

Catalyze help deliver the largest consultation exercise ever conducted in the UK

Client background

For over 40 years the UK Government has had no agreed long-term solution for radioactive waste. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s proposals were announced and defended but widespread public opposition led to these being dropped. The government realised that the traditional approach of ‘decide-announce-defend’ was not going to work.

To address this The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) was formed in 2003. CoRWM were asked to consider all the options for managing high and intermediate level radioactive waste and recommend an option that would provide long-term protection to people and to the environment and, crucially, that would “inspire public confidence”.

Client challenge

CoRWM needed to adopt a process which would consider the radioactive waste options in an open, transparent and inclusive way. Their recommendation would only be a success if citizens, stakeholders and experts were involved in the decision and agreed with the conclusions.

How Catalyze helped

Catalyze were engaged by CoRWM to help define and run the decision-making and consultation process. Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) was used to provide a structure for the debate; an MCDA model was constructed during the decisions. Catalyze’s decision modelling tool, Hiview, was used for this purpose. However, it was recognised that a technical processes alone would not be sufficient. A social process was required to ensure all stakeholders were involved. Catalyze based the whole decision-making process on Decision Conferencing. A series of workshops were held to define the criteria and score and to appraise the options.

We have helped

CoRWM:

- Deliver an inclusive process
- Reach a consensus amongst stakeholders
- Make a robust recommendation

One of the main challenges for CoRWM was the diversity of the stakeholders; a group which included the public and organisations such as Greenpeace. Decision Conferencing was ideally suited to this problem by providing a vehicle for the stakeholders to openly discuss their values, issues and beliefs. Throughout this process the decision was modelled so stakeholders' views were captured and the options assessed.

The process concluded with a 3-day Decision Conference in May, which resulted in a consensus amongst all stakeholders. Some participants had different opinions, but by modelling the different scenarios it was demonstrated that geological disposal was the best option. Importantly these differences of opinion were maintained while the group agreed to the way forward.

Enabling Effective Decisions

The Catalyze process allowed a shared understanding and an agreed conclusion to be reached while allowing peoples' differences of opinion to be maintained and enabling CoRWM to make their final recommendation: the most suitable option for managing high level radioactive waste is geological disposal. However, perhaps more crucially the process ensured that this conclusion was:

- **Inclusive** – citizens and stakeholders were involved and all agreed to this recommendation.
- **Robust** – many different perspectives were modelled and were all shown to come to the same conclusion. The recommendation was shown to be robust.
- **Rigorous** – the processes and techniques employed are thorough and proven, based on over 20 years of applied research from London School of Economics and other academic institutions.

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At Catalyze we help organisations to achieve their objectives, by translating strategic intent into deliverable operating plans and optimised business investment portfolios. We do this by applying our expertise in strategy, with proven tools and methodologies that enable informed decision-making and establish clear organisational priorities.

Catalyze was founded in 2001 in conjunction with the London School of Economics and Political Science, and we work with major public and private sector clients on a global basis. Our processes and tools have been independently reviewed and validated by the UK Treasury and the National Audit Office.