

## The business of nuclear decommissioning

### Strategy and tactics



A useful distinction can be made between strategy and tactics.

*A strategy is an overall plan which gives a sense of direction and planning framework. Tactics are the smaller steps involved in putting a plan into action.*

The role of the NDA is to create the overall strategic plan for decommissioning nuclear facilities in the UK. The tactics, i.e. the day-to-day management of this process, is the responsibility of contractors who manage the activities on those sites. The contractors are selected through open competition in accordance with EU Procurement rules within a framework set out by the NDA.

It is helpful to look at a few of the most important elements of the NDA's strategy.

- 1) The reduction of potentially high hazards, especially at Sellafield. This is the number one clean-up priority. The NDA has established time-related objectives for this. For example, the aim is to decommission the Magnox fleet of power stations within 25 years (providing safe waste management facilities are available). This part of the strategy involves speeding up existing arrangements. A business case for Government approval for this acceleration is being prepared. Previous plans and methods involved taking up to 125 years for this process.
- 2) Consulting with stakeholders at each site about the dates and potential uses of sites once decommissioning has been completed.
- 3) The NDA will be open and transparent about the process of nuclear decommissioning. It is important that the public has as much knowledge as possible about the process. A criticism in the past was that the general public did not know enough about the nuclear industry.
- 4) Establishing a range of facilities to use, develop and extend the existing skills base. These will be developed with other organisations and many will be based in West Cumbria (the location of Sellafield). These will include:
  - \* a Nuclear Academy to provide courses and business support training up to foundation degree level
  - \* a Nuclear Institute to provide high quality research and development support
  - \* a university Chair of Epidemiology to research the impact of radiation on the workforce
  - \* a National Nuclear laboratory to provide world-class facilities to support the industry.

All this will provide a framework for specific training courses, PhDs and innovation projects and will create a pool of world-class expertise in decommissioning. This will support the UK industry and other countries involved in nuclear decommissioning worldwide.

The proposed approach that the NDA hopes to take will involve the following stages:

- i. to consult and seek agreement with stakeholders, including local communities, at each of the sites
- ii. to have fully costed plans, by April 2008, for decommissioning all sites, which will then be made publicly available
- iii. to work with contractors to use innovation and new methods of working in developing the plans. This will accelerate work without compromising on safety, security and environmental protection
- iv. to explore the possibility of fully decommissioning Magnox sites within 25 years
- v. to introduce competition for the management of the sites. This will encourage innovation, improve contractor performance and deliver best value to taxpayers.