

SESSION TITLE: Environmental and Geological Disposal

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive to the next generation of people • UK has good capability in relevant areas that are not currently nuclear-focused but complementary (e.g. meteorological modelling; high performance computing; oil & gas) • This area includes nationally important technical challenges that must be addressed now • On the critical path for future nuclear development • Programmes exist and have clear aims (Geological disposal; Contaminated land; Emergency response) • There are defined end users for this research 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current students are often not very quantitative • Demand from employers is much greater than supply of recruits • RCUK model not sufficiently inclusive of the whole academic community and reduces diversity of training • Security clearance, nationality restrictions • Age profile of the current research community • Volume of current research training • Facilities: High barriers to entry (cost; safety case; training) • Gaps in capability to handle highly active samples • These very cross-cutting topics fall foul of boundaries within RCUK • Timescales of research projects vs. timescales of the problems • Lack of coherent representation within RCUK- need ‘ambassador’ • UK programmes out of synch with FP8 • BBSRC is not meaningfully engaged in nuclear research
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve public understanding- communication • High demand for personnel • Diversification of research training • Facilities: Reorientate existing facilities to nuclear (e.g. meteorological models, high performance computing) • Access to underground research laboratories and ‘natural labs’ • Develop better use of expert judgement • Geological disposal; Contaminated land; Emergency response; Measurement and monitoring; Natural laboratories • ‘Ambassador’ within RCUK • Thematic research network • Long term (> 5 years) programmes 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public confidence • NERC DTPs • Security clearance & nationality restrictions • Sustainability of the supply of new entrants • High barriers to entry for new facilities (cost; safety case; training; slow, unclear processes) • Politics • Loss of trust in research- need for independence • Politics