

Fact Sheet on Waste Predisposal Management

What are the Issues in waste management and what is predisposal?

All Member States have to a large or small extent nuclear activities that generate radioactive wastes. Hospitals, research in biomedicine or in agriculture, and some industrial applications, beside other large nuclear activities such as Nuclear Power Plants and Nuclear Research, generate unconditioned liquid or solid radioactive wastes that have to be treated, conditioned and stored prior final disposal. Countries with small nuclear activities require of organizations and infrastructure as to be able to manage, in a safe manner, the wastes that they generate.

Predisposal management of radioactive waste is any step carried out to convert raw waste into a stable form suitable for the safe disposal, such as pre-treatment, treatment, storage and relevant transport. Transport of radioactive waste do not differ, in general, from other radioactive material and so are not considered within the scope of this fact sheet (Nevertheless the Agency, within the Nuclear Safety Department, has created a special Unit that might give advise Member States in this area). Predisposal management is comprised of a set of activities whose implementation may take some time. In most of the cases, safety issues and strategic and economical considerations have to be solved prior the main decisions are taken.

What services does WTS provide?

The services are aimed to provide assistance for the management of radioactive waste at national and operating level, in the definition and/or implementation of the projects. The services could include, but are not limited to:

- Guidance in the definition of national waste management strategy and its implementation
- Definition of the most adequate equipment and practices taking into account specific Member State conditions, as well as assisting in the procurement
- Technical expertise for the evaluation of current status of operating facilities and practical guidance for the implementation of corrective actions
- Assistance in the definition of waste acceptance criteria for storage/disposal of conditioned wastes, waste characterization and quality assurance applicable to all steps of waste predisposal management
- Provisions for training to waste management and operating teams, Quality Control improvements, offering proper software for an more efficient record keeping

What are some recent activities in Predisposal Management?

The Waste technology Section, through the Predisposal Management Unit, has provided:

- Technical support to some Latin American, Asian and Eastern European Countries in the creation or updating of their national infrastructure (waste management organizations and facilities). This support is given through out IAEA's professional staff or internationally recognized experts.
- Leadership in regional projects organizing workshops and training courses, at managerial or operating levels
- Assistance to member States in the definition of their strategy for specific important projects such as waste management in research centres (i.e. Serbia and Montenegro) or nuclear power plants (Chernobyl, Bushehr)

- Coordination research programme related to “difficult to manage radioactive wastes”
- Publication of technical documents at various levels, that includes participation of representatives from developing Member States in consultancies for drafting and especially in Technical Meetings.

How to benefit from the activity

Member States not yet involved in waste management activities should contact the Technical Cooperation Department of the Agency

For more information please contact your IAEA TC Country Officer or

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Further information is available on the Departmental website,

<http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/ST/NE/index.html>