

The business of nuclear decommissioning

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Introduction

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) is a new body. It started work in April 2005. Its aim is to clean up the UK's nuclear sites. It will restore the environment on these sites. Nuclear power provides around a fifth of our energy supplies. Britain needs to increase this figure as oil and gas supplies decline. At the same time, older power plants need to be closed, or decommissioned.

Everyone in an organisation needs a clear vision of where they are heading. This is called Management by Objectives (MbO). The NDA's aim is set out in a clear mission statement. Progress towards this goal is measured and communicated to everyone. Objectives can then be adjusted if they are not being reached.

Mission

Mission statements are written to give a sense of direction and a framework within which an organisation operates. The mission of the NDA is clearly stated but quite complex. It includes statements on safety, cost effectiveness, environmental responsibility, openness and communities.

- * Safety "is obviously a priority when dealing with nuclear power.
- * Cost effective " means getting value for money.
- * Environmental responsibility " means carrying out work with due regard to the environment.
- * Open and transparent " all stages are public, so that everyone knows what is happening.
- * Communities " taking into account the social and economic effects, such as through job losses.

Objectives

Objectives define what an organisation hopes to achieve. Business objectives should be SMART. This means

- * Specific
- * Measurable
- * Achievable
- * Realistic
- * Time related NDA has set itself the objective of cleaning up the 20 civil nuclear sites in the UK.

Strategy and tactics

A strategy is a set of plans. Tactics are the smaller steps within this. The NDA has an overall strategy for decommissioning. This has some important elements such as:

- * the priority of reducing the risk of hazard, especially at sites like Sellafield, in the Lake District
- * consultation with stakeholder groups
- * being as open and transparent about the process as possible
- * establishing various education and research facilities to help better understand nuclear hazards.

Its more detailed timetable is to:

1. consult with stakeholders
2. fully cost plans for decommissioning all sites and make these publicly available

3. develop new ways of working to ensure that plans progress as rapidly as possible, but still safely and environmentally
4. explore fully decommissioning the Magnox (built in the 60s and 70s) sites
5. introduce competition for the management of sites to deliver best value.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is anyone with an interest in how an organisation works. Important stakeholder groups for NDA include the government, energy consumers who want cheap, clean fuel, local communities and the public in general, as well as energy companies and the bodies that regulate energy suppliers. The NDA has to work closely with all of these groups and ensure that it communicates clearly with them. It does this via a website, a media pack and by encouraging the public and others to comment on its plans.

Conclusion

The NDA has created a clear strategy for decommissioning. This is an important part of the government's nuclear strategy and a major issue for various stakeholders.