

STRATEGIC THOUGHT GROUP RISK MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY

british nuclear group

British Nuclear Group cleans up with Active Risk Manager (ARM) from Strategic Thought. ARM, the market-leading risk management software solution will enable project level risk management with central control.

The Customer

British Nuclear Group is a world leader in the nuclear clean-up business. Established by BNFL to bring a specialist focus to clean up operations, British Nuclear Group has a proud track record of applying exceptional experience to complex nuclear challenges. Its design and operational solutions are actively delivering a safer environment, both now and for the future.

The Group has three distinct businesses: Management Services, Project Services and BNG America. Together they have a wide range of skills and knowledge that is interchangeable across its operations.

Standardising Systems

As part of a new drive to standardise procedures, British Nuclear Group has reviewed all of its in-house systems and identified the need to have one common way of working across functions, including risk management.

After considering a number of risk management solutions, the Group chose Active Risk Manager (ARM) from Strategic Thought. The decision was made to roll out ARM for both the project and operational areas of British Nuclear Group, following its initial successful adoption and use in the Management Services business.

Operating Safely and Cost Efficiently

British Nuclear Group Management Services is the site management business that manages both operational plant and delivers accelerated site clean-up operations at the Sellafield site in West Cumbria, as well as various reactor sites where the historic Magnox reactors were operated. Management Services manage and operate the activity

under contract to the exacting standards of safety and cost efficiency of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, (NDA) the Government body established in April 2005 responsible for delivering the decommissioning programme of the UK's civil nuclear legacy.

Robin Phillips, Risk Manager of British Nuclear Group Management Services at Sellafield explained why Active Risk Manager is so important: "Management Services operates as two groups, Sellafield which covers four sites and Reactor Sites which covers a total of eleven sites, with Sellafield being by far the largest individual site. The sites are all at different stages, for example the Sellafield and Reactor site portfolios have operational facilities involved in production, waste treatment and electricity generation. However, all sites are due to be decommissioned in the future therefore each site is treated separately, with different projects and programmes of work.

We needed to find a way of actively managing risk across the different programmes and being able to report to the NDA."

Many of the buildings on the older sites are ageing and the main aim of the NDA programme is to reduce any potential hazard by treating the waste and changing it into a safe and environmentally friendly state.

Using Active Risk Manager within the Programme Office enables a central overview of all projects, while project managers have accountability and visibility of their own work. Robin Phillips can report back to the NDA – 'the customer' who is ultimately responsible for the assets of all sites.



Change Programme

“Changing from owner/operator to a contractor has also initiated a huge change programme across the organisation,” said Robin Phillips. “The costs of the clean up programme are immense and it is vital that we have systems in place that can manage the projects throughout their lifecycle in a consistent way across all the businesses and different sites.”

Eighteen months prior to the NDA being established Robin Phillips had been looking to improve risk processes and support systems. The Sellafield site had historically been split into individual businesses, with the result that each department and business group had different databases and processes. An internal audit highlighted inconsistencies across the reporting, making it difficult to get consistent reports and an accurate overall picture.

Reviewing the Options

Initially Robin and his team reviewed three options – adapting an existing system, approaching an IT supplier for a bespoke system or buying an off the shelf solution. Discounting the first two options, the team reviewed several products and found that Active Risk Manager fitted all of their needs for project and business and governance.

“We mapped out our process steps simplistically and found that ARM actually helps drive people through the process – assessing the scope of work, setting objectives, identifying risk, managing, planning and mitigating it,” explained Robin Phillips. “It was something everyone could pick up and run with, we didn’t have to change our methods of working or start from scratch.”

Using Active Risk Manager reminds people of the steps required in the process. It not only holds the data, it supports the people using the basic steps. Information can be shared easily across projects, so that factors affecting timescales or staffing issues can be highlighted early in the project processes. Managing costs on a project depends on being able to plan resources within strict safety regulations and coordinating activities across the sites as efficiently as possible.

British Nuclear Group also chose ARM as it was a fully supported package with Strategic Thought providing regular updates. Many new functions developed are as a result of customer feedback and incorporated into the product. Strategic Thought also provided advice and assistance in the

early days, which Robin Phillips found helpful. Ongoing support has been very responsive – another positive factor in the selection of Active Risk Manager.

“We started with ARM at Sellafield with 40 licences, taking the decision to control the use of it by training key people initially. We then expanded and took 100 read-only licences – this enabled us to give wider access to enable project managers to view information, while controlling who could input into the system. Currently we have over 130 read-write and 250 read-only licenses between all the sites.” explained Robin Phillips.

Managing Risks

There are over 700 ongoing projects – a mixture of projects and operating plant activities – across the sites at any one time. Many of the business areas are interrelated and dependent on each other, with little buffer in between so managing the risk in those interfaces is a complex and critical task. ARM is used by the central team to track and monitor the management of risk within the four sites under the Sellafield Management – from site level right down to individual projects. The whole hierarchy, down to the work breakdown, in terms of live risks is nearly 10,000. ARM enables Management Services to use the hierarchy to filter out, flag and escalate risks upwards if required.

“We draw risk reports that also form part of performance reports. They are being pulled straight out of ARM and into our reporting process, saving a lot of time. We need a good handle on risk management. ARM gives us that visibility and helps us to pull out the critical risks we should be focussed on,” said Robin Phillips.

Central control

ARM enables central control, while providing accountability at the project or individual level. Risk co-ordinators look after areas of business on a day-to-day business, reporting to line managers but using standards and processes set centrally. The central Programme Office is responsible for setting standards, capabilities and processes. It also reviews and challenges and is then responsible for central reporting.”

“The important thing about ARM is that it enables us to have a devolved risk process which is run within individual areas but our central team maintains the overview across the sites and the business, something we couldn’t do before,” concluded Robin Phillips.