A. Background

Two fundamental prerequisites for the development and implementation of a sustainable radioactive waste disposal programme are the provision of realistic, time related cost information for the long term liabilities and the establishment of financing schemes that match these costs as they arise. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is preparing a report on this topic to support Member States in developing cost estimates for all phases of a disposal programme (both geological and surface disposal) and in establishing the corresponding financing schemes.

During a consultancy meeting held in Vienna, Austria, in November 2015 a work breakdown structure (WBS) for a generic geological disposal programme was developed. The WBS lists the activities and items of a geological disposal programme and structures them in a logical way. Drawing up such a WBS is a necessary step in assessing the programme’s cost as disposal programmes contain a very wide range of activities.

A December 2015 meeting of the International Low Level Waste Disposal Network (DISPONET), whose activities take place under the auspices of the IAEA, provided feedback...
on how the approach developed for a geological disposal programme can be used or extended to surface disposal programmes. The meeting concluded that there is no significant difference in the way surface and geological disposal programmes are developed and implemented and that both programmes can be broken down in a very similar way. It was, however, recognized that, although the types of activities in both programmes are similar, their extent and complexity can be very different for surface and geological disposal, leading to big differences in their costing.

The cost guidance developed at that stage concerned the cost estimation of a defined reference disposal programme. Such a reference programme will contain a list of unknowns for which certain assumptions need to be made. These assumptions will result in uncertainties in the cost estimate. In addition, risks are always present that can overturn the reference design and scenario. Such risks prominently exist in waste disposal programmes because these usually stretch over many years, and the conditions — political, societal, economic, scientific, etc. — will change over such long time periods.

A consultancy meeting held in Vienna, Austria, in November 2016 discussed approaches to take account of those uncertainties and risks in the cost estimate. Some disposal programmes apply contingency margins on the different costs of the programme while others have developed a probability approach, which leads to a probability-distributed cost spread instead of a point estimate.

Furthermore, the November 2016 consultancy meeting addressed how the cost estimate can be converted into the amount that is needed for funding the disposal programme. Schemes for funding the disposal programme were also discussed.

The work done so far has been compiled in a draft report with the provisional title Costing Methods and Funding Schemes to Support Programme Planning for Radioactive Waste Disposal.

B. Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Collect participants’ feedback on the draft IAEA report on financing schemes for radioactive waste disposal programmes; and
- Gather and consolidate Member States’ experiences related to mechanisms or schemes for the funding of disposal programmes.

It is in particularly aimed to exchange information on the following topics:

- How is the cost escalation taken account of, or how is the cost estimate discounted to determine the required amount of funding?
- How is the disposal programme funded: State budget, waste fund, etc.?
- How are fund contributions determined?
- Who manages the fund and what is the management like? How is the fund secured? Is there an investment strategy determined for the fund and are there any (regulatory) restrictions on the investment strategy?
In addition, meeting participants are invited to present examples of the proportion of estimated costs for specific aspects of a surface or geological disposal programme, such as the costs for:

- Stakeholder engagement, which can include societal participation in the disposal programme, incentives or benefits to local communities involved in the site selection process, media campaigns, visitor or communication centre, etc.;
- Licensing process or regulatory interactions;
- Site selection process;
- Site characterisation;
- Research, development and demonstration programmes (this might include constructing and operating an underground research facility); and
- Constructing, operating and closing the disposal facility.

Meeting participants are invited to give oral presentations addressing (a part of) these topics.

C. Expected Output

The expected outcome from the meeting consists of:

1. Member States’ feedback on the above-mentioned draft report; and
2. An exchange among Member States on the ways that they fund their disposal programmes and/or specific examples of the cost of (parts of) their disposal programmes.

D. Working Language

The working language of the meeting will be English with no interpretation provided. All communications, abstracts and papers must be submitted in this language.

E. Venue

The meeting will commence on Monday, 22 May 2017, in Vienna, Austria.

F. Visas

Participants who need a visa for entering Austria should submit the necessary application to the nearest diplomatic or consular representative of Austria as early as possible.
G. Organization

Official correspondence with regard to the technical aspects of the meeting should be addressed to the Scientific Secretary:

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