

Networking as a tool to improve education and training in environmental remediation of uranium mining and processing sites –the role of the ENVIRONET/CONNECT

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The operation of uranium mining and processing facilities in the past gave rise, in several cases, to sites that now are in need of extensive environmental remediation. They were originated because these operations were not developed under appropriate regulatory control. Some countries have been successful in achieving good progress and results with the remediation of these sites. In some other countries however, remediation works move at a slow pace or are virtually stagnant. The IAEA has a vision that its Member States (MS) will eventually have in place a proper infrastructure and technologies for managing these and other legacies and resolve all related issues in a timely, safe and cost-effective manner. Experience has shown that with appropriate planning and assistance (including financial support) remedial actions are more likely to be implemented. As such the interaction of inexperienced with experienced countries facilitated by the IAEA may lead to better conditions for real implementation of projects and sharing of lessons learned. Countries may be inspired to reproduce (after necessary adaptation to local conditions and constraints) the experience gained by others. Therefore, in addition to the traditional mechanisms of assistance that the IAEA offers its MS the concept of networking has been adopted in an attempt to improve even more the technical support offered by the Agency. One of the created networks is the ENVIRONET –Network of Environmental Management and Remediation - that was established with the objectives of making available the relevant skills, knowledge, managerial approaches and expertise, related to environmental management and remediation. It is also aimed at offering a broad and diversified range of training and demonstration activities with a regional or thematic focus while providing hands-on, user-oriented experience and disseminating proven technologies. Facilitating the sharing and exchange of knowledge and experience among organizations with advanced environmental management and remediation programme in pursuit of good practices, is also in the scope of the network's objectives. Finally, it is also intended to sustain a forum in which advice and technical guidance may be provided. The scope of activities of the ENVIRONET is not restricted to deal with past-operations. The network fosters the adoption of the life-cycle thinking to the planning and implementation of new operations in so that remediation is considered from the very beginning in a way to avoid the generation of future legacy sites and/or the need for implementation of extensive remediation projects. The outreach of the IAEA networks, ENVIRONET included, will be enhanced with the full operation of CONNECT; an online collaboration platform hosted by the IAEA on behalf of its MS that provides a gateway for interconnecting existing and planned IAEA Networks, increasing the participation of individuals and organizations involved in them, and making available additional sources of information that complement existing training workshops and meetings... see attachment

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