

International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Decommissioning, Environmental Protection and Remediation: Ensuring Safety and Enabling Sustainability



Contribution ID: 160

Type: POSTER

Improvement of Regulatory Framework on Radioactive Waste Management Facilities in Korea

In Korea, as radioactive waste management facilities have gone into full operation, the regulatory body has been revising the Nuclear Safety Act(NSA) to introduce several practices to radioactive waste management facilities including Periodic Safety Review(PSR) to ensure that the safety regulation framework related to assessment and obligation during operation is consistent with international standards. Considering the findings of IAEA IRRS mission and overseas precedents, the NSA is revised to lay a legal basis in 2021 for a PSR to be performed every 10 years by a radioactive waste management facility before the time comes when the first PSR needs to be performed. Major revisions to the NSA include the obligation of the operator to conduct a PSR and submit the results and the authority of the regulatory body to order corrective or supplementary measures when the results of the PSR or follow up actions are not sufficient. Another significant revision to the NSA is to establish a regulatory procedure related to termination of operation (decommissioning of radioactive waste treatment or storage facilities, closure and post-closure institutional control of disposal facilities), with consideration of characteristics of each facility, so as to be prepared for termination of operation of a radioactive waste management facility. The NSA is to be revised in such ways to obtain a regulatory approval for decommissioning of a radioactive waste management facility and to clearly define a procedure and a list of documents to be submitted along with an application for decommissioning approval. Additionally, a closure procedure for a radioactive waste disposal facility, etc. which cover approval for closure, documents to be submitted when an application is filed is to be defined. Through these legislative changes, it is expected that a regulatory framework for all stages of the life-cycle of a radioactive waste management facility will be established.

Key Words: Radioactive Waste Management Facilities, Periodic Safety Review, Decommissioning, Post-closure Institutional Control, Regulatory Framework

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Track Classification: Track 2 - Managing the interrelationships in policy, strategy, legislation, and regulation