Editorial

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Biographical notes: Da Ruan (PhD in Math, Ghent University, Belgium, 1990) is a senior researcher at the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre (SCK•CEN). He was a Post-Doctoral Researcher from 1991–93 and since 1994 has been the principal investigator for the research project on intelligent control for nuclear reactors, cost-estimation for large nuclear projects under uncertainty, and computerised decision making systems for policy support at SCK•CEN. His major research interests lie in the areas of mathematical modelling, computational intelligence methods, uncertainty analysis, decision support systems and AI applications to information management, cost/benefit analysis, nuclear safety and security related fields. He has published 80 peer-reviewed journal articles, 2 text books, 20 research books on Intelligent Information Systems. He currently serves as Regional Editor for Europe of *Int. J. of Intelligent Automation and Soft Computing*, Co-editor-in-chief of *Int. J. of Nuclear Knowledge Management*, Guest Professor at the Dept of Applied Math and CS at Ghent University, and Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Information Technology at University of Technology, Sydney in Australia.

In contrast to the Special Issue on Soft Computing Methods in Nuclear Engineering Applications (IJNKM Volume 2, No. 3), this Special Issue of eight selected papers also generated from the Seventh International FLINS Conference on Applied AI (FLINS06, Genoa, Italy, 29–31 August 2006), pays attention to applying decision making and evaluation-related techniques in nuclear-related 'soft' systems.

Such 'soft' systems are represented by Rao's risk–risk analysis based socio-legal abstraction to complex nuclear decision-making systems, by Kunsch's financial-option procedure in radioactive waste management, by Ruan and Li's uncertainty analysis for cost estimation in large scale nuclear projects, by Kanemoto et al.'s intelligent system supporting defect identification in nuclear power plants, by Maschio's safeguards information analysis with fuzzy logic, by Kahraman et al.'s location selection for a nuclear power plant, by Lu et al.'s warning message generation by information filtering techniques, and by Milis and Vanhoof's analysing success criteria for ICT projects, respectively.

This special issue is an ongoing progress report of FLINS activities, and especially the result of FLINS 2006. Special thanks are due to all contributors and all referees for their kind cooperation in helping to prepare this volume, and to Professor André Maïsseu (Editor-in-Chief) of IJNKM for his kind consideration, help and advice in publishing this special issue.