EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Community Research

FUTURAE

A Future for Radioecology in Europe

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FINAL ACTIVITY REPORT-EXTRACT

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EC, Henning von Maravic	1	pdf
	2	hard copy
FUTURAE Partners	1	pdf
FUTURAE website	1	pdf on Outputs page

FUTURAE (a Future for Radioecology in Europe) aims to evaluate the feasibility of network(s) to maintain and enhance competence and sustainable collaboration in the field of assessment and management of the impact of radionuclides on man and the environment. The output of the project will be an evaluation of the potential for establishing deeper and sustainable collaboration in radioecology possibly in the form of Network(s) of Excellence. The project started in October 2006 and is to end by September 2008.

Project Co-ordinator: Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN)

Contractors:

Swedish Radiation Protection Authority	SSI/SSM
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology	CEH
Belgian Nuclear Research Centre	SCK-CEN
Research Centre in Energy, Environment and Technology	CIEMAT
University of Antwerp	UA
Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority	STUK
Jozef Stefan Institute	JSI
Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority	NRPA

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Publishable Executive Summary

The FUTURAE CA ("A Future for Radioecoloy in Europe") evaluated the feasibility of a network to maintain and enhance competence and sustainable collaboration in the field of assessment and management of the impact of radionuclides on man and the environment. After an evaluation of the current situation of research in radioecology in Europe, the project promoted an interaction with end-users representing national bodies, competent authorities, industry and experts to assess the present and future needs in radioecology and to evaluate the capacity of research groups to support these future needs. The output of the project is an evaluation of the potential for establishing deeper and sustainable collaboration in radioecology in Europe possibly in the form of a network of excellence.

D1 and D2 FUTURAE deliverable reports produced during the first year have assessed the: (i) current levels of research capacity, human resources, infrastructure, research programmes and funding of radioecology in Europe; (ii) present and future needs of end-users of radioecological research. WP3 brought together these two outputs and considered how to rationalise the radioecological capacity across the EU with the requirements of end users. It was demonstrated that there are justifiable, and increasing, requirements for radioecological research within Europe for the foreseeable future. These requirements are common across member states. A SWOT (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats) analyses highlighted issues for radioecology in Europe. Whilst Europe retains radioecological expertise in a wide range of disciplines, there are currently 'threats' to sustainability as there is considerable fragmentation occurring with the majority of organisations conducting radioecological research having comparatively small budgets and few staff. Similarly, although the first FUTURAE report indicated an adequate infrastructure, the number of facilities to conduct some key activities has declined over the last decade with few remaining.

Work performed during WP4, has shown that, due to the limited available resources in terms of human resources and infrastructures, the only realistic way to maintain and enhance competences in radioecology at the European level appears to be a better integration of scientific activities. As a first step, a NoE funded by the Commission, networking human resources, infrastructures and projects in radioecological sciences would be an important signal in the objective of maintaining and enhancing competences in the long-term. The NoE, which should constitute the basis for the development of a sustainable network, should have the following objectives :

- to reduce the fragmentation of the radioecological community;
- to optimize the research programmes and utilization of infrastructure;
- to maintain and strengthen European excellence;
- to adequately support the needs expressed by all end-users;
- to improve mobility between the member organizations;
- to put mechanisms in place to involve the wider European radioecological community;
- to attract young researchers (as the average age of European radioecologists is increasing); and
- to liase with European and worldwide networks and international bodies.

Finally, the FUTURAE consortium has considered that there is a justified need for coordination of radioecology in Europe and that this requirement would be appropriately addressed by a Network of Excellence under the EURATOM programme