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STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS FOR CANADA'S DEEP GEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY FOR USED NUCLEAR FUEL

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Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is leading a site selection process for an informed and willing host community with a suitable site for a deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel, as well as an associated Centre of Expertise. The process was initiated in 2010 and is expected to culminate with identification of a preferred site around 2023. It is a community-driven process designed to address a broad range of social, economic, cultural and technical factors identified through dialogue with Canadians and Indigenous peoples. The process involves a step-wise approach with clear decision points, and increasingly intensive stakeholder engagement and technical study. Consistent with the NWMO's commitment to involving people in its work, the siting process is being implemented in an open, transparent and inclusive manner through a growing set of engagement and communications programs. These programs are frequently shaped by the very stakeholders they aim to engage, and seek to: build awareness, understanding and support among key audiences; work collaboratively to identify potential repository sites that are socially acceptable and respectful of social and cultural values; and explore potential to build supportive partnerships to implement the project while enhancing well-being and building resilience of communities. This paper provides an overview of the site selection process, with a focus on approaches used to engage and communicate across a wide range of audiences and platforms to achieve the goals described above. It explores the types of programs and activities used to engage citizens in developing Canada's plan and the site selection process, and in implementing the project collaboratively with municipal and Indigenous communities. It also discusses how the NWMO is expanding and adapting the activities, tools and platforms it uses to increase visibility and understanding of its work among key audiences in preparation for site selection.

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Country or International Organization

Canada

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