

*Focus Groups
To Test*

GNEP COMMUNICATIONS

BOISE

AUGUST 2006

for

IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY

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Focus Groups about GNEP Communications

Focus groups were held in Boise on August 4, 2006 to test GNEP communications. GNEP is a complex, technical topic. The focus groups were designed to learn how to ensure that communications about the topic are understandable and meaningful to non-technical audiences. Boise was selected for the focus groups to make it easier for INL personnel to observe and hear first-hand public comments about the communications.

The focus groups found that the general GNEP concept and goals are almost universally appealing. The communications materials also were, for the most part, viewed as clear and free of technical jargon.

However, many participants found that the materials did not provide enough details about GNEP. What is GNEP organizationally? Who is promoting the GNEP initiative? Who are the partners? How will GNEP actually accomplish the goals?

There was also some ambivalence about nuclear energy in the focus groups. Participants agreed about the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. In this context and considering that countries around the world are interested in developing nuclear energy, focus group participants saw value in the way GNEP would create new international relationships for peaceful use of nuclear energy, minimizing waste, and limiting misuse of nuclear material.

The Focus Groups

Two focus groups with a total of 20 participants were held August 4 in Boise, Idaho. Participants were screened as follows:

- "News attentives" (must read newspapers or follow news on radio or TV at least 6 days per week)
- Equal gender split
- One third each Democrats, Republicans, and Independents
- Good ethnic mix
- Good age spread (mostly 25-55)
- At least 50% college graduates
- Able to articulate important issues facing the world today (energy and war in the Middle East were high on the list of issues they mentioned, along with economy and environment)

The Discussion and Test Materials

The discussion proceeded approximately as follows (test materials attached):

- **Brief description:** Participants were asked to read a brief two-paragraph description of GNEP. They were asked to fill in a questionnaire that asked... "Based on what you have read...:"
 - Do you tend to think that GNEP is a good idea or not a good idea?
 - Please write three features of GNEP that are most important to you.

Participants then discussed their opinions.

- **Four-page description of GNEP for the web site and general use:** Participants were asked to read the description and 1) underline anything it says that is a particularly good point and 2) circle anything it says that is not a good point or is unclear or confusing. Participants then discussed their opinions.
- **Messages:** Main messages were handed out. Participants were asked to check the six points that "are most important to you."
- **Benefits:** Participants discussed main benefits of GNEP for the world, the U.S., and "you personally."
- **Questions:** Participants raised questions throughout the focus group discussion. These were summarized and discussed.
- **Videos of top GNEP technical experts, Dr. Kathryn McCarthy and Dr. David Hill:** Participants viewed brief videos of Dr. McCarthy explaining the main goals of GNEP and Dr. Hill answering questions about GNEP. The groups discussed their reactions to the spokespersons and what they had to say. They then talked about the types of persons they'd like to hear from on the subject of GNEP.

Also, participants in one focus group were asked to read an August 3 press release, "DOE Continues Path Forward on Global Nuclear Energy Partnership." The technical terms proved too great a barrier for lay persons, and so there was virtually no discussion of the release. The press release is attached.

Detailed Findings

Appealing Features of the GNEP Concept

A two-paragraph description of GNEP was used to introduce the topic and assess first impressions of the general concept.

Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP)

We need to expand global use of non-fossil fuels, such as nuclear energy, to help address growing concerns about climate change and clean air, to reduce conflict over resources in the developed and developing world, and to fuel growth.

GNEP promotes international partnerships to secure the benefits of nuclear energy. Its goals include developing advanced technologies to recycle used nuclear fuel, reduce nuclear wastes, and avoid misuse of nuclear materials.

Participants were handed a page with the following questions:

1) Based just on this brief description, do you tend to think that GNEP is a good idea or not a good idea?

Good idea__

Not a good idea__

2) Please write three features of GNEP that are most important "to you."

Based just on this description:

- 16 tended to think that GNEP is a good idea
- 4 tended to think that GNEP is not good idea

The clearest and most supported GNEP features, according to both the written comments (see following table) and discussion, are:

- Recycling waste for energy. There was virtual consensus support for recycling.
- Minimizing waste.
- Reducing misuse of nuclear materials.

- Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and energy from unstable parts of the world. Concern about the cost of gasoline for cars and natural gas for home heating appeared to increase the urgency and make this a most important feature of GNEP.
- Clean air and addressing global warming and climate change. Most seemed to be aware of global warming/climate change and believed it is real.
- International collaboration.

The main questions and concerns resulted from the fact that the introductory description did not identify what is GNEP organizationally and who are the main players. It was not clear to participants if GNEP is a private company, a government program, an international activity or what. The absence of this information suggested that something was being hidden and prompted skeptical comments about both government and private institutions.

Features that Were Most Important in the Brief Description
Please write three features of GNEP that are most important "to you."

Recycling, recycle nuclear fuels	9
Disposal of nuclear materials, reducing nuclear waste, technology to handle nuclear waste	7
Avoid misuse of nuclear materials	6
Alternative to fossil fuels	6
International partnerships, globalization	5
Clean air, helps environment, climate change	5
Reduce conflict, peace, cold war over, reduce conflict over resources	4
Safety, making nuclear power safer	2
Nuclear waste safeguards	1
Addressing future concerns for energy use	1
Jobs, new technical jobs	1
More affordable energy (more available)	1
Reliable source of energy, continue power	1
Nuclear power in Eastern Idaho	1
Nuclear energy	1
Negative	
Waste not safe	2
Concerned about safety, plants not safe, what are dangers of advanced technology	1
Pollution	1
Prefer other ways (fuel cells)	1
Not enough info	1

Four-Page GNEP Overview

Participants were asked to read a four-page draft description of GNEP. They were asked to underline any points in the description that they felt were particularly good and circle any points that they found bad, unclear, or confusing. The draft four-page overview is attached. A table on the following pages shows the numbers who marked each section.

In general, participants found that the description was clear and well written. However, they felt that it did not include enough specific information. Questions included:

- Who/what is GNEP: The initial questioning about who is behind GNEP continued. Although the U.S. Government/Department of Energy Logo was clearly shown in the four-page handout, the organizational structure was not clear.
- Who are the partners: A picture of G8 Summit participants was shown to communicate that GNEP had met with positive response at a recent Summit. But there was no mention of actual partnerships having been formed; in fact, discussions are underway but not completed. More information about the ongoing discussions and the agencies involved (DOE, State) could be helpful.
- Who are the "developing countries:" Issues of fairness and control of energy resources surfaced. Some questioned how GNEP would determine which countries would have the full nuclear energy capability and which would be dependent on the U.S. and partners for enrichment services.
- How will controls be accomplished: The idea that misuse of nuclear materials would be reduced was appealing, but some participants thought that the description did not explain how this would be accomplished.

Two sections drew the most attention:

- A New Vision for Worldwide Energy Security
- The Role of Recycling

Aspects of the Vision section that have great appeal are:

- Reduces global dependence on fossil fuels, thus reducing world conflict and helping to meet increasing global demands for clean-air energy.
- Cooperation, including the following concepts:

- With a new spirit of cooperation— among nations as well as among the public and private sectors— GNEP focuses on developing new technologies that recycle nuclear waste into fuel for energy and reduce waste storage needs while guarding against misuse of nuclear materials.
- Reduce the risk of misuse of nuclear materials.
- Tap international scientific and technical expertise to develop advanced technologies and safety features.

The discussion showed that the term, **energy security**, has many meanings. To policy makers, energy security means having abundant, reliable, and affordable energy. To the public after 9/11, the primary meaning of energy security is safety of facilities. The focus groups also found that the idea of **energy diversity** is less clear and compelling than reducing global reliance on fossil fuels. Reducing reliance on fossil fuels implies reliable energy supply, less conflict in the world, and also finding solutions to clean air and global warming/climate change concerns.

The other section that had greatest appeal talked about recycling. The 20 participants marked 38 points within this section about recycling as "particularly good points." Discussion found total and enthusiastic consensus in both groups that recycling used nuclear fuel is good.

The specific points most underlined regarding recycling referenced:

- High energy radioactive elements that can power new kinds of reactors as well as existing ones.
- Mixtures that are not pure enough to be diverted for weapons purposes.
- Less toxic nuclear wastes that reduce disposal requirements.

However, some questioned how these results would be accomplished. How, for instance, would less toxic wastes reduce disposal requirements?

Other points that a significant number of participants especially liked were:

- New technologies to produce hydrogen and develop new transportation fuels.
- Advanced nuclear safeguards to increase the safety and security of nuclear energy worldwide and prevent the misuse of nuclear material. Some would have liked more information on how this would be accomplished.
- Various points about the clean air benefits of nuclear energy. Nuclear power plants... :
 - Help to preserve the Earth's climate, avoid ozone formation, and prevent acid rain.

- Make a unique contribution to the mix of energy sources as the largest source of clean-air energy.
- Produce no sulfur, particulates, or greenhouse gases.

The least clear points had to do with safeguards. Participants found that the description on these points was too vague. Some also questioned how GNEP would limit the number of countries that can produce nuclear materials through the uranium enrichment process, which can potentially be diverted to produce weapons.

A reference to President Bush's leadership drew harsh criticism from some participants.

Graphs. Several graphs were included in the four-page description (see attached). None stood out.

- Participants said they did not read the graphs on world power generation and electricity consumption. When asked to look at them, the graphs were found to be unclear. Participants suggested that captions and sources would help.
- A pie chart showing the percent of U.S. electricity from nuclear and other sources was considered more useful in giving perspective.
- A step diagram intended to communicate how GNEP relates to ongoing nuclear energy development was confusing. Participants either misinterpreted the steps or said they simply could not understand what it was trying to say. The use of unexplained terms, such as "NP-2010 program," contributed to the difficulty.

Four-Page GNEP Overview
Numbers of Participants Who Marked Each Point

	Good Points to Make	Bad or Confusing
A new vision for worldwide energy security	1	1
The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) is a cooperative, international initiative to promote the peaceful use of the atom.	3	0
This new initiative aims to:	1	0
Reduce global dependence on fossil fuels, thus reducing world conflict and helping to meet increasing global demands for clean-air energy	11	2
Encourage economic growth, prosperity, and health throughout the world	4	2
Tap international scientific and technical expertise to develop advanced technologies and safety features	6	0
Reduce the risk of misuse of nuclear materials	9	4
Countries around the world are turning to nuclear energy because they want the improved quality of life that abundant, clean energy affords.	0	0
Global demand for nuclear power will inevitably expand with or without U.S. involvement, but GNEP makes it possible for all nations to participate in shaping its growth.	4	2
With a new spirit of cooperation – among nations as well as between the public and private sectors – GNEP focuses on developing new technologies that recycle nuclear waste into fuel for energy and reduce waste storage needs while guarding against misuse of nuclear materials.	10	3
World Nuclear Power Generation 2003-2030 Graph	0	1
G8 Photo and Caption	0	1
In talks at the highest levels, such as the G8 Summit, the GNEP vision is receiving enthusiastic support from leading nuclear nations.	0	4
While GNEP is evolving internationally, the U.S. has begun developing the science and engineering applications needed to realize the worldwide vision.	0	3
The Global Challenge	1	0
Competition for energy resources is accelerating, and planning for future needs must begin now.	5	0
The U.S. Energy Information Agency estimates that worldwide energy consumption will grow by 71	5	1

percent between 2003 and 2030, with the highest growth projected for developing countries.		
Over the same period, energy-related world carbon dioxide emissions will rise from 25.0 billion to 43.7 billion metric tons	2	1
Net Electricity Consumption 2003-2030 Graph	0	1
Energy use in developing countries will exceed that of developed nations by 2015.	3	1
Worldwide competition for fossil fuel resources will continue to generate higher prices as well as concerns about the security of energy supplies.	4	2
Focusing International Resources on a Long-Term Solution	0	0
GNEP represents a fundamental redefinition of U.S. nuclear energy strategy because it addresses not just U.S. needs, but those of the world as a whole.	4	2
In addition, it looks to the long term and takes a flexible approach to planning to adapt to changing technologies and world events.	1	3
New Technologies and Systems	0	0
Success for the program over the long term will require a number of new or improved technical elements to make the world cleaner and safer:	2	0
New ways of recycling nuclear fuel; recycling turns nuclear waste into fuel for electricity	4	3
New ways of fabricating nuclear fuel elements	2	1
New reactor technologies based on international experience	4	2
New technologies to produce hydrogen and develop new transportation fuels	6	1
Advanced nuclear safeguards to increase the safety and security of nuclear energy worldwide and prevent the misuse of nuclear material.	6	2
The national laboratories and their associated universities are already exploring these technologies.	2	0
New Relationships	0	0
Also new with GNEP is its cooperative approach, globally and within the U.S., to focus resources on long-term development of energy supplies.	0	0
Ongoing discussions with other nations that already have nuclear capabilities and can contribute their own expertise will accelerate research and development, and the specifics of partnerships are under discussion.	3	0
Cooperative relationships will also include representatives from the public and private sectors,	0	0

with each contributing what it does best:		
U.S. government	1	0
- Offer incentives, loan guarantees, and insurance against production delays to utilities and to private companies to move technologies that are already available to market	3	3
- Support research at U.S. national laboratories and their affiliated universities to develop key technologies that are not yet available	2	1
Private industry	0	0
- Continue to build and commercialize technologies efficiently and cost effectively.	1	1
The Role of Recycling	1	0
Recycling enables the U.S. to join other nations that currently recycle fuel in developing advanced technologies.	3	0
These are a key element of a long-term strategy because new, more flexible technologies can recover reusable nuclear materials from waste.	2	1
These recycled materials can, in turn, produce energy and simplify waste management.	2	0
Already a mature technology, chemical reprocessing involves dissolving used nuclear fuel in liquid, then removing high-energy elements for reuse.	1	1
Processes can be tailored to produce various combinations, each with certain advantages.	0	1
For example, mixtures could consist of:	0	1
High-energy radioactive elements that can power new kinds of reactors as well as existing ones	9	2
Less toxic nuclear wastes that reduce disposal requirements	8	3
Mixtures that are not pure enough to be diverted for weapons purposes.	9	2
Recycling can also involve new, safer configurations whereby reprocessing and fuel fabrication plants are located at the same site.	2	1
Some technologies could also make better use of world uranium resources as nuclear power expands globally.	1	0
Reducing Misuse of Nuclear Materials	1	1
Working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and GNEP partner nations, the U.S. could participate in a system whereby nations without nuclear capability could purchase fuel from provider nations under multinational control, with the IAEA guaranteeing access to energy supplies.	5	2

This would limit the number of countries that can produce nuclear materials through the uranium enrichment process, which can potentially be diverted to produce weapons material.	4	4
Modern safeguards and nuclear materials management concepts can be incorporated into future nuclear fuel cycles from the very beginning of the process instead of adding them after the fact.	2	3
Strengthening U.S. Energy Strategy	0	0
While it is a global vision, GNEP strengthens the nation's overall energy strategy and starts the U.S. on the way to energy security.	2	1
The U.S. government supports development of all our energy sources, including cleaner fossil fuels, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and nuclear energy.	4	2
But nuclear power makes a unique contribution to the mix of energy sources because it is the largest source of clean-air energy.	5	0
Nuclear plants produce no sulfur, particulates, or greenhouse gases.	5	1
They help to preserve the Earth's climate, avoid ozone formation, and prevent acid rain.	8	1
And, while conservation and renewable resources contribute to supply, they cannot provide the reliable base power needed to maintain a complex national electricity grid.	3	0
All of these are important benefits as environmental and energy policies become more closely linked.	2	0
Building on a Solid Foundation	0	0
GNEP builds on more than 50 years of scientific expertise and research and development to establish a sound framework to guide nuclear power expansion for years to come.	2	2
It will continue to support the advances made under President Bush's leadership to expand the domestic use of nuclear power and develop a new generation of nuclear power plants in the U.S.:	0	5
Nuclear power is the second largest source of U.S. electricity	0	1
Pie Chart	0	0
Nuclear Power-2010 program, a cost-shared program with electric utilities and consortia to develop a more efficient licensing process for new plants in the near-term	1	3
Breeder reactor technology	0	5

The Advance Fuel Cycle Initiative	0	5
Generation IV.	0	4
In addition, GNEP is consistent with an aggressive Department of Energy plan to manage used nuclear fuel in the U.S., including permanent disposal in the repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.	3	3
Its new recycling processes will ensure that even with expanded use of nuclear energy, the U.S. will need only one geologic repository.	7	2
Globally, there are already 442 nuclear power plants in operation, and the U.S. has 103 nuclear reactors in 31 states that currently generate 20 percent of the nation's electrical power.	1	1
Eleven other countries currently have 27 new nuclear power plants under construction, and new nuclear plants will be coming on line in the U.S., too, between now and 2015.	1	0
Research and development has also begun in the U.S. on new nuclear technologies – another step toward long-term energy security.	1	0
Step Chart	0	1

Summary of Messages

Participants were given the page shown below and were asked to check the six points that were most important to them. Following is the exact set of message points. The points checked by 10 or more participants are in bold font. See also the table on the next page.

Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP)

Please put a check mark next to the 6 points about GNEP that are most important to you. The six points may include any of the numbered headlines or bulleted points under the headlines.

1. GNEP will help focus worldwide resources on the long-term development of non-fossil (nuclear) energy
 - **Planning for future needs must begin now—competition for energy resources is accelerating.**
 - GNEP will help to shape the growing use of nuclear energy worldwide.
 - The program is designed to respond to evolving research, technical and economic considerations.
 - Nuclear energy will provide abundant, reliable energy.
 - GNEP strengthens the nation's overall energy strategy.

2. GNEP's technologies and partnerships can help make the world cleaner and safer
 - Nuclear power will reduce global reliance on fossil fuels.
 - Nuclear power has no emissions and does not contribute to global warming.
 - **With GNEP, the U.S. joins other nations recycling fuel and will recycle valuable fuel to produce energy and simplify waste management.**
 - GNEP will increase developing countries' access to clean air nuclear energy.
 - People throughout the world want the improved quality of life that energy affords.
 - **Advanced safeguards, technologies and systems will guard against misuse of nuclear material.**
 - The GNEP program will provide reliable fuel services.

3. GNEP builds on a solid foundation of U.S. and international nuclear experience
 - The program benefits from more than fifty years of scientific, engineering, commercial and industrial expertise and R&D capability.
 - GNEP builds on past and current work on advanced reactor technologies.
 - Tangible progress is being made now.
 - U.S. efforts in this program use national labs, universities and industry.
 - International partners have recycling experience.

Summary Message Points

"Please put a check mark next to the 6 points about GNEP that are most important to you. The six points may include any of the numbered headlines or bulleted points under the headlines."

With GNEP, the U.S. joins other nations recycling fuel and will recycle valuable fuel to produce energy and simplify waste management	14
Advanced safeguards, technologies and systems will guard against the misuse of nuclear material.	13
Planning for future needs must begin now -- competition for energy resources is accelerating.	11
Nuclear power has NO emissions and does not contribute to global warming.	8
The program is designed to respond to evolving research, technical and economic considerations.	8
People throughout the world want the improved quality of life that energy affords.	8
Nuclear energy will provide abundant, reliable energy	8
GNEP will increase developing countries' access to clean air nuclear energy.	7
GNEP will help focus worldwide resources on the long-term development of non-fossil (nuclear) energy	6
The program benefits from more than fifty years of scientific, engineering, commercial and industrial expertise and R&D capability.	6
International partners have recycling experience.	6
GNEP builds on past and current work on advanced reactor technologies.	6
The GNEP program will provide reliable fuel services	4
U.S. efforts in this program utilize national labs, universities and industry	3
GNEP will help to shape the growing use of nuclear energy worldwide.	3
GNEP strengthens the nation's overall energy strategy	2
Tangible progress is being made now	2
GNEP's technologies and partnerships can help make the world cleaner and safer	2
GNEP builds on a solid foundation of U.S. and international nuclear experience	2

Videos of Kathy McCarthy and David Hill

Participants viewed short video clips of Kathy McCarthy (brief overview of GNEP) and David Hill (longer answers to questions). Both were viewed as competent and believable. People especially liked Dr. Hill's British accent.

One appealing aspect of David Hill's remarks was the acknowledgement of problems associated with nuclear energy that GNEP sought to resolve.

Characteristics of a credible spokesperson on this topic, participants said, are scientists/experts on the subject. Most indicated they would like to hear from people like Kathy McCarthy and David Hill. Participants suggested that they would like to hear Dr. McCarthy and Dr. Hill answer questions from an audience instead of an off-camera interviewer.

Description of GNEP

At the end of the discussion, one group of participants was asked how they would describe GNEP. Following are their comments.

- It's an alternative to fossil fuel to get cleaner energy.
- A global group that wants to promote nuclear energy.
- It's an organization who wants to promote nuclear energy as our primary source of energy and regulate it as a way that is safe and accessible.
- I see it more like a treaty alliance of nations to work together not only for their own good but in assistance to other countries to provide them with reliable energy sources.
- Pilot projects and start them in the US; didn't seem like a global program.
- The alternative is having China taking the first steps.
- If this is the direction we want to go and we want to have some continuity throughout the world; if this is something that you decide is good for the world, the nation, for your state; if it meets the guidelines, if you meet the guidelines, you want that, you get the jobs; that's the point.
- I would like to know more about it, I think it's a generally good idea, but I have a lot of questions.

GNEP Facilities in Idaho

The other group was asked whether they thought it would be good for Idaho or not good for Idaho to have some of the GNEP facilities in the state. Opinions were mixed:

- It's involved with new technology; it can't hurt.
- As long as the intent is not a dumping zone, as long as it was R&D, how is that different from what we're doing now?
- All we've been doing is clean up.
- We have the land.
- Idaho wants the money.
- Yes, we all want our share of money, we need to do this where it can be safe and protected and managed.
- I think before putting all these dollars and these billion dollar facilities we need to be assured of the safety.

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Discussion Guide: Communications about GNEP

- Introductions.
- Hand out brief summary of GNEP and QUESTIONNAIRE. Here is a brief summary of an initiative we'll discuss tonight. The initiative is called Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). Please read it and fill in the questionnaire and then we'll discuss it.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

- 1) Based just on this brief description, do you tend to think that GNEP is a good idea or not a good idea?
- 2) Please write three features of GNEP that are most important "to you."

- Collect questionnaires, and do a quick tally of good/not good
- Discussion: Report tally results and probe reasons for opinions.
- Easel pad. What are some of the features you wrote down? Reasons.
- What, if anything does it say that is important to you? Probe for specifics/ reasons.
- Hand out 4-page description. Here is more information about GNEP. As you read this information, I'd like you to do 2 things:
 1. Underline anything it says that is an especially good point.
 2. Circle anything it says that is not a good point or is unclear or confusing.
- What are your overall thoughts about GNEP?
- Page by page:
 - Are there some especially good points on this page? Probe for specifics/reasons.
 - Is there anything on this page that is unclear or confusing?

- **Hand out message points.** Here are short summary points about GNEP. Please read this page and put a check mark next to the 6 points that are most important to you. The six points may include any of the 3 numbered headlines or bulleted points under the headlines.
- **video.** Dr. Kathryn McCarthy, director of nuclear science and engineering at Idaho National Laboratory and Deputy Director for the GNEP program.
- What is your impression of Dr. McCarthy and what she said? Does she seem to you to be...
 - Competent, not competent?
 - Believable, not believable?
- **video.** Dr. David Hill, national program director for GNEP and an Idaho resident. What is your impression of Dr. Hill and what he said? Does he seem to you to be...
 - Competent, not competent?
 - Believable, not believable?
- In general, if you had a choice of persons to hear from on the subject of GNEP, would you like to hear from experts from national laboratories? Who else?
- Show August 3 press release. Does this press release add any new and important information? This press release was shown to one group, which was also asked: Do you think that having some of the GNEP facilities in Idaho would be good for the state or not?
- The other group was not shown the press release and was asked: After all that you have read and discussed, if someone you know asked you to describe GNEP, how would you describe it in simple terms?