



CASE STUDY FACT SHEET #6

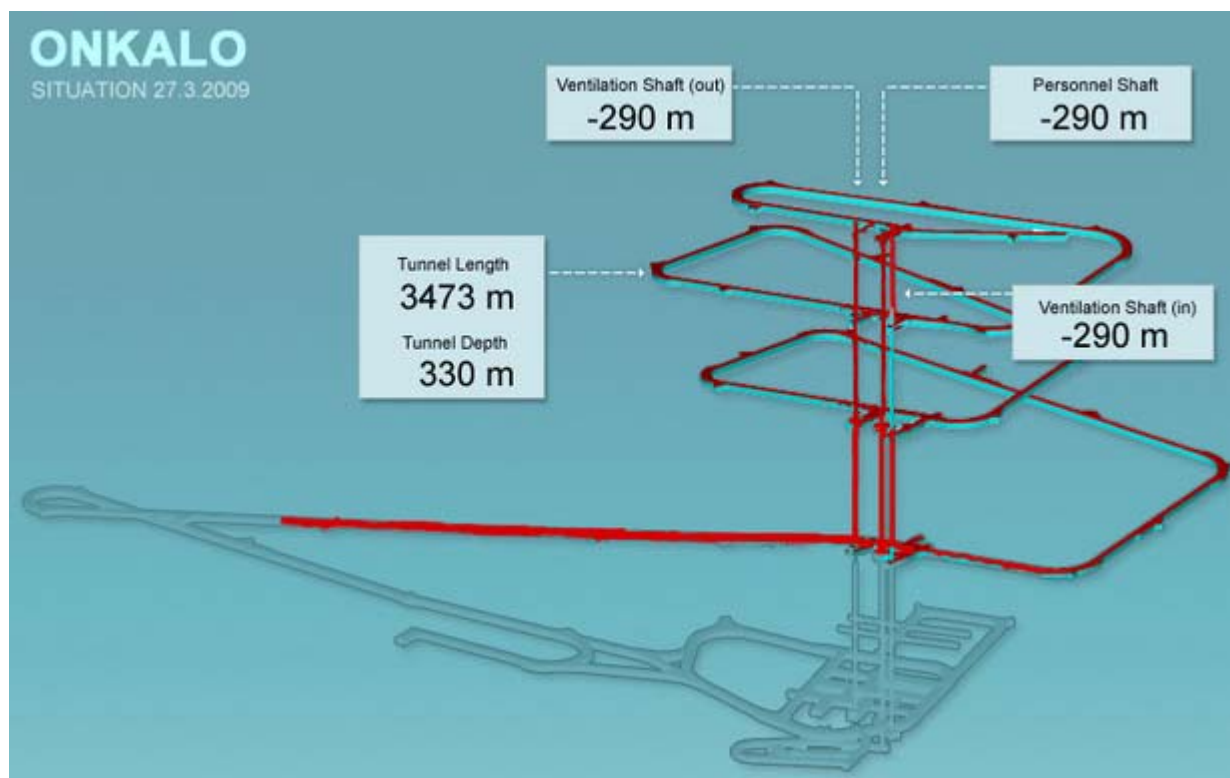
Expansion of a planned spent nuclear fuel repository in Finland

BACKGROUND

Nuclear power is an important source of energy in Finland (29% of its electricity). In order to manage radioactive waste generated mainly by nuclear power plants, Finland is planning the expansion of a planned repository for this purpose. The **Espoo Convention** is being applied to the expansion.

THE PROJECT

The project comprises the expansion of a planned spent nuclear fuel repository on Olkiluoto Island in Finland, extending the capacity of geological disposal from 9,000 tonnes to 12,000 tonnes of uranium (from plants owned by the companies TVO and Fortum's). The project owner is Posiva Oy. The Espoo Convention is also being applied to four nuclear power plants in Finland (see fact sheet no. 5).



Status of excavations at Olkiluoto in March 2009. Source: Posiva Oy.

EIA PROCEDURE

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure has two main steps: (1) the “EIA programme” setting out the scope of the EIA; and (2) an “EIA report” taking into consideration comments received in the first step. Once the Ministry of Employment and Economy—the competent authority in this instance—has considered the EIA report as “adequate”, the licensing process follows four more steps: (1) the “decision in principle”; (2) its ratification by Parliament; (3) issue of the construction licence; and (4) issue of the operating licence.

ESPOO CONVENTION PROCEDURE

Initiating the process. Activities for the storage and disposal of radioactive waste (listed in Appendix I) automatically require application of the Convention if significant transboundary impact is likely. Although unlikely, a severe accident may cause transboundary impacts (e.g. radioactive contamination). Therefore, a procedure under the Espoo Convention is being carried out for the project. *Note:* Finland and Estonia have an agreement on EIA in a Transboundary Context, as provided for by Article 8 of the Convention.

Notification (Art. 3). As Party of origin, Finland in 2008 sent notifications, through the Ministry of Employment and Economy, to neighbouring States and Baltic Sea littoral States, i.e. eight Parties to the Convention (Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden) as well as the Russian Federation, though it is not a Party to the Convention. A summary of the EIA programme was translated into the language of each notified Party; this summary was intended for use by the public. The whole EIA programme was available in Finnish, Swedish and English. Estonia, Germany, Norway and Sweden decided to participate in the procedure.

Transmittal of information (Art. 3). In the notifications, Finland gave general information about the project and likely transboundary impact. The authorities of affected countries gave their opinions on the EIA programme and, later, on the EIA report.

EIA preparation (Art. 4). The EIA programme was completed in May 2008, and the EIA report was completed in October 2008. Summaries of the EIA reports were translated into the language of each participating Party. The whole EIA reports were available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

Public Participation (Art. 2, 3, and 4). The public had the opportunity to comment on the EIA programme and on the EIA report. Following the Convention’s provisions, the Ministry of Employment and Economy requested the inclusion of the public’s comments, and how they were considered, in the EIA report.

Final Decision (Art. 6). The Ministry of Employment and Economy has made its statement on the adequacy of the EIA report. In April 2008 there was a submission for a new decision in principle for the extension of the repository (a previous decision in principle was issued in 2002).

LINKS (in English)

Finnish Ministry of Employment and Economy:

<http://www.tem.fi/index.phtml?l=en&s=2992>

World Nuclear Association:

<http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/info.html#countries>

Povisa Oy: <http://www.posiva.fi/en/>

Fact sheet prepared

March 2009

www.unece.org/env/eia