



Châtenay-Malabry, 4 January 2012

PRESS RELEASE

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About Andra

The French National Radioactive Waste Management Agency (Andra) is a public body with industrial and commercial activities set up by the Waste Act of 30 December 1991. It was assigned further responsibilities under the Planning Act of 28 June 2006 on the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste.

Andra is independent of radioactive waste producers and supervised by the French Ministries for Energy, the Environment and Research.

As a public body, Andra uses its expertise to develop, implement and ensure safe management solutions for all French radioactive waste aiming at protecting current and future generations from risks presented by this waste.

Deep disposal of French highly radioactive waste: The Cigéo waste disposal centre enters the industrial design phase

After 20 years of design and research, and the signature, on this day, of a first contracting agreement, Andra's Cigéo project is moving into the industrial design phase.

With the signature, on this day, of the Cigéo system prime-contracting agreement between Andra and the Gaiya group, made up of the two engineering companies Technip & Ingérop, the Cigéo project (industrial geological disposal centre) begins a new operational phase that, following the public debate planned for 2013, will allow Andra to file a licence application in 2015.

The Cigéo project aims at the disposal of the most radioactive French waste, primarily from nuclear power plants and the reprocessing of their spent fuel. It is the result of studies and research performed by Andra from 1991 to 2011, notably in its Meuse/Haute-Marne underground laboratory. These twenty years were necessary for the Agency to choose the scientific and technological solutions ensuring the long-term safety and reversibility of such a deep disposal.

In 2012, the project is beginning an industrial design phase that will consist in the proposal of an overall architecture for the repository and the definition of the operating principles of Cigéo in all phases of its lifetime (operational aspects, civil engineering, equipment, organisation of the worksite and operation until the closure of the underground structures). This phase shall include also the estimation of the construction time and overall cost and, finally, will gather the technical data necessary for the preparation of the repository licence application.

The year 2012 will also provide for:

- Specification of the waste inventory that will be disposed of in the future repository and its delivery planning, in line with the waste producers (EDF, Areva, CEA);

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COM.CP.ACOC.12.0002



- Identification of the different foreseen siting possibilities for the surface installations of the repository, in line with the Meuse and Haute-Marne stakeholders;
- Contribution to the drafting of the inter-departmental territorial development scheme, led by the Prefecture of the Meuse, which aims at planning Cigéo local insertion (network connections, urban planning, transport, etc.)

In 2013, Andra will launch tenders for the selection of "subsystem" prime-contractors who, under the coordination of the system prime-contractor, will carry out the preliminary design studies (conceptual design and basic design) and will be involved in the following areas: conventional surface installations, nuclear surface installations, nuclear processes (waste package handling) and underground installations.

The Gaiya group will work alongside Andra for 6 years. It will contribute its knowledge and lessons learned during the design studies, management and realisation of large industrial projects, notably in the nuclear and underground works fields.

Cigéo project calendar (industrial geological disposal centre)

- 1991: beginning of project research with the first law on radioactive waste;
- 2005/2006: public debate on French national policy regarding the management of radioactive materials and waste;
- 2006: after 15 years of research on different possible solutions, disposal in clay is selected, by law, as the reference solution for the very-long term protection of man and the environment;
- 2009: after two years of dialogue, Andra proposes a siting area for the underground disposal installations, near its underground research laboratory in Meuse. In 2010, the State validates the pursuit of research on this extremely favourable geological siting area;
- 2012: launch of the project's industrial phase;
- 2013: public debate on the project
- 2015: beginning of the review of the repository licence application;
- By 2016: law to define the disposal reversibility conditions;
- 2025: pending its licencing, commissioning of Cigéo.

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