLEAR SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON THE HSC CO-ORDINATED PROGRAMME OF NUCLEAR
SAFETY RESEARCH FOR 2004/2005**

**Note from Professor J. Knott,
Chairman of the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee
Sub-committee on Research**

Issue

1. I am submitting this note in fulfilment of the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee's (NuSAC's) remit to consider and offer the Commission advice on:
 - the HSE's proposals for the HSC Co-ordinated Programme of Nuclear Safety Research for 2004/2005, set out in paper HSC/0/18. This advice is based primarily on the work of the NuSAC Sub-committee on Research (SCR);
 - the adequacy of new arrangements used to identify, commission and manage the 2003/2004 HSC Co-ordinated Programme of Nuclear Safety Research

Timing

2. Commission approval of the proposed 2004/2005 programme is required to enable the HSE to commission the Levy funded research.

Recommendations and Decisions

3. The HSC is advised by NuSAC to approve the HSC Co-ordinated Programme of Nuclear Safety Research for 2004/2005 put forward in paper HSC/04/18.
4. The HSC is further advised that the new programme management arrangements are operating satisfactorily, but the NuSAC SCR will continue to monitor the arrangements closely.

Background

5. The sub-committee met with HSE and the licensees in April 2004 to:
 - review implementation of the trial arrangements for identifying and commissioning the HSC Co-ordinated Programme of nuclear safety research;
 - discuss the current and proposed programmes.

Argument

NuSAC SCR's view on the trial of the proposed new management arrangements for the HSC-Coordinated Programme.

6. A joint IMC/HSE paper to NuSAC SCR presented a review of the trial arrangements. HSE and the Licensees reported that the new arrangements have successfully addressed diverging research requirements of the principal generating reactor Licensees. Nuclear Research Schedules (NRSs):
 - document each Licensee's proposals for addressing the nuclear issues listed in HSE's Nuclear Research Index;
 - record Licensees' Essential Research Capability (ERC);
 - propose programmes of NRI and non-NRI related nuclear safety research.The NRSs have increased the visibility to HSE of the Licensees' strategies and drivers for research and they also inform a dialogue between HSE and the Licensees on the adequacy of proposed programmes and development of the Levy programme.
7. The new arrangements recognise the importance of adequate and appropriate dialogue between HSE and the Licensees to agree safety issues, develop programmes and manage the research projects. The HSE and the Licensee technical representatives in each technical area are given the flexibility to agree the format of the exchange and these vary from structured meetings with minutes to less formal exchanges with minimal record. NuSAC SCR had previously questioned the auditability of technical exchanges. HSE reported that they have agreed with the Licensees an acceptable baseline standard for recording exchanges that is exceeded in many areas.
8. NuSAC SCR had also asked HSE to monitor inter-licensee exchanges. The NRSs have provided HSE with a measure of these exchanges by improving the visibility of the collaborative content of the Licensees programmes. HSE reported that approximately one third of the research in the Licensees' current and proposed programmes is collaborative.
9. NuSAC SCR also noted that HSE and the Licensees are developing improved arrangements agreeing the closure of an NRI issues that focus on the benefit to nuclear safety. HSE expect these to improve evaluation of the programme.
10. The HSC is advised that the new programme management arrangements are operating satisfactorily, but the NuSAC SCR will continue to monitor the arrangements closely.

11. NuSAC SCR are also required to advise on the future of the Industry Management Committee Steering Group (IMC SG). The trial arrangements have established the roles of Licensee Research Coordinators who meet regularly with HSE's Nuclear Safety Research Unit. It was reported that these exchanges have been central to the successful implementation of the trial arrangements and provide an effective forum for oversight of the programmes and dealing with problems that cannot be resolved at a technical level. HSE advised that they are satisfied with this arrangement and that it is an acceptable alternative to the IMC SG which could now be disbanded. NuSAC SCR accepts this position, noting that HSE's NSD will provide an annual overview of the total research programme and that the Licensees' Research Coordinators will also comment on their part of the programme.

The NuSAC SCR's view on the 2003/2004 HSC Co-ordinated Programme Programme of Nuclear Safety Research

12. At the April meeting the HSE and IMC reported the expected final outturn for the Levy and IMC managed elements of the 2003/2004 HSC Coordinated Programme. At £1607k the forecast outturn for the Levy Programme is up £46k on the originally planned spend of £1561k. A total of 35 projects were progressed, ie. one less than planned.
13. The IMC reported that the £6970k budget would be underspent by £1033k (15%). NuSAC SCR was advised in September of the expected large underspend on Waste and Decommissioning and since then HSE has agreed to the deferral of three projects. At £1748, W&D remains the largest element of the 2003/04 programme. Elsewhere:
 - emerging operational issues have impacted upon the fuel and core and graphite programmes;
 - a number of programmes have been delivered at lower cost, e.g. chemical, C&I and PLM-Steels; and
 - MGBG reported that they had curtailed their fuel because the results would not be available in time to benefit their reactors.HSE advised the sub-committee that it had monitored the IMC commissioning of the 2003/2004 programme, was aware of changes to the licensees' programme and was satisfied that the licensees had addressed all high priority HSE Nuclear Research Index (NRI) issues.
14. The sub-committee concluded that, although it recognises and accepts the reasons for the underspend, it would like assurance that that the underspent funds could not have been utilised on other priority issues.

The NuSAC SCR's view on the 2004/2005 HSC Co-ordinated Programme Programme of Nuclear Safety Research

15. HSE presented the proposed programme for 2004/2005 to the NuSAC SCR which comprised Levy and licensee programmes totalling £8.55m, excluding management charges. HSE advised that it is satisfied that the proposed Levy and Licensee programmes will:

- secure continuity of existing research;
- deliver a balanced and adequate programme of research that addresses priority NRI issues;
- maintain the licensees' access to Essential Research Capability and HSE's access to Independent Technical Capability; and,
- include participation in appropriate international activities.

HSE confirmed that the decision to exclude from the 2003/2004 programme low priority NRI issues and issues awaiting the outcome of ongoing research activity will not affect NSD's ability to regulate the nuclear safety of power systems at UK licensed sites.

16. NuSAC SCR recognises the rigorous nature of the dialogue which has led to the proposed programme and advises HSC that because it is well focused on the technical needs, and the Licensees are continuing to collaborate where necessary, it should be approved.

Consultation

18. NuSAC SCR discussed the proposed programme on 2 April 2004 and the Nuclear Safety Research Steering Group discussed it at their meeting on 23 March 2004.

Costs and Benefits

19. The proposed programme expenditure in 2004/2005 is £8.55m plus management charges of £0.735m (£0.215m for the HSE and £0.52m for the licensees).
20. HSE and licensees' evaluations of the programme conclude that the HSC Co-ordinated Programme of Nuclear Safety Research is satisfactorily progressing Nuclear Research Index issues and contributes to securing high standards of nuclear safety.

Financial/Resource Implications for the HSE

21. The cost of the research commissioned by the HSE, and the programme management charges, are recovered by a levy made on the nuclear licensees. There are no additional financial implications for the HSE.

Environmental Implications

22. There are none.

Other Implications

23. There are none.

Action

The SCR's advice on the HSC Co-ordinated Programme of Nuclear Safety Research.

- 24 NuSAC SCR advises the HSC that:
- it approves the HSC Co-ordinated Programme of Nuclear Safety Research for 2004/2005 put forward in paper HSC/04/18;
 - the new arrangements for managing the programme are operating satisfactorily, but NuSAC SCR will continue to monitor the arrangements closely.