

# ACCREDITATION

## CASE STUDY



## Sellafield Ltd

### Introduction

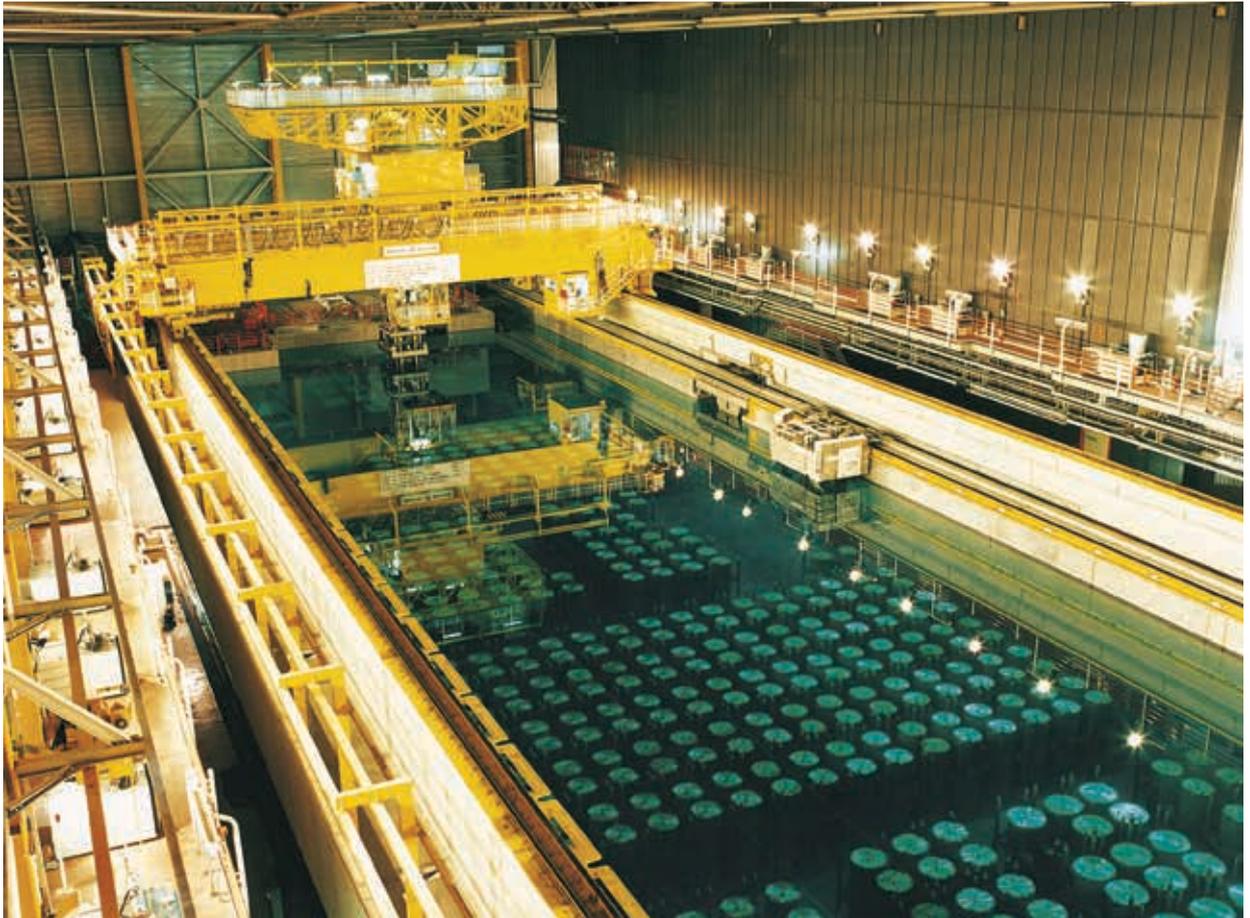
Sellafield Ltd is responsible for safely delivering decommissioning, reprocessing, nuclear waste management and fuel manufacturing activities on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. With over 50 years' experience, it has the largest concentration of nuclear expertise in Europe carrying out some of the most innovative and complex nuclear activities in the world.

It is now owned by Nuclear Management Partners (NMP), which brings together the global nuclear experience of American company URS, British company Amec and French company Areva to deliver the safe acceleration of hazard and risk reduction across the business.

The Sellafield site in West Cumbria is spread across six square kilometres and is home to more than 1,000 facilities performing a wide range of tasks. These include decommissioning the UK's nuclear legacy as well as fuel recycling, manufacturing and the management of low, intermediate and high level nuclear waste.

The site at Capenhurst in Cheshire is due to become the UK's first nuclear site to complete its decommissioning and clean-up programme – and on the way has delivered the biggest demolition projects ever undertaken in the UK nuclear industry.

Employees at Risley, near Warrington, also provide project management, engineering, design and other functional support capabilities.



## Safe delivery in a challenging environment

Complex projects with a lifetime cost of up to £800 million are not uncommon in this technically challenging and highly regulated, secure environment. The very nature of the business means that successful and safe project delivery and leadership is vital to delivering world-class operations and reducing high hazard risk.

Sellafield Ltd is committed to delivering projects safely, ahead of schedule and giving best value for the UK taxpayer. Decommissioning legacy buildings and processes often requires new builds. As a result, projects cover a wide range of activities including modifications to existing operational plants and site infrastructure maintenance.

The Project Management arrangements were reviewed and benchmarked by NMP, and Sellafield Ltd has now embarked on a comprehensive project execution improvement programme led by Head of Project Improvement Capability, Ian Marr, focussing on streamlined procedures and behavioural changes.

In 2009, Sellafield Ltd adopted a rigorous gated process of project delivery to provide a single streamlined process that could be tailored and utilised throughout the community – the Sellafield Gated Process. This was a further improvement to the front end loading process used prior to that time.

Sellafield Ltd has used many tools, techniques and

processes over the years, demonstrating the mature learning and development nature of the organisation and its drive to continuously improve project delivery and performance.

All work that becomes a project is developed, managed, sanctioned, validated and delivered using the Sellafield Gated Process. This includes capital building, major asset care, minor projects and non-routine tasks of all values.

The process confirms the business case and identifies the best fit for purpose, cost effective option before embarking on design, procurement, construction and commissioning.

This reduces time and money spent on non-value adding activities, avoids delays and unnecessary work, improves performance predictability and makes more efficient use of resources as the team is not mobilised until later in the project lifecycle. Together with improvement initiatives in areas such as procurement, design, construction and commissioning, it can significantly improve the historic project delivery norms.

Jim French, executive director decommissioning, said: "Good project management skills are essential if we are to deliver projects to the world class standard to which we aspire within the decommissioning arena at Sellafield. Good project delivery is fundamental from both a safety and value for the taxpayer angle and project management training is a valuable part of the development process for employees."

## Creating world-class professionals

Project management is clearly defined and highly valued within Sellafield Ltd, with a dedicated Project Management Directorate encompassing all aspects of projects and their management.

Within the directorate is the Project Management Capability organisation, responsible for the company's Project Management Career Path Programme to develop high calibre professionals who can fulfil the demands of the business, its clients and the industry.

Led by Bill Condon, director of project management and Dr Christos Triantis, head of project management capability, the philosophy of the development programme is to address the training needs and how it fits with the reality of work for the community of some 400 professionals who define, organise and deliver projects.

The career programme has five main goals:

- to ensure that project managers possess the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to execute their projects with efficiency and certainty
- to prepare them for positions of greater accountability and responsibility
- to encourage and support development of the company's project management talent
- to prepare other high-potential professionals for project management positions
- to establish project managers as Sellafield Ltd's competitive advantage

There are five levels of project professionals encompassing five certification roles. A typical career path starts with project assistant, progressing through project manager levels 1 and 2 after five to seven years with experience working on schemes of up to £70 million, on to senior and executive levels involved in highly complex projects worth above £70 million.

These grades are mapped against the company's own certification level and external professional qualifications. Project assistants are encouraged to gain the APM Introductory Certificate and candidates aiming to become project managers have to obtain the APMP as a minimum mandatory requirement.

As they progress, they need to achieve appropriate certification through rigorous online modular testing and management reviews before they can move up. In addition to Sellafield Ltd's own higher-level certification, project managers are encouraged to attain the pan-sector APM Registered Project Professional.

Experience in doing the job and gaining knowledge are the twin hearts of the programme. The Project Management Career Path has been aligned to the APM's Five Dimensions of Professionalism, *Competence*

*Framework, Body of Knowledge* and PMI's *PMBok Guide*. Candidates are expected to study these and Sellafield Ltd's internal publications to rectify gaps in their knowledge.

Said Vicky Harold, a project management graduate: "I really enjoy working in the Project Management Directorate and am grateful for the opportunities that I have been given. I have been learning every day and hope to continue to do so throughout my career. I work with fantastic people, who have offered support and advice over the last two years and it's those people I have really been learning from."

Individuals are responsible for their own career development with support from the company. Manuals and guides are available on the intranet and are regularly reviewed to ensure they incorporate lessons learned, are up to date and relevant. Mentoring and access to advice is also on offer, while training for the APMP is through an APM accredited provider.

Moving into a senior project manager's position involves further management reviews, completing a 360-degree assessment, and project simulations while moving to an executive level requires review by an executive board of directors.

Once approved to join the programme, development plans are drawn up tailored to the individual. Online guides detail what is expected at the different levels and each level has to be completed and certified before an individual can progress to the next.

Knowledge, principles and processes are acquired through a combination of e-learning and instructor-led classes, all integrated into practical application at work. Progress is measured through monitoring, interviews and assessments when any shortcomings can be identified and addressed.

Learning through sharing is positively encouraged. A twice-a-year, one-day project management forum with external expert speakers is a knowledge and experience-enhancing event that is attended by most project managers at Sellafield Ltd. Peer assist reviews, project simulations, training events, internal specific interest groups and taking part in APM activities help to foster a feeling of community as well as boosting skills and knowledge.

Said Bill Condon, project management director: "When we started the Project Management Forum in 2009, one of our goals was to make Sellafield Ltd project managers the best in the UK. They now have the best training tool in the UK to support this."

## Association for Project Management and Sellafield Ltd

Sellafield Ltd's Project Management Career Path has taken the APM *Body of Knowledge*, Five Dimensions of Professionalism and *Competence Framework* as base references in setting standards for its practices and as sources of the company's fundamental principles of project management.

As well as mapping its own internal certification against APM's qualifications, APMP is mandatory for all wishing to progress to project manager, with 770 employees currently holding this qualification. The company also regards higher APM qualifications as desirable.

Sellafield Ltd is a corporate member of APM and is the first nuclear company of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's seven Site Licence Companies to be awarded corporate accreditation for its training programme.

It has around 400 active members taking part in association activities, regularly provides key speakers at APM events and in 2010 Neil Crewdson was named Young Project Manager of the Year at the Association for Project Management Awards.



### Personal story

Dorothy Gradden is a head of projects at Sellafield Ltd, responsible for an extensive and varied portfolio of projects associated with the remediation and decommissioning of some of the highest hazard legacy nuclear facilities in the world.

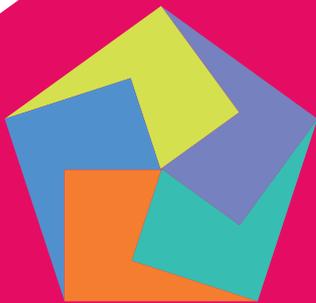
With a degree in nuclear engineering, she quickly moved through design roles into commercial, contract and bid management positions, which provided a sound foundation for taking on the project management of increasingly complex projects. With over 25 years' experience in the nuclear industry she has delivered a range of projects at most of the UK's nuclear facilities as well as some overseas projects.

She joined Sellafield Ltd as a senior project manager in 1999 as the company's primary focus moved from operations to that in which the delivery of major projects was also required to deal with the legacy facilities. At that time there was no formal certification or career pathway for project managers within the company.

The introduction of the Sellafield Ltd Career Pathway provided a clear route for formal certification of all project management personnel, with all starting with the basic Level 1 modules, irrespective of current grade and position. In order to support her project managers, Dorothy set up a learning centre for her team with a range of learning materials and sessions where they could seek the advice of others as to where to research particular topics. More experienced project managers have been mentoring their teams through the process.

"I was surprised at how much I personally learnt from studying for and taking these modules. Over time you can develop your own routines and practices and forget about other tools and techniques that are available in the project managers toolkit," said Dorothy. "Once the basic modules had been mastered, the Level 2 modules focused on key leadership skills and techniques."

Now certified as a Level II senior project manager, Dorothy is looking forward to preparing for an Executive Review Board as the first step to becoming a Level 3 Executive Project Manager.



## **FIVE**Dimensions of Professionalism

### **APM Corporate Accreditation**

APM Corporate Accreditation will help you stand out as an exemplar in the development of project management professionals. It provides assurances to your customers and suppliers and allows you to attract and retain the best project management talent in the country.

APM Corporate Accreditation recognises the commitment of organisations and professional development services to the defined, APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism, each of which is supported by an APM standard:

#### **Breadth**

The APM Body of Knowledge defines the knowledge needed to manage any kind of project. It underpins many project management standards and methods including the National Occupational Standard in Project Management.

#### **Depth**

The APM Competence Framework provides a guide to project management competences. It is part of your professional toolkit; mapping levels of knowledge and experience to help you progress your skills and abilities.

#### **Achievement**

APM qualifications take your career in new and exciting directions. They are recognised across the profession and aligned with IPMA's 4 level Certification Program.

#### **Commitment**

Continuing Professional Development helps develop your project management practice. A targeted development plan will enhance your project management career.

#### **Accountability**

The APM Code of Professional Conduct outlines the ethical practice expected of a professional. Becoming an APM member shows your commitment to the Code and sets you apart from others.

## Association for Project Management

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