

National Geological Screening Independent Review Panel

Purpose

The National Geological Screening Independent Review Panel (hereafter 'the Independent Review Panel') will review and evaluate the national screening guidance that Radioactive Waste Management Limited (hereafter 'RWM') is to develop and apply nationally.

Overview of remit

The remit of the Independent Review Panel will be in two phases.

1. Initially, it will assess whether the national geological screening guidance:
 - Is geologically and technically sound;
 - Can be applied using existing geological information; and
 - Provides a basis for assessing the prospects for developing a long-term safety case in a range of geological settings to accommodate the UK inventory of higher activity waste.

This assessment will be achieved through open discussion and engagement with the developer, the public and interested stakeholders¹.

2. A second phase of work will follow finalisation of the guidance, in relation to its application across England, Wales and Northern Ireland (in 2015/2016). The Independent Review Panel will assess whether the guidance has been applied accurately and consistently, and in a manner likely to engender public confidence.

Process

As set out in the 2014 White Paper, the UK Government has asked the Geological Society of London (hereafter 'GSL') to oversee the establishment of the Independent Review Panel, having access to a broad range of well-respected national and international geoscience expertise and other learned bodies.

The Independent Review Panel will report to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (hereafter 'DECC') after each phase of its work. DECC will provide reasonable secretarial and logistical support, including helping to facilitate public and stakeholder engagement. GSL is happy to host plenary and panel meetings, subject to room availability.

GSL has indicated that it expects a maximum of six members to serve on the Independent Review Panel.

Each panel member might spend up to five days on this work in Phase 1 (e.g. one day for panel meetings; one day for a plenary meeting; and three days for review of documentation, research, correspondence and writing reports).

¹ NB: The Independent Review Panel will not be the only means of scrutinising the draft guidance. The draft guidance will also be subject to public consultation by the developer during 2015.

Timetable

It is expected that the initial review of the screening guidance (Phase 1) will be completed by April 2015, with a possible plenary meeting of the Independent Review Panel with RWM in March / April 2015. Should the Independent Review Panel have any serious concerns about the draft guidance, which necessitated fundamental changes and a further round of review, Phase 1 could be extended.

It is not yet possible to set out a detailed timetable for reviewing the application of the screening guidance (Phase 2), but this will take place following finalisation of the guidance and is expected to extend into 2016.

Panel members' expenses

DECC will pay reasonable travel and subsistence costs for all members of the panel. DECC will give sympathetic consideration to requests for recompense for loss of earnings in the case of panel members who are independent consultants², on a basis to be agreed prior to confirmation of the membership of the panel.

**GDF team, Department of Energy and Climate Change
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² It is expected that academics taking on such work would do so as part of their normal portfolio of activities. Those working for companies should only be doing so with the support of their employer.