



Training Workshop on Lessons Learned in the Design Process for Near Surface Disposal Facilities

**Hosted by the
Kingdom of Belgium**

**through the
Belgian Agency for Radioactive Waste and Enriched Fissile Materials
(ONDRAF/NIRAS)
and virtual participation via Microsoft Teams**

Antwerp

26–30 October 2026

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Information Sheet

Introduction

This training workshop on “Lessons Learned in the Design Process for Near Surface Disposal Facilities” is being conducted under the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA’s) International Low Level Waste Disposal Network (DISPONET). Through DISPONET, the IAEA supports the exchange of practical experience among Member States and organizations, strengthening the development of sound national policies, effective disposal programmes, and sustainable solutions for near surface and intermediate depth disposal of radioactive waste.

Member States require disposal facilities as part of the final step in the radioactive waste management. A globally shared set of successfully implemented concepts for the disposal of very low level waste (VLLW) and low level waste (LLW) - aligned with safety, technological, environmental and societal considerations,

as well as applicable IAEA Safety Standards - can assist Member states with developing programmes and those with small inventories in identifying suitable approaches tailored to national conditions. The degree of design robustness depends on the specific characteristics of the selected site. Any design option must account for present and anticipated local factors, including waste inventory, site-specific geological features, environmental impacts etc. Disposal concepts should therefore be adapted to ensure safe facility performance during both operational and post-closure phases.

Established in 2010, DISPONET facilitates communication, cooperation and the sharing of experience among Member States developing disposal solutions for low and very low level radioactive waste, as well as for intermediate level radioactive waste when co-disposal with high level radioactive waste in deep geological repositories is not foreseen.

Objectives

The purpose of the event is to provide participants with practical guidance on the development and refinement of conceptual designs for near surface disposal facilities (NSDF). Emphasis will be placed on how site characteristics influence design decisions, using the Dessel NSDF in Belgium as a case study to illustrate the entire process, from siting and site characterization to design development and construction. The workshop is convened under the auspices of the IAEA's International Low Level Waste Disposal Network (DISPONET).

Target Audience

The event is targeted at professionals from organizations involved in the development, implementation or regulation in programmes, considering VVLW and LLW, as well as to representatives of organizations substantially contributing to sharing experience in the disposal of VLLW and LLW.

Working Language(s)

The working language of the meeting will be English. Interpretation will not be provided. All communications, reviews and discussion papers must be submitted in English.

Expected Outputs

The primary outputs of this Training Workshop will include the minutes of the meeting and a library of presentations. These will encompass:

- Annual updates from Member States on progress in disposal programmes for VLLW, LLW and ILW.

- Records of technical discussions, supported by presentations on lessons learned in the near surface disposal facility design will be processed.
- Proposed structure for a curated global portfolio of successfully implemented LLW and VLLW disposal facility designs, demonstrating safety, technological, environmental, and societal performance consistent with current IAEA Safety Standards and Guides.

Topics

Administrative:

- Roll call and introductions.
- Review and accept minutes from the last annual meeting.
- Administrative update on Network issues.
- Planning for DISPONET Network activities in 2027 and beyond; and
- Questions and/or suggestions on DISPONET Network administration.

Technical:

Country Updates –Network members are requested to prepare a short country update specific to each Member State’s programme in Microsoft PowerPoint. The updates should be uploaded to the DISPONET website at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Country Updates will be discussed in a roundtable format, however, Member States with particularly interesting updates will be afforded extra time if requested. Member States desiring more time should contact the Scientific Secretary directly *at least two weeks prior to the meeting*. Please note that time limits may require a prioritization and acceptance of presentation by representatives of the Steering Committee. Member States accepted for a virtual presentation must provide a prerecorded version of their presentation.

Technical Presentations - The technical component of the meeting will allow Member States the opportunity to present, share and discuss lessons learned, related to the following topics through a series of Technical Presentations:

- Lessons learned and best practice recognised during planning, siting, construction, licensing and closure of VLLW and LLW disposal facilities.
- Identification of driving forces and factors, leading the decisions through the disposal facility development process, namely dedicated to construction and closure.
- Implementing construction, including optimization process and logistical considerations, reflecting lessons learned from other concepts.
- Closure considerations in design decisions: from plans to reality.

Technical Visits - Finally, a technical visit to the waste disposal facility under construction at Dessel will allow members the opportunity to experience first-hand the considerations taken in planning, siting and launching the construction of the near surface disposal facility, including supportive R&D and monitoring.

Please note that visit to the site, including the permission to do so, will be strictly driven by the safety and security rules of the Host.

Participation and Registration

All persons wishing to participate in the event have to be designated by an IAEA Member State or should be members of organizations that have been invited to attend.

In order to be designated by an IAEA Member State or invited organization, participants are requested to submit their application via the InTouch+ platform (<https://intouchplus.iaea.org>) to the competent national authority (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission to the IAEA or National Atomic Energy Authority) or organization for onward transmission to the IAEA by **15 August 2026**, following the registration procedure in InTouch+:

1. Access the InTouch+ platform (<https://intouchplus.iaea.org>):
 - Persons with an existing NUCLEUS account can sign in to the platform with their username and password.
 - Persons without an existing NUCLEUS account can register [here](#).
2. Once signed in, prospective participants can use the InTouch+ platform to:
 - Complete or update their personal details under ‘Complete Profile’ and upload the relevant supporting documents.
 - Search for the relevant event under the ‘My Eligible Events’ tab.
 - Select the Member State or invited organization they want to represent from the drop-down menu entitled ‘Designating Authority’ (if an invited organization is not listed, please contact InTouchPlus.Contact-Point@iaea.org).
 - If applicable, indicate whether financial support is requested and complete the relevant information (this is not applicable to participants from invited organizations).
 - Based on the data input, the InTouch+ platform will automatically generate the Participation Form (Form A) and/or the Grant Application Form (Form C).
 - Submit their application.

Once submitted through the InTouch+ platform, the application, together with the auto-generated form(s), will be transmitted automatically to the required authority for approval. If approved, the application, together with the applicable form(s), will automatically be sent to the IAEA through the online platform.

NOTE: The application for financial support should be made, together with the submission of the application, by **15 August 2026**.

For additional information on how to apply for an event, please refer to the [InTouch+ Help](#) page. Any other issues or queries related to InTouch+ can be sent to InTouchPlus.Contact-Point@iaea.org.

Selected participants will be informed in due course on the procedures to be followed administrative and financial matters.

Participants are hereby informed that the personal data they submit will be processed in line with the [Agency’s Personal Data and Privacy Policy](#) and is collected solely for the purpose(s) of reviewing and assessing the application and to complete logistical arrangements where required. The IAEA may also use the contact details of Applicants to inform them of the IAEA’s scientific and technical publications, or the latest employment opportunities and current open vacancies at the IAEA. These secondary purposes are consistent with the IAEA’s mandate. Further information can be found in the [Data Processing Notice](#) concerning IAEA InTouch+ platform.

Papers and Presentations

The IAEA encourages participants to give presentations on the work of their respective institutions that falls under the topics listed above.

Participants who wish to give presentations are requested to submit an abstract of their work. The abstract will be reviewed as part of the selection process for presentations. The abstract should be in A4 page format, should not exceed 500 words and may extend up to 2 pages, including figures and tables. It should be sent electronically to Vaclava Havlova, the Scientific Secretary of the event (see contact details below), not later than **15 August 2026**. Authors will be notified of the acceptance of their proposed presentations by **31 August 2026**.

Submission of a paper should be confirmed, together with the submission of the main application via the InTouch+ platform, by **15 August 2026**.

Presentation guidelines

Member State updates may be submitted either as standard Microsoft PowerPoint slides or as pre-recorded video presentations. If submitted as pre-recorded presentations, these should be designed using Microsoft PowerPoint in landscape with a slide ratio of 16:9 using the 'Record Slide Show' function and saved as an MPEG-4 video (*.mp4) file, not exceeding 2 GB. This will allow all participants to watch the updates at a convenient time. Further details on pre-recording Member State updates will be provided upon request. Please note that the original Microsoft PowerPoint slides, used to generate video presentations, should also be provided to the Secretariat.

Expenditures and Grants

No registration fee is charged to participants.

The IAEA is generally not in a position to bear the travel and other costs of participants in the event. The IAEA has, however, limited funds at its disposal to help meet the cost of attendance of certain participants. Upon specific request, such assistance may be offered to normally one participant per country, provided that, in the IAEA's view, the participant will make an important contribution to the event.

The application for financial support should be made, together with the application submission application, by **15 August 2026**.

Venue

The event will be hosted by the Belgian Agency for Radioactive Waste and Enriched Fissile Materials (ONDRAF/NIRAS) in Hotel Park Lane Antwerpen, Van Eycklei 34, 2018 Antwerp, Belgium. Logistic note with further information, including booking code, will be sent to participants in due course.

Please note that training workshop includes the site visit to Dessel LLW facility. Specific safety and security measures can be implemented, complying to the facility operator rules.

Visas

Participants who require a visa to enter Kingdom of Belgium should submit the necessary application as soon as possible to the nearest diplomatic or consular representative of Kingdom of Belgium.

IAEA Contacts

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Event Web Page

Please visit the following IAEA web page regularly for new information regarding this event:

<https://www.iaea.org/events/evt2503817>