



XA04C1426

NUCLEAR WASTE INFORMATION IN SUPPLEMENTS OF LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Veijo Ryhänen
Teollisuuden Voima Oy

The utility Teollisuuden Voima Oy (TVO) is conducting site investigations in Finland to select a final disposal site for spent nuclear fuel. Site selection studies, including deep drillings and other field investigations, have been carried out in different parts of the country since 1987. Now there are three areas in which detailed studies are continued. The programme aims at site selection in the year 2000.

Before the construction of the final disposal facility can be started around the year 2010, a precondition in the Finnish legislation is that the council of the local municipality accepts the facility. Hence, an essential task is to distribute information of the studies and of the principles of final disposal to the local decision-makers and public. Information work has an important role already now in order to make people familiar with the long-term project and to build confidence on the safety of final disposal.

TVO's information programme includes several types of actions to different target groups, such as press conferences, contact group meetings, open houses, exhibitions, lectures to different groups, visits to the drilling sites and to the existing nuclear waste facilities as well as use of various written material.

In January 1994, a new method was applied in the distribution of TVO's written information directly to local public. Four-page supplements were prepared to the local newspapers to inform public of the stage of the site investigations and other topical issues. After that, new supplements have been published in six months intervals.

Own supplements have been made for different municipalities in which the candidate areas are situated. The form of the supplement is same as that of the newspaper. As a matter of fact, TVO's information forms a special advertising section in a single issue of a newspaper.

The topics handled in the supplements are for example present status of the local bedrock studies, other topical information of TVO's waste management programme and co-operation between TVO and local enterprises, sports clubs etc. Partly same articles are used in the supplements of the different municipalities.

An advantage when using supplements of local newspapers in the distribution of nuclear waste information is that information is easily delivered to all households of the municipality. Furthermore, the supplement is in the same form as that of newspaper, to which local readers have got used.

In the summer of 1994, impressions and opinions of information in this form were studied by telephone interviews of local residents. According to the results, 70 - 80% of the readers of the newspapers remembered the supplement. As to the contents of the supplements, the readers remembered best the articles dealing with local field work. These articles were also considered the most interesting ones.

Most of the readers, 50 - 60%, had a positive attitude towards this form of information distribution. However, there were differences in the credibility of information between the different municipalities; stronger local opposition correlates with lower credibility of information delivered by TVO. Further issues studied were e.g. comprehensibility of the articles and attitudes towards sponsorship of local sports clubs.

According to the results of the study and also on the basis of the other response received, the supplements have mainly a favourable reception in the municipalities. Hence, the publication of supplements will be continued.