



From closed rooms to openness

Civil society and the
future of the old nuclear reactors
in North West Russia

Annual report 2005

Introduction

The long-term goal of the project is to get an official plan of action for closure of the old nuclear reactors in North West Russia. In shorter term, the project shall contribute to a public debate on the future of the reactors, and to participation of civil society in the process. Norges Naturvernforbund received grants for the project in 2004 and 2005.

Kola and Leningrad NPPs both have first generations reactors that have reached their designed lifetime of 30 years. Two reactors at Kola NPP and one at Leningrad NPP have been prepared for 15 years prolongation of lifetime and operation permits has been given for the first five years. No plans are currently made for decommissioning. On the contrary, Rosenergoatom wants to extend the lifetime of all the reactors, and possibly do so for more than the already announced 15 years. According to Russian legislation, decommissioning planning should start five years ahead of planned closure.

Beside technical decommissioning plans, local energy strategies and social and economical aspects of decommissioning are important. Lack of plans in itself constitutes an obstacle to decisions for closure, investment in renewable power production and alternative development in the nuclear cities. Early and good planning is needed to avert for instance social and economic problems from closure.

Another important aspect of the project is promotion of democracy. Civil society possesses a weak standing in Russia, owing to a lack of tradition and experiences, and to the bad state of Russian contemporary democracy. A process where decommission is being planned is a positive process, where environmental, economical and social security will be looked after. Working for increased publicity and participation in nuclear issues could hence contribute to democracy "training" in a positive way.

Status

Two reactors at Kola NPP and one at Leningrad NPP have been prepared for 15 years prolongation of lifetime, and operation permits have been given for the first five years. The second reactor at Leningrad NPP turned 30 years this summer, and has been shut down since, waiting for reconstruction and lifetime prolongation. The reconstruction is scheduled to start soon, and planned to take approximately one year, which means that by the end of 2006, all four first generation reactors at the two NPPs could have been prepared for prolonged lifetime.

Plans of a new nuclear reactor of the type VVER 1500 in Sosnovy Bor have been supported by the gouverneur of Leningrad oblast. The argument goes that a power reserve is needed, and at the same time that export is necessary. A cable from Leningrad NPP to Finland is also planned, providing the possibility of increased export from the region.. However, this export will not increase the nuclear power production since Leningrad NPP already operates on full capacity. Currently, Leningrad NPP sells power to the grid for a tariff-decided price, allowing RAO UES to export with profit. A direct cable will give the profit from power export to Rosenergoatom instead.

On Kola peninsula, the Russian aluminium company SUAL plans to build new capacity in their aluminium plant in Kandalaksha, to use the excess power from Kola NPP. Kola NPP currently runs on lower capacity because of power surplus in the area.

Summary of results and experiences

The project partners have developed a functioning network, which actively cooperates in order to collect and analyse information and to involve stakeholder in preparation of decommissioning. The NGOs regional NGOs capacity has increased a lot in 2005. Our dialogue with nuclear industry, regional authorities and municipalities has improved. We have also aquired and spread more information than previous years. This is mainly a result of increased competence, knowledge and network. We have made progress in the field, and overcome several difficulties. There is still a long way to go before openness and constructive dialogue are achieved, but the networking organisations are much better equipped than last year.

A central issue at the beginning of the activities was to establish an understanding of the juridical base for decommissioning and how the industry is building up of financial reserves. This quest continued in 2005 until the real situation was disclosed. The findings about juridical aspects and practical implementation of building up reserves for decommissioning are presented in the report *"Status of Russia's decommission fund"*. As it turns out, money is in fact allocated in a decommissioning reserve as the law states, however, no accumulation of funds take place, all money is spent on already closed reactors.

Finding and sharing experiences from decommissioning elsewhere has also been a task. We have visited Ignalina NPP and its satellite town Visaginas in Lithuania, and made a film about their experiences. We also invited representatives from Visaginas to a seminar in Sosnovy Bor, to tell with their own words about social and economical programs to mitigate negative consequences of decommissioning. In our seminar in Murmansk, representatives of Rosenergoatom and Rostekhnadzor, and managers of Kola NPP participated.

Several of the network's events have been covered by media. Press conferences in January and April received attention and publicity, and both seminars in November got good media coverage. In addition to appearances in local media, Oleg Bodrov has also been interviewed by news programs on Swedish and Finnish television.



Press conference in St.Petersburg Regional Press Institute on Nevskij Prospekt, January 05

Network composition and responsibilities

The network's composition has been altered during 2005. SEU in Moscow withdrew from the practical work in the network because the work with preparations for decommissioning became too time consuming for them. SEU has continued to contribute in discussions, and participated at both our autumn seminars (in Sosnovy Bor and Murmansk).

Nevertheless, this change led to increased responsibilities for GAIA and Zelenyj Mir, but was in no way dramatic, as the organisations being neighbors to the NPPs from the very beginning have held the most central positions in the project. These organisations have now also taken over the work towards federal institutions in Moscow. In addition we use experts and contact persons in Moscow when needed.

Resources have been redistributed from SEU in Moscow to GAIA in Murmansk, which has increased their group with a new person. GAIA has taken on more responsibility for the general work, in addition to the work towards Kola NPP. Zelenyj Mir holds specific responsibility for work towards Leningrad NPP, together with international power trade.

One of the experiences from 2004, was that the Russian organisations need closer cooperation and coaching by Norges Naturvernforbund to be able to work with this complicated issue. This is still the case, even though the organisations' ability has improved.

Norges Naturvernforbund has worked closely with the Russian partners. In 2005 more was spent in Russia, in order to work more closely together on difficult subject. Five strategy meetings have been held, in addition to frequent dialogue on e-mail and telephone.

Expected and achieved results

All planned project activities have been implemented and the expected results has been reached. A number of success criteria's for the 2005 project implementation have been established. In the following activities and results for each of the criteria's are given.

– Determined actual status of the decommissioning fund and its content

As it is necessary to know the system in order to ask the right questions, the knowledge gained the previous year has been a good basis for further gaining of knowledge in 2005. Our search for information on the decommissioning financing reserves has brought results. These results are presented in the draft report "*Status of Russia's decommission fund*". The information in the report exceeds what has been collected on this topic by others.

The result however, is not quite as positive; It is clear that money for decommissioning is severely lacking. Although money is being put aside in a reserve, everything is being spent on already closed reactor blocks and not accumulated.

The draft report was presented at a seminar in Oslo in September and in Sosnovy Bor and Murmansk in November. Comments and corrections are currently being gathered, and a final report will be finished by April 2006.

– Demanded openness regarding the amount of money in the fund

In our work with the report mentioned above, we wrote letters to several federal bodies to attain the information needed. After repeated requests, we have got answers. In addition, the information is later published in nuclear industry magazines. So our work have resulted in more open information on this issue from the nuclear industry, as at least some information and comments on the reserve can be found.

Recently, the Governor of Murmansk region decided to open a Nuclear portal on their web site, and even asked our network partner GAIA to provide information for it. This shows two things; that information on nuclear issues is considered important by the regional level, and that GAIA is considered an important stakeholder in this issue.



Visiting Kola NPP, June 05

- *Taken initiative towards decision makers on local and regional levels, to make them demand financing and planning of decommissioning.*

The project participants have accomplished to start a fruitful dialogue with the nuclear “community” both in Sosnovy Bor and on Kola peninsula. In Sosnovy Bor, local municipalities and trade union are interested in decommissioning experience, and to some extent dialogue about decommissioning preparations. We are working to further extend this dialogue, as for instance the idea of a study trip to Lithuania has been welcomed from the city hall administration.

In Kola, the plant management of Kola NPP has started a new and more open approach towards environmentalists. In June representatives of GAIA, SEU and Naturvernforbundet visited Kola NPP together with other environmental NGOs. The visit gave an opportunity to ask questions to the plant management and talk to journalists about the issue of prolongation and decommissioning, and even more important it provided a basis for further dialogue. After the visit GAIA kept in contact with Kola NPP, which has become more open to discussion and contacts with NGO. On this basis Kola NPP supported establishing contacts with Rosnergoatom (REA). As a result specialists from REA, together with plant management, participated in our seminar that was organized in Murmansk in November.

A “round table” discussion in Polarnye Zori was arranged by GAIA October 19, shortly before local elections. Participants were candidates for the mayor office, representatives of the Department of Education, Department of Culture, students, and mass-media (local TV-channel and newspapers). The mayor candidates gave answers to student’s questions on issues such as social problems, Kola NPP and higher education. In Polarnye Zori there are no NGOs, which makes it even more important that GAIA come from Apatity to promote civil society and democratic ideas.

- *Organized a seminar on decommissioning for municipalities, trade unions and NGOs in Murmansk*

The seminar in Murmansk was carried out November 24, with the title “*Future of nuclear energy*”. 25 representatives from Rosenergoatom, Rostekhnadzor, Kola NPP and NGOs from Kola, St.P and Moscow participated in the seminar. In addition the seminar was attended by seven representatives from local and regional Tv and newspapers. The representatives from the nuclear industry held presentations about prolongation of operating life and NGOs made presentation on their positions.

Rosenergoatom presented a possible technical decommission solution, a work that is at an early stage.

All presentations in the seminar were followed by an “opponent” commenting the presentation, paving the way for further discussions. Even though it was completely clear that the views of NGOs and nuclear industry differed a lot, and the discussions were more than lively on some occasions, GAIA managed to calm things down to open and constructive exchange of opinions. Both sides appreciated the seminar and look forward to continuing the dialogue.

The Norwegian Consul General Rune Aasheim in Murmansk did not have opportunity to participate in the seminar, but welcomed us to the consulat for a briefing on the project and its findings.

– *Organized a seminar on decommissioning for municipalities, trade unions and NGOs in St Petersburg*

The seminar in Sosnovy Bor was carried out November 18-19, with 38 participants. The seminar title was “*Nuclear Power Units Decommissioning. European Experience. Social, Economic and Environmental Aspects. Role of Authorities, Business and Public in Ensuring Sustainable Development*”. The seminar was organized in cooperation with NGO ATGAJA (Kaunas, Lithuania), Sosnovy Bor city administration, and ATOMGRAD trade union association of Sosnovy Bor city. The main part of the seminar consisted of presentations on Lithuanian experience, among others from the mayor of Visaginas, the town of Ignalina NPP.

Detailed presentation of the experiences from Ignalina decommission preparations was an inspiration for Sosnovy Bor to start thinking about how the city best could prepare for decommissioning of the first block at Leningrad NPP. As a direct consequence the Leningrad NPP trade union has started their own program to prepare for decommissioning.

– *Made videofilm about decommission experiences from Lithuania, Sweden and Germany*

The videofilm “*Visaginas Between Past and Future*” recorded, edited and produced during 2005 by Gennady Shabarin of Green World/Zelenyj Mir. The purpose of the film is to create an information basis for the promotion of the decommission process of the old NPPs. The film was shown at the seminar in Sosnovy Bor, and got positive feedback.

The film is about the Lithuanian decommission experience and transformation of the socio-ecological crisis to a constructive development process of the nuclear city Visaginas, when the 1st unit of the Ignalina NPP was closed. Also the Swedish experience from closing of Barseback is covered in the film.

The film is distributed to politicians, administrations, trade union representatives and NGOs. It is used at meetings and seminars to start discussion about how to prepare for necessary decommissioning processes in Russia.

– *Drawn attention to dependence of the oldest reactors, by plans of new power demanding industry in connection with the nuclear stations*

There is surplus power capacity in Northwest-Russia. Several initiatives aim at creating market for the surplus power. Establishment of industries linked to the old reactors by long term contracts on cheap energy, will make the early closure more difficult.

There are initiatives for establishing new aluminium production linked to both Leningrad and Kola NPP. Zelenyj Mir has closely monitored the situation in Sosnovy Bor, where the first aluminium project has been stopped (see 2004 report). GAIA and Zelenyj Mir participated in an aluminium industry seminar with SuAl in Petrozavodsk in December, and started to question the enlargement plans at Kandalaksja aluminium factory.

This year new plans for an electricity transfer cable from Sosnovy Bor to Finland have arisen. This project is connected with increased nuclear activity, because it provides new financial opportunities. Today ROA UES held a monopoly for power export. A Rosenergoatom cable directly from Sosnovy Bor will give Rosenergoatom increased income by exporting to the Nordic market instead of selling power by standard tariffs in Russia. Zelenyj Mir has raised questions about the sustainability of the project both in Russia and through Finnish media. Norges Naturvernforbund follows the question in contact with Norwegian power companies and politicians. The EU-commission has stated that there should not be any increased power import from Russia, as long as the oldest reactors are in operation.

– *Launched the web page and update it frequently*

The web site www.decomatom.org.ru was launched in early spring, and since then further developed. The web site provides background information on power situation, decommission experiences, costs etc. Up to date information on network seminars, press releases and statements are also provided. Updates are being made approximately every third week depending on what is new.

The responsibility of the practical work with the web site has been transferred from Zelenyj Mir to GAIA. This has led to more frequent updates, but there are still possibilities for improvements and adjustments. We are currently working to change the technical solution for the web site, as the old one is not really user-friendly and doing changes in the site are thus rather complicated.

– *Organize 5 meetings within the network*

In 2005 we have organized 5 strategy meetings with participants from Norway and Russia, 3 of which all network organisations participated. In addition the network participants have been in connection with seminars and other travels.



Working together at the Zelenyj Mir office

– *Tree-four work stays in Russia in combination with meetings*

Some of the travels in connection with meetings have provided the opportunity to work together in offices, some to organize meetings and visits.

This is an overview of the travels in 2005:

- January, Sosnovy Bor: Strategy meeting with all network organisations, press conference in St. Petersburg and 2 additional days for Norges Naturvernforbund (NNV) and Zelenyj Mir working together.

- April, Moscow: Strategy meeting with all network organisations, and additional meetings with contacts in other environmental organisations.
- May, Apatity: Strategy discussion NNV and GAIA, 3 additional days working together, and meeting in Polarnye Zori to prepare a round table debate.
- May, Moscow: Strategy discussion NNV and SEU
- June, Apatity: Strategy meeting with NNV, GAIA and SEU (Zelenyj Mir missing), and visit to Kola NPP
- August, Apatity: NNV and GAIA working together
- September, Oslo: Strategy meeting with all network organisations
- November, Sosnovy Bor: Seminar
- November, Murmansk: Seminar

On two occasions, NNV sent two persons to events in Russia. In the strategy meetings in Oslo, 3 representatives from NNV participated.

Economic results

The grant for 2005 was 850 000 NOK, in addition to 63 889 NOK transferred from 2004. This amounts to 913 889 NOK.

Table: Preliminary results per December 31, 2005, in NOK

	Rev budget	Prel. results
Salaries/fees NNV (incl. overhead)	450 000	450.000
Transfers Russian organisations, travels, translations etc.	200 000	220.000
Travels NNV	70 000	86.500
Meetings/conferences/ seminars	65 000	65.000
Publications (web, videofilm, reports etc.)	110 000	93.500
Reserves	18 889	
Totally	913 889	915.000

Please note that the economical results are preliminary, and might change accordingly. The final result will be presented later when the auditor has approved it.

Attachments

- Program and participants seminar in Sosnovy Bor November 2005
- Program and participants seminar in Murmansk November 2005