



Clockwise left: COG's Stephanie Smith joined by IAEA's Greg Rzentkowski, NRCAN's Marco Presutti and IAEA's Dohee Hahn were representatives at the virtual signing ceremony, March 24, to recognize the expanded Practical Arrangement between COG and the IAEA.

COG-IAEA expand areas of collaboration

CANDU Owners Group (COG) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have amended a Practical Arrangement they signed in 2019 to include decommissioning, waste management and nuclear safety among the areas in which they work together

MARCH 24, 2021 — COG and the IAEA are building on a long-standing relationship of sharing knowledge to address areas of growing interest and importance to the nuclear industry.

The two organizations have expanded their existing Practical Arrangement (PA) to focus on decommissioning, radioactive waste management, reactor safety and engineering, among other areas.

The amended agreement was signed at a virtual signing ceremony, March 24. COG President and CEO Stephanie Smith, IAEA's Director of Nuclear Installation Safety Greg Rzentkowski and Director of the IAEA's Nuclear Power Division Dohee Hahn represented the two organizations. The PA highlights COG's formalized relationship with these IAEA divisions.

Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) Director General, Electricity Resources Branch Marco Presutti represented the federal government at the event.

"Decommissioning and waste management are areas of increasing focus for the worldwide nuclear community, including COG members and participants. They are especially important for the CANDU industry as some long-serving reactors, like Pickering and Wolsong, come to the end of operation," said Smith at the signing ceremony.

"Knowledge management is truly a strength for both our organizations. Our collaboration in these, and other areas, benefits the members of our respective organizations and benefits the entire nuclear industry," Smith added.

In their remarks, Hahn and Rzentkowski reinforced the importance of collaboration in the areas of decommissioning and nuclear safety to ensure continued public acceptance and sustainability of nuclear technologies. They also expressed appreciation to COG for a mutually beneficial partnership that will be strengthened by this agreement.

"It has to be realized that over 60 per cent of the approximately 450 operational reactors are over 30 years of age," said Rzentkowski. "Taking measures to optimize their life cycle, including decommissioning and radioactive waste management, will become a growing issue in the coming years."

Added Hahn, "I am grateful for this opportunity to strengthen our [COG and IAEA's] longstanding relationship."

NRCAN's Presutti commended both organizations for expanding their arrangement in areas, such as radioactive waste management, where Canada is focused on being a world leader.

The existing COG-IAEA PA, signed at the 63rd IAEA General Conference in September 2019, has enabled greater cooperation between both organizations through a number of international nuclear forums and technical working groups in the areas of knowledge management, aging and asset management, training and pandemic response.

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic to now, COG and IAEA members have exchanged OPEX through the IAEA's International Forum on Good Practices and Lessons Learned (Plant Operation and Engineering Support).

COG is working on several joint projects in the decommissioning area including calandria segmentation, fuel encapsulation of defective fuel and a decommissioning schedule. As well, projects specific to decommissioning planning and activities are anticipated to develop through COG's Decommissioning Peer Group.

The radioactive waste management area at COG includes a leadership forum and a waste management peer group. The Radioactive Waste Leadership Forum (RWLF) has the mandate to identify strategies and solutions for management of the waste streams from low and intermediate level to high level waste. In 2020, the RWLF completed development of an integrated waste strategy (IWS). The IWS is a live document that will be updated over the coming years to align with Canada's waste management strategy.

As well, COG, the University Network of Excellence in Nuclear Engineering (UNENE) and Ontario Tech University have been collaborating with IAEA to host the first Nuclear Energy Management (NEM) School in Canada. The NEM focuses on supporting young professionals in the nuclear sector to strengthen their managerial and technical competencies. It was delayed by the pandemic and is tentatively re-scheduled for later this year, pending changes to COVID-19-related restrictions.

The existing COG-IAEA PA has a term of five years and lasts until 2024. COG and IAEA's history of collaboration dates back to COG's founding in 1984.

COG's Director Corporate Services and CFO John Moore served as event host while attendees included members of COG management. The IAEA delegation included several other nuclear division representatives.

[Click here](#) to read the full joint announcement.

Working together for a stronger nuclear industry

Both COG and IAEA exchange information, OPEX and good practices through several forums and workshops. Areas of collaboration between the two organizations include (but are not limited to):

- COVID-19 pandemic response;
- Knowledge management;
- Safety, engineering and performance;
- Aging and asset management;
- Plant technical and economic performance;
- Nuclear training and professional development;
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Decommissioning and waste management; and
- Refurbishment.



As more CANDU reactors, like Pickering Nuclear, above, approach end of operation, COG and its members are increasingly looking to develop innovative approaches to decommissioning and waste. COG's enhanced agreement with the IAEA will further collaborative efforts in these and other areas. Image: OPG