



What we heard:

Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

DECEMBER 2025

nwmo

NUCLEAR WASTE
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION
DES DÉCHETS
NUCLÉAIRES

Land acknowledgment

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) acknowledges that we have worked in many different Indigenous territories since the inception of the organization. We are grateful to the Indigenous Peoples and communities we have worked with over the years.

In 2024, we selected Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace as potential hosts for the site for a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel. With this context, we acknowledge that today and moving forward, we are working in the territory of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and in other Indigenous communities.

Throughout 2024, in southern Ontario, we worked with Saugeen Ojibway Nation, and we acknowledge their dedication to the siting process. We further acknowledge that we have the privilege of working with other First Nations and Indigenous organizations and communities, including the Métis who expressed an interest in learning about our work.

As part of our commitment to Reconciliation, we recognize both the historic and current injustices and harms that far too many Indigenous communities endure. We commit to doing our part to support well-being in the Indigenous communities with which we work.

Throughout the site selection process for a deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel, the NWMO has reported annually on the content and nature of our ongoing dialogue with communities, interested individuals and organizations. These *What we heard* reports were conceived to share these conversations more broadly and invite others who may be interested to add their voice and help shape the conversation. In November 2024, we successfully concluded the site selection process and we are moving forward into the regulatory decision-making process, which will include ongoing engagement and reporting. This is the final *What we heard* report from the site selection engagement process.

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
2024 IN REVIEW	6
SAFETY, WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT	9
COMMUNITY COLLABORATION	14
RECONCILIATION AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE	19
TRANSPORTATION.....	26
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE CONVERSATIONS.....	31
IMPLEMENTING ADAPTIVE PHASED MANAGEMENT 2024-28.....	32

Introduction

Since the creation of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization in 2002, we have worked collaboratively with Canadians and Indigenous Peoples to develop a plan for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel in Canada. Our priority is protecting people and the environment for generations to come.

In 2024, after many years of community engagement, the NWMO announced we had selected the future site for Canada's deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel. The facility will be sited in the territory of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation near the Township of Ignace in northwestern Ontario. This decision followed extensive technical studies confirming the safety of the site for hosting a deep geological repository, as well as clear demonstrations of willingness from the people of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace to move forward into the next phase of the project.

As this report highlights, we continued to have many opportunities to hear from community members in the final year leading up to the site selection milestone. As the deep geological repository project for used nuclear fuel advances into the multi-year regulatory phase, the NWMO will continue to engage with Indigenous Peoples and local and regional residents. Alongside the federally regulated process, we will also be subject to Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation's sovereign Regulatory Assessment and Approval Process. This process will evaluate the project based on Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation's Anishinaabe values using Anishinaabe processes.

From the beginning, the process to select a site for a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel was informed by public input. A broad cross-section of Indigenous Peoples and Canadians shared their thoughts on what an open, transparent, fair and inclusive process should look like. Based on that input, the site selection process was designed to ensure the selected site would be safe and secure, that it would be in an area with informed and willing hosts and that it would meet the highest scientific, professional and ethical standards.

Starting in 2010, we carried out a community-driven site selection process. By 2012, 22 communities in Canada had expressed interest in learning about the repository project and exploring their potential to host it. We gradually narrowed our focus through increasingly intensive technical site evaluations and engagement with Indigenous and municipal communities. Each year, we published *What we heard* reports (beginning in 2012 and concluding this year with the 2024 report) that recorded feedback from residents of potential host communities. In the final year of the site selection process, we continued to receive insights and questions from groups and individuals in the remaining potential host communities. We've summarized these questions and insights in this report.

A YEAR OF DECISION-MAKING

Prior to the NWMO's site selection announcement in November 2024, four potential host communities were still being considered in the site selection process and continued to engage with the NWMO: Saugeen Ojibway Nation and the Municipality of South Bruce in southern Ontario and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace in northwestern Ontario. These communities developed and implemented their own decision-making processes to determine whether they were willing to move forward with the project if selected. We heard many questions about how hosting Canada's deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel could potentially support community goals in the future. To answer these questions, we worked together with communities to share information through avenues ranging from online seminars to onsite participation in community events.

We also worked extensively with community organizations in the potential host communities. For example, in recognition that the repository is a multigenerational project, we were pleased to support organizations providing in-classroom science learning, youth sports leagues and other youth programs.

This past year, during presentations and information events, NWMO staff were asked about aspects of Canada's plan related to environmental protection and safety, housing, career opportunities and other topics. While the site selection process has now concluded, we will continue our commitment to collaboration as we move forward into the regulatory decision-making phase of the project.

2024 in review

In 2024, as we prepared to announce the selected site for a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel, we continued engaging with communities on the topics that were of interest to them.

PROGRESS ON OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

As part of the NWMO's commitment to living our values, we continue to build a Reconciliation culture through activities, training and sponsorships. Throughout 2024, we provided Reconciliation training and cultural awareness sessions virtually and in person for employees and contractors as part of our commitment to align all aspects of our work with Indigenous Knowledge and to ensure Reconciliation is at the forefront of our work.

Through in-person engagement with both Indigenous communities and our independent advisory body, the Council of Elders and Youth, the NWMO continued meaningful dialogue on a broad range of issues. Key areas of discussion included the impact assessment and regulatory process, the Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste, transportation, safety from a social perspective and the implementation of the NWMO's *Water Statement*.

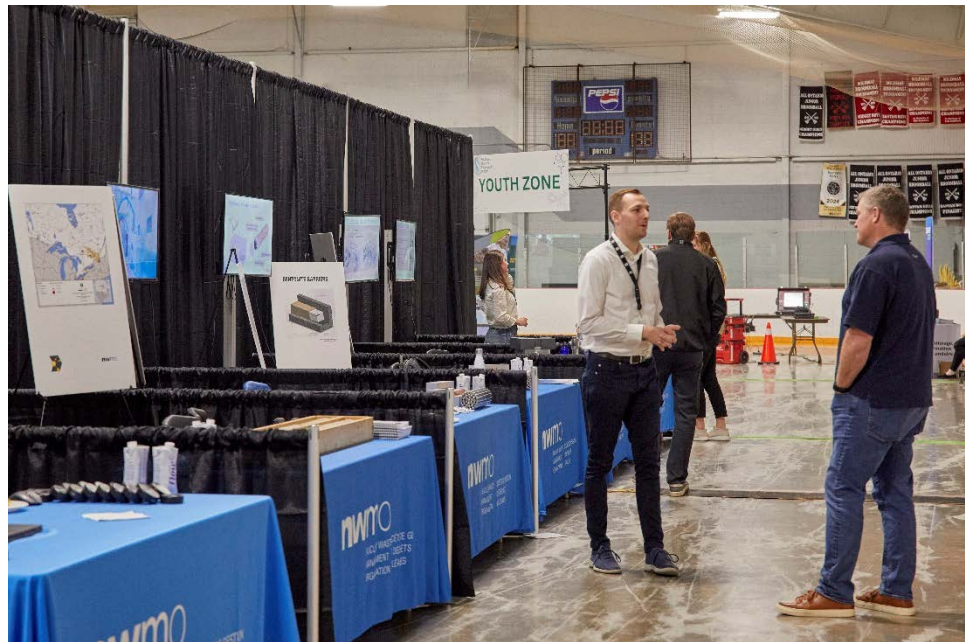
COMMUNITY LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

We continued to support community and individual learning by inviting questions and feedback from residents. We shared information about the NWMO's mandate and plans to manage Canada's radioactive waste for the long term. At the invitation of community groups, we attended numerous community events to deliver presentations and have conversations at information booths. We also supported school-based science learning programs and hosted tours of the NWMO's Discovery and Demonstration Centre in Oakville, Ont.

As in past years, NWMO subject matter experts took part in regional nuclear expos. These events are designed to provide direct learning experiences for community members of all ages. In April 2024, the Township of Ignace held the Northwest Nuclear Exploration Event, inviting residents and visitors from communities in northwestern Ontario to learn more about the nuclear industry and about the potential to build a deep geological repository near their community. Nuclear industry partners, Indigenous communities and organizations, environmental organizations and the NWMO took part in the event and had opportunities to answer visitors' questions and encourage people to learn more. Popular topics included nuclear energy, safety, regulations and oversight, the environment, international experience, project economics, Indigenous Knowledge and more. Subject matter experts staffed booths, offered varied science workshops for youth and answered people's questions.

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

At the South Bruce Nuclear Exploration Forum, members of the public were able to ask NWMO subject matter experts about topics related to Canada's plan.



In May, residents of potential host communities attended the South Bruce Nuclear Exploration Forum 2024: Safety and Opportunities in southern Ontario. This regional event took place in the town of Mildmay and featured panel presentations and activities for youth. To encourage visitors to seek answers to their questions, the forum included an exhibition area where the public could talk to NWMO subject matter experts about topics related to Canada's plan, with a focus on deep geological repository safety and potential career and economic opportunities stemming from the project. The forum served as an opportunity for community members to learn more before deciding about their willingness to host the repository.

These two events also allowed adults and youth to learn more about the NWMO's environmental programs, including our partnership with the Toronto Zoo. The NWMO is proud to sponsor the Toronto Zoo's Native Bat Conservation Program, which helps monitor bat populations and works on reversing population decline in vulnerable species of wildlife. As part of our partnership activities, in 2024 the Toronto Zoo held workshops with youth in all four potential host communities, helping them learn about the role bats play in Ontario's ecosystems by pollinating plants and controlling insects.

Community members have told us they believe it is important that youth have opportunities to learn about the NWMO's plans to manage used nuclear fuel for the long term, about nuclear energy and also about science-based career opportunities. Our engagement activities this year continued to address young people's questions about science-based careers, especially jobs and career paths that could enable them to find work in their communities.

NWMO specialists took part in numerous classroom presentations to address these questions. In addition, in support of students' interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) topics, we continued to sponsor organizations offering classroom-based science learning opportunities such as Scientists in School and Science North.

DECISION-MAKING AND MILESTONE

The site selection process included a clear commitment that Canada's plan for used nuclear fuel could only move forward in an area that met rigorous safety standards and had informed and willing hosts. Over many years of community engagement, residents helped shape what the project could look like in their community through their ongoing input and participation in the process. As we gradually established the technical and environmental safety of the sites through site assessment and technical studies, we continued to work in collaboration with the potential host communities as they carefully considered integrating a large infrastructure project into their community. More than a decade of community engagement and learning made it possible for us to make our site selection decision in 2024, with the knowledge that communities had carefully considered the possibilities, benefits and potential challenges of the project.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND REGULATORY REVIEW

Now that a site has been selected, the project moves into the required regulatory decision-making process. The purpose of the regulatory process is for the safety of the repository to be independently confirmed by the regulators, including the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

The NWMO will respect Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation's sovereignty and work to align NWMO-led regulatory work with Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation's Regulatory Assessment and Approval Process. It is a sovereign regulatory process that will be developed and implemented by Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, emphasizing the protection and stewardship of land, water and all Creation and respecting and honouring the nation's traditional governance systems.

The Initial Project Description is the first of many steps in the licensing process for nuclear facilities, which also includes engaging with Indigenous Peoples and local and regional residents. The review process will evaluate the project in terms of its potential environmental, economic, social and health impacts. This process is designed to confirm the selected site will protect people and the environment. Public input will continue to be essential. As this report outlines, we take very seriously the responsibility to engage with community members, to collaborate with communities and to provide accurate and timely information about the project and the NWMO's activities.

Safety, water and the environment

The safety of people and the environment has been a top priority throughout the process of selecting a site for a deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel. Our approach to exploring the geology of potential sites and to planning for the construction of the repository is consistent with international best practices and is the culmination of more than 30 years of international research, development and demonstration of technologies and techniques. Safety is foundational in our project design, engineering, environmental work, research and community engagement.

CONFIDENCE IN SAFETY

In the spring of 2024, we published an update to our two *Confidence in Safety* reports, which demonstrated that both potential sites still under consideration were suitable for the safe construction of a deep geological repository. Both of the [2023 Confidence in Safety reports](#) provided additional data confirming the repository would protect people and the environment. This research built on previously released findings and presented new data, including new borehole studies, which further supported our confidence that a deep geological repository could be constructed at either of the sites.

Throughout the year, we answered questions about safety online, through in-person interactions and by providing access to virtual reality videos describing various aspects of the project's safety measures, such as the five components of the multiple-barrier system that will contain and isolate the used fuel in the repository. The videos were made available at our kiosks during community events, in our community offices and in our mobile learning exhibit.

Our subject matter experts also visited communities to make presentations at community learning and in-classroom events, providing participants with opportunities to ask questions and engage in discussions with scientists, engineers and other technical specialists.

We also received questions from people who had heard outside opinions about the safety of the project and wanted to obtain accurate, first-hand information about safety directly from our experts.

The NWMO takes seriously our responsibility to share accurate and timely information with Indigenous Peoples and Canadians. Information tours of our Discovery and Demonstration Centre remained popular with residents of both potential siting areas in 2024. Some people who took part in the tours reported they would encourage other community members to attend, as the in-person tours helped answer many of their questions about the safety of the project.

We use tours, in-person discussions and community events to respond to questions and share information directly. We also share information with Indigenous Peoples and Canadians through our social media channels and through local news media channels. Our website includes an email address where we invite people to reach out to us with any questions they may have. In addition, the NWMO's website is regularly updated with new project information, news announcements and links to our reports. For example, we publish the results of our geological and technical research on our website.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

The process of mapping existing environmental conditions with input from community members who live in the area is known as participatory environmental monitoring. In 2024, with the assistance of community members who collected samples, we supported tissue sampling of trees and animals in the two potential siting areas as part of our ongoing baseline environmental monitoring program. Since the repository is a major infrastructure project, it is important to establish a baseline of environmental conditions in the area where construction will take place, so that any future changes to environmental conditions can be anticipated, avoided or mitigated. For example, if there are species at risk in the area where construction is slated to take place, construction methods or traffic can be adapted to ensure protection for these plant or animal species.

WATER PROTECTION

Our commitment is to protect people and the environment, [including water](#). Water protection remains at the core of the NWMO's work on safety and the alignment of western science with Indigenous Knowledge. As part of the site selection process, the NWMO conducted technical studies to confirm the geological and environmental suitability of each area as a potential site for a deep geological repository. In addition, NWMO scientists are tasked with safeguarding water resources by continuously assessing water quality, water systems and geology.

Through our engagement activities in 2024, we heard that protecting water and the natural environment continues to be of key importance for Indigenous Peoples and Canadians. To highlight how protecting water for generations to come remains at the core of what we do, our experts made presentations to community members about our environmental and water programs. In answer to questions about protecting groundwater from potential contamination, for example, we provided information confirming that the used nuclear fuel in the repository will be contained and isolated from water sources. This included sharing information about geological studies outlined in our 2023 *Confidence in Safety* reports.

We also supported in-classroom and environmental field study opportunities for schools. For example, we continued to support the GENESIS program at Sacred Heart High School in Walkerton, Ont., which enables high school students in an exploratory science, technology, engineering and math program to experience how scientists monitor water and aquatic environments. In the spring of 2024, our environmental scientists shared their knowledge about environmental monitoring with students taking part in the GENESIS program. With support from the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, NWMO scientists taught students water quality sampling techniques and answered their questions about potential career paths in environmental science.



NWMO scientists introduced high school students to water quality sampling techniques and answered their questions about career paths in environmental science.

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

The NWMO hosted a Water Symposium that welcomed families from Saugeen Ojibway Nation, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, water protectors, western scientists and community members.



In October, we also took the opportunity to focus on water safety and to address community questions as we hosted a Water Symposium. This event included families from Saugeen Ojibway Nation, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, water protectors, western scientists and community members, who came together with a shared priority of water protection and safety.

Jessica Perritt, Director of Indigenous and Municipal Relations at the NWMO, is an Indigenous scientist and water steward from Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, which is part of Saugeen Ojibway Nation. Ms. Perritt often speaks to community audiences about the importance of water as Mother Earth's lifeline. In 2024, she continued to take part in numerous learning events, discussing how the NWMO aligns western science with Indigenous Knowledge across all aspects of our work.

Frequently asked questions: Safety, water and the environment

- » What is a deep geological repository?
- » How will it isolate used nuclear fuel from people and the environment?
- » How do you date the water you find in the rock?
- » Did you find any minerals?
- » How will people and the environment be protected?
- » What is the multiple-barrier system?
- » Are earthquakes a problem?
- » Is the NWMO considering disruptive events such as forest fires, flooding and extreme weather?
- » How will it be determined that the project is safe?
- » How many boreholes were drilled?
- » What if there are cracks in the rock?
- » Is there water in the rock?
- » Will underground water be exposed to radiation?
- » Will water used to clean underground be released untreated?
- » How big is the project (plant) going to be?
- » What kind of training is available to build the human resource capacity needed for the project?
- » How long will this radioactive material be dangerous?
- » How can you know if it will be safe over millions of years?
- » How far apart are the underground shafts from each other?
- » Will there be water and sewer treatment facilities on site?
- » How will you handle accidental releases of radiation?
- » What are the levels of protection for the workers and the environment?
- » What is the difference between the rock in Ignace and the rock in South Bruce?
- » How will the NWMO handle damaged used fuel bundles?
- » Is the bentonite manufactured or mined?
- » Could the used fuel container leak?
- » What will be the safety measures at surface facilities?
- » How will these facilities use water, treat waste and safely manage radioactive sources?
- » What does the rock look like in the region? Is it suitable for a deep geological repository?
- » Are you assessing the advantages and disadvantages of opening the packages, putting the fuel into the transportation containers and then repacking it into the barrier system?
- » How will you manage water runoff from the site?

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

- » What are the environmental impacts of the rock pile that will be created during the deep geological repository's construction?
- » How will an emplacement room in the deep geological repository be filled? Will robots be used?
- » What is the radiation limit for a nuclear worker in Canada?
- » Will there be a monitoring system placed underground?
- » In an ice age, could the repository withstand the weight of a glacier on top of it?

Community collaboration

BASELINE STUDIES AND WORKSHOPS

To support continued engagement with the potential host communities, over the past few years studies were undertaken to provide a social, economic and environmental snapshot of the communities. These studies provided baseline information to aid in tracking changes to the community in the event that the project was approved and built in their area.

In June 2024, we [published a report](#) describing existing conditions in northwestern Ontario, as well as potential future conditions without the project. Detailed site characterization studies, including environmental studies, were completed to confirm the siting area was suitable for hosting the project.

During the preparation of the socio-economic baseline study, we conducted workshops and other public engagement activities. We invited feedback from community members to ensure the baseline information would form a realistic description of conditions in the area. The summary report provides a snapshot of the baseline conditions detailed in the over-1,200-page technical report. This data will help determine the extent of the changes Canada's plan could bring to the communities in northwestern Ontario.

HOSTING AGREEMENTS

In 2024, the remaining potential host communities also worked with the NWMO to conclude draft hosting agreements.

Hosting agreements were developed to reflect the unique characteristics and goals of each community and outline the financial and other benefits the communities would, if selected, experience over several decades, supporting many generations of people living and working in the area. Over the course of its 175-year timeline, which includes the construction and operation of the repository, the project will drive a wide range of benefits for the host communities in the selected area, as well as for neighbouring communities. These will include new jobs and investments in community well-being driven by the priorities communities themselves have defined.

The Township of Ignace signed a hosting agreement with the NWMO on March 18, 2024. Following a community willingness process, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation indicated in November 2024 that they were willing to move forward into the next phase of the site selection process. The Municipality of South Bruce in southern Ontario signed a hosting agreement as a potential host community in May 2024.



Laurie Swami, President and CEO of the NWMO (right) and Mayor Kim Baigrie of the Township of Ignace sign the historic hosting agreement.

These agreements provided residents with valuable data to inform their decision-making during the community-led willingness process. By concluding hosting agreements before moving to their willingness decision-making, communities ensured their members would be able to clearly see how they would benefit if they decided they were willing to host the project.

In general, people wanted to know how the hosting agreements would meet their future needs and would benefit residents. Community members asked, for example, if the hosting agreement would include new housing to support the implementation of the project. In addition, online commentary from various people (both within and outside the siting areas) increased. In some cases, people in the potential host communities asked us to address misinformation about the project circulating online.

COMMUNITY WILLINGNESS DECISIONS

Community willingness decisions were made in the summer and fall of 2024, through community-led processes designed by each community to meet its needs.

Before the NWMO announced our siting decision in November 2024, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace had completed their own willingness assessments and indicated they were willing to move forward into the regulatory decision-making process.

In November, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation announced their members had voted to progress to the next step, noting the nation's commitment to thoroughly explore the project's feasibility through a rigorous regulatory process that upholds their Anishinaabe laws and values.

In July 2024, the Township of Ignace had also confirmed they were willing to move forward and publicly shared the results of their assessment. Through Ignace's deliberative democracy process, 77.3 per cent of residents who participated in the voting process indicated their support for the project moving forward in the Ignace area.

In southern Ontario, the Municipality of South Bruce also confirmed willingness, following an October 2024 municipal referendum. The municipality had announced in the spring of 2024 that they would determine community willingness to proceed by holding a formal vote in October. In accordance with Ontario's referendum guidelines, voters were given six months of notice. Eligible voters in the municipality were asked if they were in favour of declaring South Bruce to be a willing host for a deep geological repository to safely store Canada's used nuclear fuel. The results indicated 51 per cent of votes cast expressed willingness to host the project. With a majority of eligible voters (69 per cent) participating in the Oct. 28 referendum, the outcome was binding on the Municipality of South Bruce Council under Ontario's *Municipal Elections Act*.

Discussions with Saugeen Ojibway Nation (comprised of Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation) about their willingness decision related to the potential project in the South Bruce siting area continued throughout 2024 and were ongoing as the decision time came. In late November, the NWMO announced we had selected Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace as the hosts for the future site for Canada's deep geological repository, based on our commitment to only move forward in an area with informed and willing hosts.

Frequently asked questions: Community collaboration

- » Who will be involved in partnership discussions? Local municipalities? Indigenous communities?
- » What is the definition of willingness?
- » How will willingness and support be gauged?
- » Will there be a referendum?
- » Will Council decide?
- » What is our community's role in the site selection process? What do you need from us?
- » What is the Community Liaison Committee and when does it meet?
- » Can I attend these meetings?
- » What are the local and/or regional benefits of hosting?
- » Will there be local jobs or infrastructure?
- » How do I get involved in my community's decision-making process? Is there a local committee?
- » Have you talked to my neighbours about the project yet?
- » What happens if local circumstances change?
- » Can we opt out of the process?
- » How much land is required to build the repository and facilities?
- » Will residents of neighboring communities have a say in the site selection process?
- » Will the project involve changes to zoning/land use around the site?
- » Will you be looking at Crown land for the repository?
- » How will the NWMO ensure the community and people in the area benefit?
- » How can we begin to plan for jobs and longer-term economic development?
- » What are the opportunities for businesses and employment associated with site selection?
- » Are there economic opportunities related to the rock that is extracted from the repository?
- » Who needs to be supportive of the project in our area for it to proceed?
- » How can I help build this partnership?
- » With whom is the NWMO looking to partner?
- » What resources are available to learn more about partnership and what partnership would mean for our community?
- » Can a few people in an area who are opposed to the project prevent it from proceeding in that area?
- » How can we help to get more people involved?
- » Will hosting agreements include support for new infrastructure and recreational projects?
- » How will my town look different?

- » What opportunities are there for small businesses?
- » What capacity needs to be built?
- » When will the NWMO share the hosting agreements?
- » Will the project increase the difficulty many seniors have accessing health care?
- » What is the role of the municipality in the site selection process?
- » What happens if the community says no to the project?
- » How did the siting areas get involved in the process?

Frequently asked questions: Community studies

- » Who is participating in the studies?
- » How will the studies be used in decision-making?
- » Are regional communities going to have a chance to review the studies?
- » Do regional residents have a say in the site selection process?
- » Who wrote the reports?
- » What specific benefits would the community receive?
- » What benefits will regional communities receive?
- » How will the NWMO engage existing industry for community development?
- » How did you determine who will be impacted by the project?
- » What will the municipalities do to get ready?
- » What about housing for workers for the project?
- » Will the project help youth stay in the community?
- » What are the jobs exactly?
- » How will the project affect healthcare in the community?
- » Will it affect people who cannot afford rent?
- » How will you plan for immigration or newcomers?

Frequently asked questions: Safety from a social perspective

- » Will this affect the safety of agricultural products produced in the area?
- » Can land on top of the repository be farmed?
- » What is the NWMO doing to prevent social harm in the community?
- » Will the community depend on the NWMO?
- » How is the NWMO preparing for all the changes that will come to the siting area and region?
- » How can we prepare people in the community and area to participate in the project and to develop skills and capacity?
- » What resources are available to communities now to help build understanding of the project locally and with our neighbours?

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

- » How are youth being engaged? How can we retain youth in our communities?
- » What learning resources are available to students and youth?
- » When will we begin to see economic activity and jobs in the area?
- » What kind of training is available to build the human resource capacity needed for the project?
- » Where will people live? What about housing?
- » What will be the impact of the project on community well-being?
- » Will there be welding job opportunities?

Reconciliation and Indigenous Knowledge

RECONCILIATION

In 2024, the NWMO continued meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities and our independent advisory body, the Council of Elders and Youth, to discuss issues such as impact assessment and other regulatory processes, the Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste, transportation, social safety and the implementation of our [Water Statement](#).

As part of the NWMO's commitment to living our values, we continue to build a Reconciliation culture through activities, training and sponsorships. In 2024, we continued Reconciliation training and cultural awareness sessions virtually and in person for employees and contractors. We also continued to work towards our goal of aligning all aspects of our work with Indigenous Knowledge.

The NWMO's [Reconciliation Policy](#) supports our work by creating a strong foundation of recognition and respect that anchors our public commitment to Reconciliation. Reconciliation, as defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, is an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

In this policy, we have identified how we will build on our commitments to work with First Nations and Métis and municipal communities to collaboratively develop and implement a management approach for the long-term care of Canada's used nuclear fuel. We have also created a Reconciliation assessment tool to assess the NWMO's policies and procedures and ensure they are working within the organization's commitment to Reconciliation. In 2024, we began assessing the effectiveness of the existing Reconciliation assessment tool and planning to pilot new questions that include our work in water protection, sustainability and social safety.

In 2024, the NWMO was able to continue building momentum with in-person engagement with Indigenous communities and the Council of Elders and Youth. The Council of Elders and Youth continued its progress in advancing key elements of the NWMO's work. In-person meetings were held to discuss issues that could impact the implementation of Canada's plan, including but not limited to:

- Learnings about the regulatory process, such as the work of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.
- Learnings about the requirements for and an exploration of an Indigenous-led impact assessment framework.
- Advising on the application of Indigenous Knowledge through the implementation of the [Water Statement](#) as an example of work co-created by Indigenous and western science voices.
- The Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste and how lessons learned can help inform future site selection processes.
- Safety from a social perspective and how to best engage communities in dialogue on what safety concerns are most important to them.

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

Council of Elders and Youth member Jeremiah George and NWMO employee Antoine Boyer participated in the NWMO's Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science workshop in October 2024.



In addition, Council of Elders and Youth members participated in several learning and development opportunities, including attending industry conferences and participating in the NWMO's seventh annual Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science workshop.

Throughout 2024, council members also met with members of the potential host communities that were still being considered in the site selection process, including members of Saugeen Ojibway Nation and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation.

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE

In 2024, we began work to develop a Reconciliation and Indigenous Knowledge framework for the planned Centre of Expertise. The Centre of Expertise is the physical space that will be built in the vicinity of the deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel to tell the story of the host communities and serve as a learning and sharing space for both Indigenous Knowledge and western science.

Some key themes that emerged through dialogue with community members and NWMO employees included:

- Acknowledging the land, air, water, plants and animals the facility is in relationship with, in intentional ways.
- Considering how to create space for the past, present and future narrative and worldview of local Indigenous rightsholders.
- Ensuring reciprocity in relationships with communities.
- Creating learning and research spaces that can facilitate the inclusion of different world views.
- Collaborating with community members on Indigenous languages and their connection to place.
- Ensuring the acknowledgment of land use and impacts to treaty rights.

- Acknowledging the teachings of the natural barriers in the project: uranium, copper, clay and rock.
- Demonstrating how we honour the land and treat it with respect.
- Understanding the importance of nation-to-nation relationships.
- Acknowledging the leadership and commitment of communities to host a deep geological repository.

RECONCILIATION TRAINING AND RECONCILIATION STRATEGY

In 2024, we continued to offer regular sessions of our Reconciliation training program to municipalities in our siting regions. These sessions included the participation of local Indigenous community members to ensure the inclusion of relevant and accurate information about the local Indigenous nations. We also supported and encouraged municipalities in the siting regions to seek out third-party facilitators to provide training and awareness about local First Nations and their histories.

We also offered Reconciliation training to industry and academic partners. We completed a total of five training sessions with industry and more than 10 sessions with our employees, with trainings facilitated both in person and virtually. Participants felt that the training provided them with confidence to engage more respectfully with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

In December 2023, the NWMO developed a three-year Reconciliation strategy to span 2024 to 2026, in support of the implementation of our *Reconciliation Policy*. In 2024, we completed year one of the strategy, including:

- The development of an Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation framework to inform the Centre of Expertise.
- Finding intentional and meaningful ways to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation into human resources practices and procedures.
- Meeting quarterly with an internal Reconciliation working group to provide employees with an opportunity to take ownership of their role in our collective Reconciliation journey.
- Working with a third-party contractor to conduct a 360 review of the implementation of the *Reconciliation Policy* that will include an NWMO best practices inventory.

As our journey in Reconciliation evolves, it is important that we plan strategically and thoughtfully about how we will continue to meet and exceed our commitments to co-creating a better future for all beings of Creation. Four key areas of focus that will help us continue this momentum are learning, action, relationship and healing.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 92 calls upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a Reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous Peoples and their lands and resources. Our Reconciliation strategy can be found on [our website](#) and serves as guidance to the entire organization to ensure Reconciliation is at the forefront of all our work in response to this call to action.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Both western science and Indigenous Knowledge systems contribute to our decision-making processes. We remain committed to aligning with Indigenous Knowledge throughout our work.

Throughout 2024 and in years prior, we heard from Indigenous community members and the Council of Elders and Youth about the importance of respecting the sophistication of Indigenous science and holding up both knowledge systems as equal in validity.

We hosted an Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science workshop in 2024 that brought together members of the Council of Elders and Youth and NWMO employees. Participants worked in groups to create a small-scale experiment using elements of the multiple-barrier system that will be used in Canada's deep geological repository and shared their observations about the process of working with unique knowledge systems. This was our seventh year hosting this workshop, which was evident in the growth of the number of participants, as well as the quality of the dialogue.

As in previous years, the workshop created space to explore new opportunities for Indigenous Knowledge Holders and scientists to work together and to inform research about the long-term performance of the multiple-barrier system.

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Canada's plan is an inclusive one and Indigenous engagement remains essential. Indigenous perspectives are not only integral to our work — they make our work stronger. Indigenous communities continue to highlight the importance of protecting and safeguarding water, air and land in reflection of their history, rights, culture and way of life.

Throughout 2024, we continued to create opportunities for important questions to be asked as part of dialogue on key areas of our work. Some areas of discussion included:

- Understanding more about transportation and proposed transportation routes.
- Identifying shared priorities around safety.
- Understanding the nuances of community willingness.
- Co-creating environmental processes that reflect the values, rights and interests of potentially affected Indigenous communities.
- Continuing to learn about how we are prioritizing water protection in all our work.
- Beginning dialogue around the impact assessment process.

Finally, we sponsored a range of activities identified as important by First Nations and Métis communities we work with, including:

- Support for cultural events on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Support for STEM learning and other youth programming.
- Support for a Water Symposium and other events welcoming on- and off-reserve community members.
- Support for community events including summer gatherings and tournaments.

Our 2024 Water Symposium provided opportunities for Indigenous community members to engage in dialogue about Canada's plan.



Frequently asked questions: Indigenous relations and Reconciliation

- » How will the NWMO address the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the management of hazardous materials in the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples?
- » How can we keep our water safe by gaining a better understanding of the water cycle/the journey of water?
- » How can we learn more about Indigenous cultures?
- » What are some examples of how the NWMO is aligning the project with Indigenous Knowledge?
- » How will First Nations/Métis communities indicate they are “willing hosts”? What does that mean?
- » How do land use claims enter into the discussion?
- » Do all the First Nations/Métis communities that have land claims in the area have to agree to be “willing hosts,” even though these land claims have not yet been settled?
- » Where or how do the provincial/federal First Nations/Métis governing groups enter into the picture? Do or can they override the decisions of the local First Nations/Métis communities? Do they also have to be “willing hosts”?
- » Can my group/community participate in Indigenous cultural awareness workshops?
- » How will first responders be prepared to handle accidents along the proposed transportation route?
- » Would the environment be contaminated if an accident involving a nuclear shipment happened? Would we be unable to use the land?
- » Accidents can close the road for days. Will it mean weeks of closure when it's a nuclear accident?
- » How will communities benefit from the project?
- » How can community members apply for job opportunities?
- » What is the NWMO doing with respect to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples?
- » How can non-Indigenous communities be involved in Reconciliation?
- » How do Indigenous communities define “safety”?
- » How will communities be supported to develop their own process(es) for impact assessment?
- » How closely will communities be involved with the regulatory process?
- » Once a site is selected, how soon will transportation begin?
- » What is being done to engage Indigenous communities along potential transportation routes?
- » In what ways will Indigenous Knowledge be incorporated into the construction of a deep geological repository?
- » What are the timelines for the willingness phase of the project and when will decisions be made?

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

- » What work is being done to expand awareness of Indigenous Knowledge for new employees becoming employed in the industry?
- » What resources are available that provide guidance on how to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into technical fields respectfully?
- » What acts of Reconciliation can surrounding municipalities take on to build better relationships with their Indigenous neighbours?
- » Will the construction of a deep geological repository impact Indigenous communities' way of life?

Transportation

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND PRELIMINARY PLAN

The transportation planning framework and *Preliminary transportation plan* (published in December 2021) formed the backbone of our transportation-related engagement in 2024.

The framework reflects a common ground of principles, objectives and process considerations, while the preliminary plan begins to answer commonly asked questions about transportation safety and logistics. The wealth of knowledge contained within these documents continues to provide an entry point for discussions on the transportation of used nuclear fuel, even as conversations mature and become more specific.

Both the framework and the plan are living documents, which we have committed to updating on a regular basis as the transportation program evolves and continues to be developed. Updates of these documents will allow social priorities to be incorporated as transportation planning unfolds over the next two decades.

In 2024, the NWMO's transportation team participated in 80 events, meetings and conferences, engaging with over 4,900 people. Building on the foundations of the transportation framework and preliminary plan, these activities facilitated deeper discussions with members of the public, including Indigenous communities, about numerous transportation-related topics. These included:

- The scope of the transportation program (e.g., the number of fuel bundles to be transported from each interim storage location and the duration of the transportation program).
- The two transportation systems we are considering (all road or road/rail) and how they would differ in the two potential siting areas that were still being considered in 2024 in the site selection process.
- The multiple layers of safety measures that will be applied to the transportation program (e.g., transportation package requirements, operational controls, emergency response and security measures, management system and compliance assurance).
- Planned technical work over the upcoming years to support more detailed transportation planning.
- How the NWMO plans to move transportation planning forward in an inclusive way, considering feedback from Canadians and Indigenous communities and aligning our work with Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews.

Frequently heard questions and comments during these conversations can be categorized into a few themes:

- Planning for the future (e.g., How will new transportation and security technology be considered?).
- Safety and security (e.g., What specific measures will we take to keep people safe?).
- Infrastructure (e.g., Will we work with the government to twin parts of the highway that have high accident rates?).
- Environment (e.g., What will be the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation program?).

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

For most participants, more detailed conversations discussing transportation package requirements, logistics, safety measures and inclusive planning were reassuring. As expected, concerns and skepticism continued to be voiced by some participants.

Critical voices form an important part of *What we heard* reporting as they highlight the issues and concerns that may require more attention. Concerns about package testing and the adequacy of the regulatory tests to simulate severe accident conditions continued to be voiced in 2024. Concerns about potential radiation exposure for the public in proximity to used fuel shipments were raised. The safety of highway infrastructure was also a topic of interest, as was ensuring first responders along the transportation routes were aware of the used fuel transportation program and how to respond to incidents should they arise.

FIRST RESPONDERS ENGAGED

In 2024, we continued to engage with first responders about their questions and concerns related to our future transportation program. First responders are very interested in our program, particularly with regard to how transportation incidents involving used nuclear fuel might impact their responsibilities at the scene. They are also interested in learning more about industry-wide radioactive materials transportation. Transportation planning at the NWMO is revisited and revised on a regular basis to ensure the voices of Indigenous Peoples and Canadians are heard and incorporated.

At the Northeastern Fire Education Conference, we heard questions from first responders about incident handling in the context of radioactive materials transportation.



SAFETY FROM A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Safety from a social perspective encompasses more than the technical aspects of the program to manage nuclear waste. It concerns how individuals and communities perceive safety related to Canada's plan. Many factors influence perceptions of safety, including communities' own goals and well-being. As a result, questions related to safety from a social perspective cover a broad spectrum of topics, from the safety of the repository to the opportunities and social impacts the project may create for communities.

During the past decade of engagement, we have answered a broad spectrum of questions related to the transportation of used nuclear fuel bundles. These questions led to the development of the transportation planning framework and the *Preliminary transportation plan*. In turn, transportation work programs were developed to address questions and concerns voiced by participants. With this approach, our planning is developed in a way that is responsive to what we hear from Indigenous Peoples and Canadians, helping them feel safe about the transportation program.

Complementing the preliminary routing analysis and a security framework completed in 2022, two participant-inspired work programs were completed in 2023. The first of these was an accident risk and mitigation assessment which examined the various types of possible accidents and analysed their outcomes. A second work program looked at building confidence in the strength of the transportation packages that will be used and their ability to survive severe accidents. A third work program examining emergency response, to assist in responding to questions about emergency response planning, is underway.

Today, we continue to be driven by the public's questions and how we can best respond to their concerns. Both the transportation planning framework and the *Preliminary transportation plan* are available for review and comment on the [NWMO website](#).

Frequently asked questions: Transportation

- » What is the NWMO doing to ensure first responders along the routes are prepared for used fuel shipments?
- » What transportation route will you be using to get the used nuclear fuel from the interim storage facilities to the repository site?
- » Is this material safe to transport?
- » What if an accident happens on the way?
- » How do the tests on the transportation package that are required by the CNSC (Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission) prove the package can withstand a severe accident?
- » What would emergency response planning and training protocols look like? Will my community require an evacuation plan?
- » What will be the frequency of shipments and will that change depending on the season?
- » Will new or upgraded transportation infrastructure be required to transport used nuclear fuel? Who will pay for it?
- » Will your drivers be transporting the used nuclear fuel even in the harsh northern winter conditions?
- » Will you be tracking the transportation packages?
- » Will the people in communities close to but outside the potential future siting areas be informed about the potential transportation route from interim waste storage sites and about the NWMO transportation strategy?
- » What will you do to ensure the safety of the Mennonite community on the roads around the South Bruce site?
- » Would the driver of a transportation vehicle with a used nuclear fuel package be safe? What would their dose level be?
- » When will you begin considering local transportation routes?
- » Will dedicated highways or rail spurs be constructed?
- » Can the dry storage containers be transported?
- » Will used nuclear fuel be transported in the same containers that are used in the repository?
- » What happens if an unauthorized individual really intends on opening the Used Fuel Transportation Package (UFTP)? Can the package be opened?
- » What happens if a UFTP falls into a body of water? For example, how would you retrieve it from a lake?
- » What is the assumed speed of the truck transporting the UFTP?
- » Will advancements in transportation technology and security be incorporated into the system as they develop?
- » What happens when an accident occurs? How will the truck and package be removed?
- » How frequently would used fuel shipments take place? Would they travel in convoys?

WHAT WE HEARD: Implementing Canada's plan in 2024

- » Will the used nuclear fuel transportation packages emit radiation while being transported to the repository site?
- » How will emergency response workers stay safe in the unlikely event of an accident?
- » What modes can you use to transport used nuclear fuel? Road or rail? Is water being considered? Which is safe?
- » Will the NWMO respect Indigenous jurisdiction with respect to transportation?
- » How does the transportation of highly enriched uranium by another organization differ from that of the CANDU fuel by the NWMO?
- » In selecting a particular site that could eventually host the repository, is the NWMO considering proximity to rail and road?
- » Accidents close the road for days. Will it mean weeks of closure if there is a nuclear accident?

Social media and online conversations

The NWMO continued to generate steady social media conversations in 2024. While Facebook and LinkedIn were our most active communities, we also communicated on Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter). Community members from the potential host communities that were still being considered in 2024 in the site selection process — Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace in northwestern Ontario and Saugeen Ojibway Nation and the Municipality of South Bruce in southern Ontario — generated the most conversation on Facebook, with most comments coming from the north.

Locally focused initiatives, events and activities drove online interest and conversation. Popular topics included hosting agreements, willingness decisions and the site selection announcement, with residents of both siting areas sharing local news or their opinions on Canada's plan. On LinkedIn, members of the nuclear industry made up much of the conversation and NWMO employees also shared their perspectives on the project.

Topics that drove most online conversations included the transportation of used nuclear fuel (especially in northern Ontario), the safety of the deep geological repository, water protection initiatives in both potential siting areas and community willingness decisions. Of all the social media conversations we saw across social media platforms, a small majority of comments were either positive or neutral in sentiment. There was a slight increase in volume from critical voices after the willingness decisions and site selection announcement. We also saw an increase in supportive commentary on social media following the siting announcement. Some illustrative social media comments we received include:

- "This project will not only provide good jobs, but great jobs for the NWO/Ignace area for generations to come. I have had opportunity and take the opportunity to sit down with any representatives from NWMO wherever they set up (at least 5 times over last 3 years). The reps will take the time to answer any questions you may have. At one time I spent an hour with two well informed reps and was happy with everything I learned from them."
- "Thank you NWMO, we are pleased that a decision has finally been made and pleased to say hello to our direct neighbor we continue with confidence to support going forward as so many in the area."
- "Yes, but nobody could predict an earthquake or tremor any can happen at any time, and yes that sounds catastrophic and in that event we're all done but anything can happen, and I can't help but view it as farther away the better. I'm no geologist, but it seems like simple logic."

As in prior years, we also observed online discussion groups outside our channels, typically based around a specific potential siting area. Some groups have been critical of our work or presence in their community, while others are supportive. We continue to monitor public discussions for emerging topics and themes and to hear about issues and questions that are being discussed by people in the selected siting area. The concerns we see expressed in these local forums are reflective of the broad themes discussed throughout this report and mirror the learning process which has been taking place through face-to-face conversations with people in the potential host communities.

Implementing Adaptive Phased Management 2024-28

WHAT WE HEARD

In March 2024, the NWMO published *Implementing Adaptive Phased Management 2024-28*, updating the previous version of our five-year implementation plan. By also distributing a survey about the plan digitally, we seek to make it easy for the public to review and comment on Canada's plan for used nuclear fuel, supporting our commitment to transparency.

We heard from hundreds of Canadians and Indigenous people, largely from northwestern and southern Ontario, including within the potential host communities that were still being considered in 2024 in the site selection process: Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace in northwestern Ontario and Saugeen Ojibway Nation and the Municipality of South Bruce in southern Ontario.

The survey offers a snapshot of respondents' thinking and provides insight into confidence in our ability to implement Canada's plan for used nuclear fuel, as well as identifying areas of opportunity for us. The survey was designed to solicit broad feedback from interested individuals and was disseminated at informational events, through social media and through other digital channels. As the survey was open to all interested parties rather than focusing on a representative sample, the results should not be viewed as statistically reliable. Instead, they should be interpreted as qualitative and indicative of broader trends among individuals with an interest in our work.

It is important to recognize that this survey was specific to our work implementing Adaptive Phased Management and not our work on the safe, long-term management of intermediate-level and non-fuel high-level waste.

Overall participation numbers in 2024 were consistent with 2023. However, the total number of completed surveys decreased slightly. We received 649 total responses with a 34 per cent completion rate (compared to 37 per cent in 2023, but also significantly higher than 19 per cent in 2022). Most (68 per cent) of the respondents were based in Ontario, with 19 per cent from the northwestern area and 14 per cent from the southern area.

The survey is only one way we gather input that informs our work. We also solicit feedback through activities such as on-the-ground and digital engagement efforts, community liaison committees, educational events, advisory groups, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, attending conferences and meeting with a range of subject matter experts and all levels of government representatives.

This type of public input informs and guides our work and the comments we have received have helped us update this plan year after year. Below is a summary of what we heard.

CONFIDENCE IN THE NWMO

Confidence in the NWMO was slightly lower than in 2023 and consistent with 2022. Overall, more than half (55 per cent) of respondents reported feeling confident in the NWMO after reading the implementation plan, down from 62 per cent in 2023 and on par with 2022 levels.

Confidence was higher in southern Ontario than in northwestern Ontario, although perceptions in the northwest are greatly improving. The majority (67 per cent) of respondents also described the communication in the plan as "excellent" or "good." Respondents commonly describe the implementation plan as understandable, clear and transparent.

To continue to strengthen confidence, we will continue to implement extensive communications and engagement efforts, with a focus on those who have an interest in our work. These efforts will include ongoing collaboration with the host communities for the used fuel repository and continued engagement with the wide range of audiences interested in important topics like transportation and water protection. The regulatory process will also allow opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and Canadians to provide input on the project's implementation.

All this work will build on engagement work completed in 2024, including support for education and knowledge-sharing in the lead-up to the community willingness decisions and our site selection decision. We also strengthened communications related to the transportation planning framework.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND RECONCILIATION

As in years past, in 2024 a majority of survey respondents told us they hold Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation as a priority and they want us to communicate more about the steps in our Reconciliation journey. Among respondents, 52 per cent reported feeling confident in the NWMO's ability to align with Indigenous Knowledge and in our commitment to Reconciliation (down slightly from 58 per cent in 2023). At the same time, we continue to hear concerns about these topics.

In response, the NWMO will continue to share information about the role of Indigenous Knowledge in our work, engage with Indigenous communities and work towards building trust and meaningful collaboration.

In 2024, we also strengthened our data tracking efforts related to our Reconciliation and Indigenous Knowledge policies. We continue to provide mandatory staff Reconciliation training and learning opportunities, informal training opportunities, staff support systems and community-driven work plans.

We remain committed to our ongoing Reconciliation journey, working with Indigenous Peoples, learning from Indigenous Knowledge and applying these learnings to our work.

SAFETY

Safety remains a top priority for us and it was once again ranked as the most important priority for survey respondents.

In total, 79 per cent of respondents reported understanding our safety approach (72 per cent in the northwest and 90 per cent in the southern region).

About three in five respondents expressed neutral or positive sentiment, with some comments demonstrating support for our approach, asserting that the NWMO is taking a “very safe and layered approach” and has “simulated worst-case scenarios and mitigated any concerns.”

On the other hand, some comments expressed safety concerns and general opposition — for example, expressing the view that the project is “unproven” — and suggested that “the NWMO is unable to guarantee safety,” especially during transportation.

We engage directly with residents to address questions and concerns and use communications campaigns to share information on safety-related topics. As part of the regulatory decision-making process, further technical studies will be undertaken at the selected site. These studies will provide even greater clarity for the repository design and formal safety case that will be submitted to regulators.

We will also undertake similar work as we plan for the repository for intermediate-level and non-fuel high-level radioactive waste and used fuel from new nuclear projects.

Similar work is progressing in other countries with deep geological repository projects underway. We will continue to collaborate with our international peers to learn from their expertise and share our own. We are committed to ensuring these projects are safe from a conventional, social, cultural and environmental perspective.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation remains an important priority for the NWMO. Survey responses indicate that while 77 per cent of respondents understand it as a priority, there are still many questions and concerns.

There is still a persistent concern that the transportation of used nuclear fuel could be dangerous. Respondents, especially in the north, expressed concern about the safety of used nuclear fuel transportation, particularly with regard to traffic accidents and road conditions, especially on highways.

We are continuing to engage with the public on transportation to hear concerns and answer questions related to safety. In 2024, we strengthened our transportation engagement efforts based on this feedback, including providing more information about the safe track record of used nuclear fuel transportation in Canada and internationally.

Looking forward, our transportation approach will continue to undergo review and public reporting. The transportation planning framework will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis, taking into consideration factors such as public input, evolving best practices, new technologies, ongoing adaptation and continuous improvement. The next iteration of the transportation planning framework will be published in 2026.

ENGINEERING

Consistent with results in 2023, this year's survey showed engineering ranks as one of our best understood priorities, with most respondents understanding and feeling positive about the NWMO's engineering program.

Specifically, 82 per cent of respondents said they understand this priority and 72 per cent expressed a positive or neutral sentiment about it.





Respondents noted sound principles as a positive. Meanwhile, some respondents did express safety concerns, a perceived lack of engagement and general opposition to a deep geological repository as the method to contain and isolate used nuclear fuel.

The NWMO has continued to collaborate closely with academics, government and international organizations as we advance the repository design and safety case, including as part of the regulatory decision-making process. Throughout 2024, we were invited to participate in a number of events and research initiatives on the international stage, demonstrating our recognized expertise in nuclear waste management.

We are also continuing to engage with Indigenous Peoples and Canadians to ensure the project continues to be considered safe from a social perspective. Canada's plan for a deep geological repository is consistent with international best practices. This approach is the culmination of decades of research, development and demonstration of technologies and techniques. There is also consensus among major nuclear regulatory and monitoring organizations that deep geological repositories are the responsible way forward.

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