THE GERMAN COMPETENCE NETWORK ON NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

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The present German energy policy is based on the phase-out of nuclear electricity generation, which means that the last of the currently operating eighteen German nuclear power plants will run until about 2022. While the plants will be shut down one after the other, decommissioning will start together with interim storage of the radioactive waste. The safe waste disposal in a final repository is planned to start around 2030 and may take another two decades, i.e., in Germany nuclear competence is further needed, at least until the mid of this century.

Against this background, a high-ranking commission under the direction of the Federal Ministry of Economy and Technology evaluated the publicly funded nuclear safety related research and development (R&D) activities in Germany. One of the recommendations made by the commission was the foundation of a Competence Network on Nuclear Technology for an optimum coordination of the remaining nuclear activities including aspects of future human resources in this area. This Network was established in March 2000 with the following member institutions: Research Centre Juelich, Research Centre Karlsruhe, Research Centre Rossendorf and the Gesellschaft fuer Anlagen- und Reaktorsicherheit (GRS) in Munich and their neighbouring Technical Universities.

The strategic objectives of the Competence Network include:

- Trend investigations on job development and on university education capacities in the nuclear technology sector;
- Enhanced cooperation of the Research Centres with universities in the nuclear field and support of international education initiatives (e.g. ENEN, WNU);
- Coordination and bundling of the activities in publicly funded reactor safety and waste management R&D programmes;
- Support of qualified young scientists and engineers (pre-doctoral students) – also by third-party funds;
- Participation in and collaboration with international projects and activities for advancements of international nuclear safety standards (EU, IAEA, OECD-NEA).

In the full paper, these objectives will be outlined in more detail, actual problems will be addressed and illustrated and first approaches to certain problems will be described.