



Representatives from COG, NEA, NRCan and AECL participated in a virtual signing ceremony, Sept. 30, to mark a new collaboration agreement between COG and NEA.

COG signs MOU with Nuclear Energy Agency

Agreement focuses on research & development and advancement of technology in PHWRs, severe accident prevention and low dose radiation

Two international nuclear organizations – one representing countries and the other representing industry -- have joined forces to advance global collaboration in nuclear excellence.

At a virtual signing ceremony on Sept. 30, CANDU Owners Group (COG), representing CANDU/PHWR operators in seven countries, and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), a specialized group focusing on nuclear within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), signed an agreement to partner on areas of shared interest.

Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), COG and NEA will complement each other's work, allowing each of the organizations to do more to the benefit of their respective memberships.

The two organizations have been working more closely over the past few years, after Romania and Argentina joined Canada and Korea as full NEA members. India and China also participate in some NEA activities.

The agreement builds on common interest the two organizations have in the areas of international collaboration, engagement and harmonization. COG and NEA already collaborate on severe accident management and are looking at some additional research in vessel retention. COG has also joined NEA's low dose radiation research group and has been participating both nationally, in Canada, and internationally, to advance this research. Both organizations hope to increase collaboration in the areas of decommissioning as well as low, intermediate and high-level waste management.

In attendance at the virtual signing ceremony were representatives from COG, NEA, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL). Diane Cameron, NRCan's Director, Nuclear Energy Division says the agreement will leverage COG and NEA's strengths in collaboration to build up international networks and break-down "islands," that exist between nuclear organizations and national labs around the globe.

COG's Fred Dermarkar, whose last official day with the organization coincided with the announcement, played an integral role in his time as COG President and CEO, along with Liette Lemieux, COG's Director, Research & Development, and William D. Magwood, IV, NEA Director-General, to bring the two organizations together.

"When I look at what NEA and COG do, more globally, I see a really big opportunity [for the organizations] to work together on workshops where we're sharing information and initiating joint projects to advance technology, things that benefit both COG's members as well as member states that make up NEA," says Dermarkar. "I see COG and NEA moving forward in areas relating to R&D, to joint projects and the opportunity to pool our knowledge in other areas like radiation and environmental effects."

Magwood believes the COG-NEA partnership is a natural fit between two organizations with similar objectives and international stakeholders. The MOU also addresses an area where NEA wants to strengthen its knowledge base and explore new opportunities.

"COG plays a very important role in technology development and safety research in the PHWR (pressurized heavy water reactor) area. COG's members are people that we work closely with, many of which are our member countries," says Magwood. "This [agreement] gives us a tremendous boost as we try to become more cognizant, more proactive in this [PHWR] area. To have this relationship with COG, where we can join hands instead of trying to go it alone, is a tremendous benefit to our member countries."

Current COG President and CEO Stephanie Smith served as master of ceremonies for the signing event. She was joined by Dermarkar, Magwood, Lemieux, along with AECL's Stephen Bushby.

As COG's new leader, Smith, who took over from Dermarkar on Sept. 1, believes the agreement will advance nuclear technologies and research. It will also benefit both organizations and the nuclear industry, more broadly.

"Collaboration is really what's needed to move the industry forward. I'm quite excited to be a part of that."

[Click here](#) to view the MOU announcement from NEA.