

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

International Predisposal Network (IPN)

Background

Disposal is the final step of the life cycle of nuclear waste including used nuclear fuel declared as waste. Before final disposal, the nuclear waste usually goes through a number of steps such as pre-treatment, treatment, conditioning, storage and transport with characterization utilised within the entire cycle of radioactive waste. Predisposal management encompasses all of these steps that collectively cover the activities from waste generation up to final disposal. Predisposal management covers important aspects of policy and strategy, inventory assessment, waste management economics, waste minimization, technical options for waste characterisation, processing and storage, improvement in operating practices etc. The safe management nuclear waste and used nuclear fuel is, in part, reliant upon the utilisation of nuclear waste predisposal technologies. Relevant predisposal practices have been developed and refined over the years in many Member States.

However, a number of Member States with less developed programmes may not have access to advanced predisposal technologies. For these countries, achieving satisfactory predisposal management is a complex technical challenge requiring both intellectual and financial resources. Moreover all Member States need sharing the state of the art information on predisposal management of nuclear waste and used fuel.

The IAEA is proposing to focus its support for predisposal management of nuclear waste via a forum (Network) for a prompt, open and efficient transfer and exchange of knowledge gained through learning from the experience of others. The Agency wishes to support organizations, either currently engaged in or seeking to develop, predisposal technologies, through their inclusion in a network to cooperate and coordinate relevant actions, training and technical advances.

Exchange of information and best practice in the operation of predisposal management facilities is expected to underpin both public and regulatory confidence that nuclear wastes are being securely managed and responsibly stored and disposed.

The network will be non-commercial in developing its activities and will focus its attention on proven practices and successful implementation. The network will build on world class predisposal activities both nationally and internationally by sharing information between Member States.

Name

International Predisposal Network (IPN).

Icon



Objectives

The International Predisposal Network is being established to increase efficiency in sharing international experience in the application of proven, quality assured practices for the predisposal management of nuclear waste including used nuclear fuel declared as waste. In particular the IAEA intends to:

- Support organizations or Member States with less advanced nuclear programmes for predisposal management of nuclear waste including used nuclear fuel declared as waste by facilitating access to (sharing of) the relevant skills, knowledge, management practices and approaches and expertise from Member States with mature operating predisposal management facilities.
- Develop an expanded range of training and demonstration activities with a regional, inter-regional or thematic focus providing hands-on, user-oriented experience and disseminating proven procedures and technology.
- Facilitate cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience among organizations with characterization facilities, in operation or planned, in pursuit of long term knowledge management.
- Create a forum in which experts' advice and technical guidance may be provided on the Agency's waste technology programme.
- Propose Coordinated Research Projects (CRP) for relevant technical needs.

Participation

- Partners: Organisations that have a demonstrated mature expertise in predisposal management of nuclear waste including used nuclear fuel declared as waste, facilities suitable for development, demonstration and/or training and a willingness to share their experience through IPN, will be identified as "IPN Partners".
- Participants: Organisations that have responsibility for the predisposal management of nuclear waste including used nuclear fuel declared as waste, are actively engaged in planning, improving and implementing predisposal management of nuclear waste, and who are willing to participate in the activities of IPN will be identified as "IPN participants".

Activities & Methods of Work

Activities

- Hosting of training courses.
- Organization and delivery of relevant workshops.
- Establishment of a website to facilitate a Community of Practice for predisposal management encompassing:
 - Database of processes
 - Contacts
 - Interactive exchange of information
- Define and coordinate staff exchanges and missions to member locations.
- Provide qualified peers amongst the partners and participants of IPN to support IAEA efforts on peer reviews and technical support.
- Define and coordinate funded research projects, i.e. IAEA (CRP's)

Methods of Work

- Facilitation of IPN goals will be based on a programme of activities determined and approved by members. An inaugural meeting will be held to define the initial

programme and prioritization of listed topics. Thereafter, the achievement of the objectives and fulfilment of the programme will be periodically reviewed.

- Plenary meetings or sessions will be organized for specific members as means of developing IPN goals.
- An advisory committee, representative of IPN, shall be formed by the IAEA; it shall meet as required.
- The IAEA will provide the administrative and secretariat services required by IPN, including meeting facilities in Vienna, maintenance of records and distribution of documents. The IAEA will provide the services of a Scientific Secretary from within the Waste Technology Section.
- The Secretariat will record the outcome of meetings and other IPN interactions.
- The establishment of a website to provide continuity of personnel interaction between meetings and facilitate training and exchange of good practices. The website will provide a forum for exchange of ideas and information. As well, a number of other practical objectives may be served by the website, such as to highlight upcoming events, facilitate on-line publication of technical and visual information, and promote individual contacts and their interests. The IAEA will assure the hosting and manage the updating of the website.
- Where an organisation has a demonstrated experience in a particular topic it may be proposed to lead IPN work in that area. This will enhance both visibility and credibility of their activities promoting their proven technology.
- Specialist groups may be formed under the aegis of IPN. These may cover topics or facility types of common interest. Where appropriate, CRPs or specific working groups may be formed to pursue these topics.
- IPN will take advantage of the approaches used and experience gained within the on-going IAEA Waste Technology Section (WTS) Networks on characterization, geological disposal, remediation, decommissioning and low level waste disposal.

Funding

The approach and experience of the existing WTS Networks funding mechanisms will be used, i.e. IAEA Regular Budget and Technical Cooperation (TC) funding will be appropriately combined.