In the nuclear industry, leadership skills are valuable for decision-making in a boardroom and equally, in project management.

In late April, CANDU Owners Group (COG) and the Canadian Nuclear Society (CNS) successfully launched the first “Supplier Participant First Line Supervisor Program” (FLS), a three-and-a-half-day leadership course for supplier first-line managers. The course covers topics ranging from safety culture to human performance, coaching, motivation and foundational leadership skills.

“Our goal was to deliver relevant content to participants while strengthening supplier interaction and further embedding collaboration into the industry's culture,” says John Sowagi, director of Information Exchange, COG.

“The Supplier Participant Program is founded on the principle that self-interest can be achieved through the collective improvement that comes from shared experience—this course is a shining example of that,” he adds.

The FLS course also provides participants with an opportunity to examine leadership, management practices and performance improvement strategies, supported by industry case studies and interactive exercises. Participants of the pilot each created two action plans as part of their training. COG will follow up with participants within six months to determine completion rates and collect program feedback.

The development of the course reflected COG’s collaborative approach and the important role suppliers and contractors play in safe, effective operation and delivery of nuclear projects. The program was co-developed with input from an advisory committee comprised of members from Brotech Precision CNC, BWXT Canada, Kinetics, SNC-Lavalin, Worley Parsons, the Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries (OCNI), CNS and COG. The session was also supported by Amy Gottschling, VP Radiation Protection Kinetics who serves as a full-time supplier mentor with presentations from the utilities. Bruce Power Chief Nuclear Officer Len Clewett provided the program’s opening remarks while Silviu Idita, Vice President, Nuclear Training, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) closed the course.

Over the past four and a half years, COG has worked with an increasing number of CANDU suppliers to create a forum for sharing operating experience (OPEX). The goal of its Supplier Participant Program, established in 2015, is to create a better knowledge base and a stronger framework for sharing amongst suppliers. It uses similar models to the ones utilities have used to share OPEX for several decades. The program provides opportunities for information exchange, training and interaction between operators and SPs to strengthen common understanding, develop best practices and enhance collaboration.

Three more FLS course deliveries are planned in 2019:

- Aug. 18 to Aug. 21, 2019
- Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, 2019
- Dec. 1 to Dec. 4, 2019

For more information on how to register for the upcoming sessions, contact Kelsey Rodger at Kelsey.Rodger@CANDU.org.