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Role of the host communities in final disposal of spent nuclear fuel in Finland and Sweden

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Finland and Sweden are the countries with the most advanced plans for final disposal of spent nuclear fuel (SNF). The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency's Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) has evoked both countries as good examples in the use of a 'partnering' approach, designed to achieve both a licensable site supported by the community and a balance between fair representation and competent participation. While both countries are consensus driven high-trust societies, with similar technological concept for SNF disposal, and whose licensing processes have advanced at fairly similar pace, both also possess their own distinct characteristics. One difference concerns the role of the communities in siting and licensing of the repositories. The paper examines 1) the background for this differentiation, 2) how local final disposal organisations in the host communities Eurajoki and Östhammar took shape and evolved, and 3) how differences between the organisations illustrate the divergence between the Finnish and Swedish approaches to stakeholder engagement. While the Swedish approach can be characterised as 'involved partnership' –which shapes the operating environment for the implementer and authorities, by challenging and even modifying the policies and actions –the Finnish case could be described as a 'bystander partnership' characterised by trust in safety authorities, with community economics as the primary concern.

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Country or International Organization

Finland

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