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Selection of a site for the deep geological repository

The main criterion for the deep geological repository (DGR) consists of long-term safety over a period of tens of thousands of years. Hence, we are devoting a great deal of attention to selecting the best site for the construction of the facility. With respect to the Czech Republic, it is planned that the repository will be constructed in a suitable crystalline massif. Nine candidate sites are currently under consideration, the detailed assessment of which requires the conducting of detailed geological survey work.

The preparation of the construction of the DGR is a long-term project, in which the selection of the optimal location of the facility and its complete safety for tens of thousands of years play a key role. At the end of 2018, SÚRAO submitted to the SÚRAO Board (a Ministry of Industry and Trade advisory body) a proposal to reduce the number of potential sites to 4 preferred sites for the conducting of geological investigation work; the current schedule envisages that the Government will select a final and reserve site in 2025. The actual construction of the repository will commence in 2050 with the start of operation of the facility expected in 2065 at the earliest.

The selection of the candidate sites for the DGR followed the extensive collection of data which describes local conditions in detail. Moreover, in recent years, SÚRAO has conducted various research and monitoring work concerning, for example, field work, ground reconnaissance, sam-

pling and monitoring including the monitoring of dust levels and the occurrence of radon, seismic measurements and the remote sensing of the sites via satellite and aircraft imaging. The results of the geological, hydrogeological and follow-up work are being used to construct 3D geoscientific models of the rock subsoil, based on which the individual sites will be assessed.

In addition to collecting geological data, the assessment of the sites includes the consideration of the various socio-economic issues involved. Part of the site research has addressed topics such as how local inhabitants view the project, how it will affect employment, local businesses and infrastructure and a host of other important factors in the regions concerned.

The basic documentation for the assessment of the sites consists of the following:

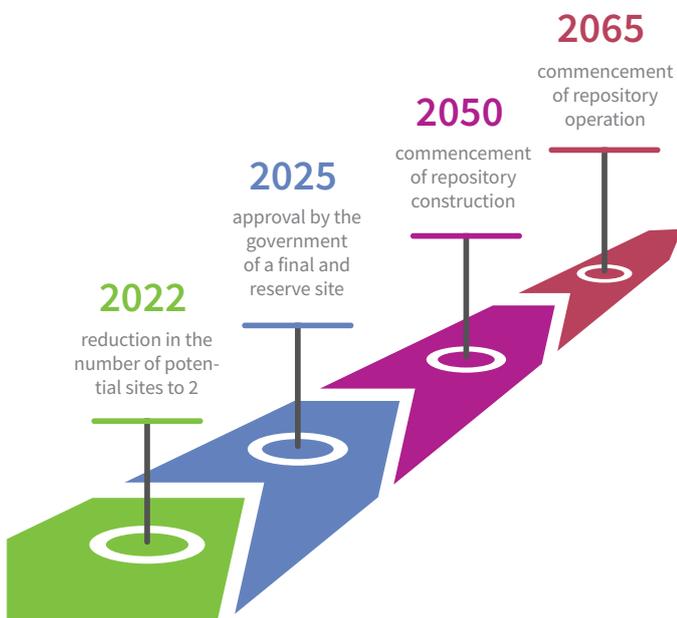
safety study
feasibility study
environmental impact study

The candidate sites were mutually compared on the basis of these documents.

The final decision on the reduction in the number of potential sites will be made by the Czech Government.

The next stage will focus on acquiring relevant knowledge on conditions at the depth anticipated for the DGR and its application with concern to determining the final and reserve sites for the construction of the facility. **SÚRAO's aim is to meet the deadline set by the Concept, i.e. 2025. The obtaining of the relevant data from DGR depth is conditional not only on technical considerations, but also on securing so-called investigation areas at the sites.** Previous experience has shown, however, that procedural issues form a key factor in terms of meeting the various milestones set by the Concept.

The final site will be subjected to a detailed geological survey and the data



obtained will be used to demonstrate the fulfilment of the various safety requirements and thus to prove that the selected site is suitable for the construction of the deep geological repository. The reserve site will provide a backup option in case of the occurrence of unforeseen issues during the detailed characterisation of the final site.

Public involvement

All the countries that are involved in the preparation of DGR projects are aware that it is not enough to merely select a suitable geological environment and then simply make the decision to build the facility without the agreement of the local population, i.e. suitable geological conditions must be accompanied by the acceptance of the inhabitants concerned. Therefore, SÚRAO considers direct communication with local people to be of key importance. Where possible, efforts are being made to involve local municipalities in the site selection process beyond the requirements of existing legislation. At the same time, SÚRAO supports the efforts of municipalities to strengthen their legal status and is calling for the closer involvement of potentially affected municipalities as part of the overall process leading to the selection of the final site for the construction of the DGR.

SÚRAO has, therefore, proposed the establishment of so-called local groups as a platform on which to base this new, proactive approach to cooperation.

The purpose of the local groups for each of the DGR candidate sites (including, inter alia, the preparation of special legislation “on the involvement of the municipalities and citizens concerned in the process leading to the selection of the site for the underground disposal of radioactive waste and obtaining permission for the operation of a DGR”) is to raise the level of public awareness and to ensure the maximum degree of openness and transparency of the process surrounding the assessment of the selection and subsequent construction of the DGR. Through representatives appointed by the affected municipalities, local groups have the right to both be informed of all the facts related to the DGR site selection process in its current stage and including the planning of further developments and to communicate accurate and detailed information on the progress of DGR site selection to their fellow citizens.

The so-called civil control committees (CCC) have already been established for the Richard, near Litoměřice, Dukovany and Bratrství, near Jáchymov, repositories with communication concerning principally the operation of local information centres, the distribution of information materials and regular meetings with local public representatives. Information meetings take place either in the form of regular CCC meetings (the Richard and Bratrství civil control committees and the Dukovany civil safety committee) or at the request of local municipal councils. The reason for the establishment of these committees was to strengthen mutual trust between local citizens and the repositories and SÚRAO. The membership of the committees includes representatives of affected and surrounding municipalities and SÚRAO and local mining authority specialists.

SÚRAO’s aim is primarily to maintain and increase mutual trust and understanding, respect and social responsibility between SÚRAO and the public.

Affected municipalities are entitled to claim financial contributions from the nuclear account

The new Atomic Act, which came into force at the beginning of 2017, substantially increased the amount of contributions that can be claimed by affected municipalities from the nuclear account.

The Act concerns contributions both to those municipalities in whose cadastral areas so-called investigation areas for special intervention into the Earth’s crust (i.e. with respect to the conducting of geological survey work by SÚRAO) are established and those municipalities in whose cadastral areas existing radioactive waste repositories are located.

Contributions to municipalities pursuant to the Atomic Act no. 236/2016 Coll.	
municipalities in whose cadastral areas the operation of radioactive waste repositories is permitted	CZK 4 000 000 per year, in addition, such municipalities will receive a contribution of CZK 10,000 per cubic metre of disposed of radioactive waste in a given calendar year
municipalities in whose cadastral areas investigation areas are designated for special intrusion into the Earth’s crust	CZK 600 000 per year, and CZK 0.40 per year for each square metre of the cadastral area of the municipality included in the investigation area
municipalities in whose cadastral areas protected areas are designated for special intrusion into the Earth’s crust concerning the deep geological disposal of radioactive waste	CZK 600,000 per year, and CZK 0.60 per year for each square metre of the cadastral area of the municipality included in the protected area

