Decommissioning & Environmental Remediation

FROM PLANNING TO DECOMMISSIONING: LIFE OF A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

1. PLANNING
   - The key to success in decommissioning is to carefully plan and consider all aspects of the project, including funding and licensing.

2. PHYSICAL & RADILOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION
   - Experts need a clear idea of the characteristics of the facility and the levels of radiation that they expect to encounter.

3. DECONTAMINATION
   - Workers decontaminate materials, which significantly reduces the amount of radioactive waste.

4. DISMANTLING & DEMOLITION
   - All buildings, walls and components are broken down into pieces, organized and recycled. Radioactive waste is treated apart, and sent for storage or disposal.

5. PREPARATION FOR REUSE
   - Workers prepare the site for eventual reuse.

6. FINAL SURVEY & RELEASE FROM REGULATORY CONTROL
   - Once the site is restored, the regulator verifies and confirms that there is no significant contamination; the site can now be reused.

When a facility no longer serves a useful social or economic purpose, it needs to be dismantled and the site made available for other uses. The six phases below highlight the steps in the decommissioning process.