Our approach to public and stakeholder engagement for the generic design assessment (GDA) of the UK HPR1000 nuclear power station

About this plan

This plan sets out the regulators’ proposed approach to engaging with the public and stakeholders during the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) of General Nuclear System Limited’s UK HPR1000 nuclear power station.

We welcome your feedback and views on our proposed approach to engagement during GDA.

Who might be interested in our engagement

You might be interested in our engagement approach if you:

- have knowledge relevant to our technical assessment of the UK HPR1000
- live or work in an area where this design may be proposed by a developer (currently Bradwell in Essex)
- represent a ‘community’ that you want to share this information with
- are interested in our process for assessing new nuclear power stations

Our approach to engagement

We will be conducting this design assessment in an open and transparent way, as we did for previous GDAs. We will be sharing information and proposals with stakeholders to build their understanding and knowledge of GDA, our decision making process and the roles and responsibilities of the regulators.

We will be encouraging and enabling stakeholder input. It’s important to us that we involve people in decisions that affect their community. We want to understand peoples’ comments and views about the UK HPR1000. Where relevant, we can use these comments to help inform our assessments of the reactor design.

While it will always remain the responsibility of the regulators to make decisions in GDA about the acceptability or not of a reactor design, we consider our decisions will be better informed through engagement.

We hope this approach will build trust and confidence in us as regulators and enhance relationships with both national and local to the site stakeholders.
Our objectives

We want stakeholders to:

- understand how we assess a reactor design and what will happen at each stage of the GDA process
- understand how they can provide their views, what they can and can’t comment on and how we’ll use their input to inform our assessment
- have many opportunities to give us their views
- understand the conclusions of our assessment and why we have made our decision
- help make our final decision on the acceptability of the reactor design as robust as possible
- know more about how GDA fits into the bigger picture of nuclear power station development
- understand our roles, specifically around regulation of nuclear new build – what we do and what we don’t do

Our stakeholders

Our stakeholders include:

- the public (including local interest and action groups) living near the decommissioned Bradwell nuclear power station and proposed site for Bradwell B on both sides of the Blackwater estuary in Essex
- the public living near existing nuclear power stations or sites listed in the government’s Nuclear National Policy Statement
- elected representatives and government agencies, including MPs
- local councils and other representative bodies especially those close to potential nuclear new-build sites included in the government’s Nuclear National Policy Statement
- non-government organisations (NGOs)
- academics
- the nuclear industry (including potential developers and operators)

How we will engage and share information with stakeholders

Our communications and engagement activity will include:

- publishing information on our websites - Joint new reactors, GOV.UK, ONR
- sharing information through e-bulletins - Joint nuclear regulators’ and EA and ONR e-bulletins
- attending and speaking at potential developers’ nuclear new-build community meetings, planning consultation events and site stakeholder groups
- listening to NGO concerns at nuclear liaison fora (e.g. BEIS’ NGO Engagement Forum)
- carrying out online public consultation (Environment Agency) and enabling developers to run a public comments process
- meeting with representatives and groups near proposed sites
- participating in conferences/meetings/public exhibitions run by others
- organising and inviting national stakeholders to participative workshops or webinars
- working with journalists to share information in local and national media
- using our social media accounts to raise awareness (Twitter, blogs)
- sharing information through community channels and local advocates
Getting involved

Comment on a nuclear power station design

The comments process is a requirement of the GDA process. Its main features are:

- The design company publishing information about its design, including that sent to the regulators as part of the assessment process, on its own UK GDA website
- The design company inviting questions/comments on the design and information provided and responding directly to the comments received
- The design company publicising this process
- The questions and comments are received by the design company and their responses will be seen by the regulators and can be used to help inform our assessments

Respond to the Environment Agency’s public consultation

As part of the assessment process the Environment Agency will prepare a consultation document setting out its preliminary conclusions about the design. It will publish and consult on these findings during early 2021 (date TBC).

Although ONR does not carry out a public consultation, views submitted via the comments process can help to inform both the EA’s and ONR’s assessments.

Engagement

There will also be opportunities for engagement with us through involvement in various stakeholder groups including, Site Stakeholder Groups, conferences and NGO forums.

Reporting progress and responding to stakeholders

We will:

- consider comments received and information arising from the comments process and, where relevant, use these to help inform our assessments
- publish reports:
  - summarising stakeholder comments after the end of each GDA step
  - setting out the issues raised during the Environment Agency’s consultation
- explain how stakeholder input has helped inform the regulators decisions in their GDA decision documents
- update stakeholders about generic design assessment and our final decisions through our websites, e-bulletins, social media, news stories and at events and conferences.

Feedback on our approach

We welcome feedback on our approach. Please send your comments to ukhpr1000@onr.gov.uk and nuclear@environment-agency.gov.uk

Further information

- Infographics to explain and enable understanding of nuclear regulation.
- Timeline for GDA
- Research report about a public dialogue project to review and improve public involvement in design assessments of new nuclear power stations.