

NUCLEAR SAFETY DIRECTORATE - BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		
RESEARCH GUIDANCE: POLICY RELEVANT RESEARCH AND SUPPORT		G/RES/001
		ISSUE 003
Approved By: <i>Peter Storey</i>	P Storey	Issue Date: 01/12/04
Open Government Status: Fully Open		Review Date: 31/11/07

1. Purpose & Scope

1.1 This procedure states the process for complying with the May Guidelines for the use of scientific advice in policy making, published by the Office of Science and Technology (OST). Similar considerations apply to both research and support.

1.2 Neither the HSC Coordinated programme of nuclear safety research nor the Nuclear Safety Studies programme aims in general to produce scientific advice relevant to policy, nor does it in general address matters of direct public concern, being at a more detailed level. However there may be exceptions, and this note gives the procedure to identify such exceptions and the action required in those cases.

2. Background

2.1 The May guidelines (refs 1-4) set out principles applying to the use and presentation of scientific advice in policy making. (Sir Robert May was the Chief Scientific Adviser to the government). They are relevant to cases where:

- 1) there is significant scientific uncertainty
- 2) there is a range of scientific opinion
- 3) there are potentially significant implications for sensitive areas of public policy.

2.2 The importance of the guidelines has not been decreased by public concern over BSE and GM foodstuffs. The key principles are:

- 1) early identification of potentially sensitive issues
- 2) policies to be based on the best available scientific advice

3) publication of all the scientific evidence and analysis underlying policy decision on sensitive issues.

2.3 The May guidelines are discussed at the HSE Science Co-ordinators meetings. The HSE mainstream programme is regarded as being almost entirely relevant to the guidelines, which is the reverse of the NSD position for the nuclear safety research programme. When the guidelines were first introduced, HSE published an annual report on implementation of the guidelines, but has since stopped.

2.4 NuSAC SCR approved the content of this procedure (ref 5). The OSPAR convention and the future potential for increased waste storage were given by NuSAC SCR as a possible sensitive area, and this may be taken as an example.

3. Relevance to the NSD research and support programmes

3.1 The third case listed in para 2.1 is the most important for the HSC Co-ordinated programme or the Nuclear Safety Studies programme. In general the research and support programmes are concerned with matters of detail that are neither sensitive nor of particular public interest (in the details). Nor does the work aim to guide policy. However exceptionally there may be topics (such as the Gardner report on childhood leukaemia) which are relevant, so there needs to be a procedure to pick up these cases.

3.2 Research is the only technical area where policy is set by NSD rather than by NHIPD. Typical topics classed as policies are development of regulations and their associated guidance; interaction with other government departments and other countries (where operational expertise is not necessary).

3.3 Matters of public concern are in general bigger issues such as plant lifetime extension and management of waste. To this end NSD publishes the programme strategy and discusses the programme content with NuSAC and other external bodies.

4. Procedures

4.1 The form for requests to let a contract in the levy programme contains a question whether the results are likely to be policy sensitive or of a high public concern. If a topic is identified as being policy sensitive, then the report should be published. Careful consideration should be given to the final approval process in these cases

4.2 NSD Unit 4A should also prepare a statement to NuSAC SCR if any work relevant to the May Guidelines was identified during the previous year. Consideration could be given to asking NuSAC SCR for advice on potentially sensitive areas that could be addressed in future work. A statement could be given if appropriate in the annual reports to NuSAC and HSC.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Project officers are responsible for identifying such exceptional policy sensitive projects.

5.2 NSD technical research representatives are responsible for identifying policy sensitive licensee projects at the time of project proposal and again at the time of project completion / issue close-out.

5.3 The unit head of NSD 4A is responsible for ensuring publication of such identified projects.

6. Definitions

HSC - Health and Safety Commission

HSE - Health and Safety Executive

NSD - Nuclear Safety Directorate

NuSAC SCR - Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee - Sub Committee on Research

NHIPD – Nuclear and Hazardous Industries Policy Division

OSPAR - (Oslo Paris) Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the north-east Atlantic

7. References

7.1 The use of scientific advice in policy making, Office of Science and Technology, March 1997

http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/advice/guidelines_97/

7.2 The use of scientific advice in policy making: implementation of the guidelines, DTI July 1998

http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/advice/implement_98/

7.3 The use of scientific advice in policy making: implementation of the guidelines; 2nd annual report, OST November 1999

http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/advice/implement_99/

7.4 Guidelines 2000: Scientific advice and policy making, OST
July 2000 <http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/advice/index.htm> -
2000

7.5 NuSAC/SCR/99/8 The use of scientific advice in policy
making: the May guidelines
<http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/advice/> - **2000.**

