

26 July 2013
Dr John Crofts

Progress Report on the Nuclear Safety Oversight Office

After a great deal of planning the Nuclear Safety Oversight Office NSOO was inaugurated on May 15th and the first group of staff joined the team on 1st July. The new team have spent time training and discussing our objective which is to increase the nuclear safety performance of TEPCO so that it is recognised as one of the safest companies in the world.

In preparation for the influx of staff Dr. Crofts and Mr. Masuda have attended various safety-related meetings and made introductory visits to the sites for discussions with the Site Superintendents and Senior reactor Engineers. These visits have provided only first impressions and it will take some time to fully assess the safety conditions. However these visits have allowed NSOO to focus its programme of assessments on some key areas. The areas we will focus on are as follows;

Firstly, do we have a strong nuclear safety culture and what should we do to improve it? Is nuclear safety and the protection of people and the environment, the primary value of TEPCO and its senior managers? Is the nuclear safety value demonstrated by everybody in the nuclear division and do we do everything with nuclear safety as the first priority?

Secondly, NSOO is assessing the corporate governance structure of the company with respect to safety. How are decisions taken, and is all the right safety information considered? Is there sufficient challenge to those decisions and the information provided? Does the existing structure work and does it provide effective governance of nuclear safety?

Other key areas we will assess across the whole company include;

- Learning From Experience; are we making every effort to find best practice and are we using it?
- Control of Contractors; TEPCO uses a high proportion of contractors, do they have the same safety values as TEPCO and are we in control of the safety of what they do?
- Management of Change; Does TEPCO have adequate systems for assessing and managing the nuclear safety significant aspects of changes to the company structure or complement?

The situation on the sites is complex, each site is different, and NSOO will have to ask different questions at each one;

· The first priority must be the stabilisation of the Fukushima Daiichi site.

It is not NSOO's role to decide what measures to take, but we need to ask whether the decisions have been properly made with nuclear safety as the top criterion.

Is everything necessary being done to control the possibility of criticality, to cool the fuel, and of course has everything possible been done to contain the radioactivity safely – are the decisions on water control taken in the full knowledge of all the safety related information?

With respect to the work being done on the site, we must make sure TEPCO has a stable and controlled form of safety management.

Are the temporary measures being replaced by properly engineered solutions?

Do these solutions have all the proper aspects of nuclear safety management, resilience, defence in depth, redundancy and diversity. Are they well engineered?

Is the safety of any new plant or modification properly analysed and challenged?
And how are we managing the work control and the safety of the people doing the work?
Are we minimising the doses to be ALARP and is the safety, health and welfare of the workforce being sustained in these demanding and demoralising circumstances?
And finally, are the emergency measures at the site appropriate for the current risks?

· For the Kashiwazaki Kariwa site the emphasis must be on the design, safety analysis and installation of the modifications – have they been designed, analysed and installed properly?

But there is also the question of the maintenance of the reactors during the long shutdown and the training and psychological preparedness of the staff, many of whom, because of the long shutdown, have never actually worked on an operating nuclear reactor.

· Finally, for Fukushima Daiichi, although the site is stable in cold shutdown, modifications, maintenance and the well-being and morale of the staff are some of the important issues.

Over the coming year NSOO will ask demanding questions in these areas with the objective of challenging the safety systems, decisions and performance in order to ensure TEPCO is operating safely and to help staff to improve the nuclear safety standards within TEPCO to achieve World Class.

(end)