

ACDS MHSC Working Group on Pipelines

Chairman's Report November 2004

Purpose

To provide ACDS with a summary of the way of working established by the Working Group on Pipelines (WGP), its experience to-date and pipeline issues identified for resolution. In addition, in the light of changes to the membership of WGP, to consider potential future working arrangements and the rationale for the groups continued existence.

Background

The ACDS MHSC Working Group on Pipelines was formed in September 2001 by HSE in response to industry lobbying as an independently chaired forum to discuss and address pipeline safety and risk assessment issues. Its membership consisted of representatives of the pipelines industry as nominated by UKOPA; an independent industry expert on risk assessment; representatives of HSE policy, operational and technical risk assessment sections; and an independent chair from ACDS, Professor Gordon Walker.

Key areas requiring discussion, understanding and joint solution were identified as:

1. The development of jointly agreed risk assessment methodology and models, to support land use planning enquiries so that technical advice is suitable and transparent to the wide range of influential stakeholder interests in land use, including HSE, Local Planning Authorities, industry, landowners, developers, solicitors and agents.
2. Resolution of stakeholder issues raised by the proposed amendments to PSR 96 (specifically the reclassification of gasoline pipelines as MAHPs and the testing of pipeline emergency plans). These proposed amendments have now been withdrawn, but it is important the work already undertaken is properly recorded and retained.

The primary objective and deliverable established at the outset was the completion and agreement of a programme of technical work and analysis on which expert advice could be based.

Technical Work Programme

The Working Group on Pipelines has to-date met on 11 occasions and held three technical workshops to focus on particular risk assessment issues. It has progressed a work programme addressing priority areas of work relating to pipeline risk assessment. These priority areas include; failure rate contribution from ground movement; 3rd part damage prediction models; risk reduction factors for physical protection of pipelines; land use planning zones for ethylene and spiked crude pipelines; risk assessment of gasoline pipelines.

Significant and constructive progress was achieved through 2002 in a number of technical work areas. In 2003 HSE reported resource constraints and notified WGP of the need to focus on internal priorities, including the delivery of the Implementation of the Fundamental Review of Land Use Planning (IFRLUP) project. Specifically HSE representation on the WGP for technical risk assessment functions was withdrawn. Dialogue between WGP and HSE then ensued which confirmed the significance of the resource constraint and identified an alternative route for progressing elements of the technical work programme as part of IFRLUP. The independent industry expert from WGP has subsequently worked as part of the P5 team within IFRLUP to contribute to the identification of risk assessment tools which are in need of development and enhancement. The outcome of P5 has included the identification of a number of aspects of pipeline modelling as priority areas for development potentially to be taken forward within work package P6. Discussion is expected to take place as to how

UKOPA may be able to bring some additional resource to P6 through jointly funded projects in order to advance this technical work.

Future Agenda and Way of Working

Whilst the interface with IFRLUP has proved very productive, questions remain as to the future ways of working for WGP. The key goal of WGP was to develop jointly agreed risk assessment methodology and models between the industry and HSE. The objectives of WGP in this respect go beyond the elements likely to be included within P6 development work. However, without technical representation from HSE, it is impossible for WGP to achieve this goal through collective endorsement of work programmes and outputs at its regular meetings. An alternative innovative way of working would be for technical work to be resourced largely by UKOPA, with WGP accountable for the governance applied to full independent peer review and acceptance of the outcomes of the technical work. This still however needs a commitment from HSE to provide some degree of technical review of work programmes, outputs and review reports in order for joint acceptance to be achieved.

It is currently proposed that the outputs of the technical work programme progressed by WGP are published as supplements to the primary UK pipeline codes BSPD 8010 (2004) and IGEM TD/1(2001) for consistent and transparent use by all stakeholders. This would help to ensure that when applications for development near to pipelines are submitted and options are considered, the regulator and operator positions can be stated to other stakeholders without public disagreement on the validity and use of basic technical tools. However, this goal can only be achieved if all parties willingly and actively engage in the process of open governance proposed by WGP.

If this approach to progressing and endorsing the WGP work programme is not agreed by all parties, then it is considered that there is no rationale for an independently chaired forum under the auspices of ACDS with the resource commitment this entails. As direct interaction between HSE and the pipelines industry as represented by UKOPA can take place using alternative and less formally structured mechanisms and opportunities, the 'added value' obtained from maintaining WGP needs to be clear and significant.

ACDS Action:-

The Working Group on Pipelines requests:

- 1) formal endorsement by ACDS of the approach proposed by WGP to progressing its work programme.
- 2) agreement that if the approach proposed cannot be pursued then WGP should be disbanded