

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Technical Meeting on the IAEA Network on Environmental Management and Remediation (ENVIRONET)

23 to 27 November 2009

Background

In the past, several projects were developed by the nuclear industry without much attention to environmental issues. As a consequence, a number of legacy sites were created requiring huge resources, both capital and human, for remediation projects. Several ongoing projects have already generated some degree of contamination that will also require further remedial work. Lessons learned indicate that the best approach to be implemented needs to consider environmental remediation under a life-cycle perspective in order to minimize, by effective operational planning, the need for future extensive and costly remediation works.

So far the IAEA has used traditional mechanisms (publications, technical cooperation projects, conferences, etc) to assist its Member States in different areas of atomic energy. However, it has become evident that new strategies may add more value to ongoing efforts. Therefore, the idea of networking has been identified as an efficient mechanism to expedite the process of information transfer and exchange between organizations in different Member States. The IAEA network will base its work on a thematic approach, i.e. key issues will be identified and, as a result, workshops, training courses, site visits and other events will be organized to address the specific needs of different Member States that may or may not belong to the same geographical region in the world.

In the field of environmental remediation, some countries have made more progress and acquired more experience in conducting the cleanup of contaminated sites. They are natural holders of solutions which can be transferred to those countries that possess contaminated sites but present less advanced programs in environmental remediation. The participation of international multilateral organizations in the network will also provide for better coordination amongst them in relation to the assistance provided to Member States.

Purpose of the Technical Meeting

This event represents the kick-off meeting for ENVIRONET. In this meeting, representatives of partner organizations will evaluate and agree on the Terms of Reference developed in two preliminary preparatory meetings, finalize the proposal on the design (including the advisory committee, sponsors and technical subcommittees), discuss and agree on the mode of operation, suggest other partners, identify potential supplementary sources of financial support for the network and elaborate the plan of activities to be implemented by the network (training courses, workshops, etc) in the biennium 2010–2011.

Scope

ENVIRONET will address technology, planning and financing issues, as well as stakeholder involvement in the remediation of contaminated sites and sound management practices of future and active operations to prevent the contamination of new sites, thereby reducing the need for extensive and costly cleanup projects after operation closure. ENVIRONET will cover:

- (a) Active and abandoned uranium mines
- (b) Active NORM-generating activities and abandoned NORM sites
- (c) Nuclear industry facilities
- (d) Land contaminated by nuclear and radiological accidents