



IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency
Atoms for Peace and Development

Technical Meeting on Planning the Next Generation of Underground Research Laboratories to Support Geological Disposal Programmes for High Level Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel

**Hosted by the
Government of Czech Republic**

**through the
Czech Radioactive Waste Repository Authority (SÚRAO)
and virtual participation via Microsoft Teams**

1–5 June 2026

Ref. No.: EVT2503815

Information Sheet

Introduction

Underground research laboratories have played an important role in the development of geological disposal. They provide access to disposal relevant geological environments and support in situ characterization, testing of engineered barrier systems, and investigation of processes under realistic conditions. Where they are used, they have contributed to strengthening the scientific basis, technical confidence and practical feasibility of geological disposal facilities and furthermore to the training of scientific experts globally.

Traditionally, underground research laboratories have been developed as either generic or site specific facilities. Generic laboratories are developed for research and testing at sites that will not be used for waste disposal, while site specific laboratories are developed at or near a potential geological disposal facility site and may serve as a precursor to facility development. We are now seeing new underground research laboratories being built, as well as the expansion of existing facilities. Alongside this, new concepts are being applied in their development. One example is the area specific underground research laboratory, which is a facility constructed at a site within an area under consideration for a geological disposal facility, or located near a future disposal site, and which may act as a precursor to facility development. An area specific laboratory combines characteristics of both generic and site specific laboratories.

The purpose of this meeting is to hear about these new and expanded underground research laboratories and to discuss what is new and different in their objectives, design, and use, and what this means for the next stage of geological disposal.

This technical meeting is part of an ongoing series of activities organized by the Underground Research Facilities Network to support Member States in their implementation of a geological disposal programme for high and intermediate level radioactive waste.

Objectives

The purpose of the event is to discuss the scope and added value of the next generation of underground research facilities and to review a draft IAEA publication on key experiments in underground research facilities considered from the historical, scientific and technical perspectives.

Target Audience

The meeting is targeted to representatives of organizations substantially involved with the development of underground research facilities and the design and development of geological disposal facilities for high level waste.

Working Language(s)

The working language of the event will be English.

Expected Outputs

A comprehensive proceedings document that captures experiences and lessons learned from Member States about new opportunities presented by the next generation of underground research facilities. The proceedings will form the basis of an IAEA publication on the subject.

Structure

This meeting will take place in Prague, Czech Republic and will incorporate a scientific visit to the Bukov Underground Research Facility operated by SÚRAO. The meeting will take place for 5 working days from the period of 1 to 5 June, 2026. It is expected that participants will spend the 3 of June to travel to the Bukov site, approximately a two-hour travel time from Prague.

Participation and Registration

All persons wishing to participate in the event have to be designated by an IAEA Member State or should be members of organizations that have been invited to attend.

In order to be designated by an IAEA Member State or invited organization, participants are requested to submit their application via the InTouch+ platform (<https://intouchplus.iaea.org>) to the competent national authority (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission to the IAEA or National Atomic Energy Authority) or organization for onward transmission to the IAEA by **10 April 2026**, following the registration procedure in InTouch+:

1. Access the InTouch+ platform (<https://intouchplus.iaea.org>):
 - Persons with an existing NUCLEUS account can sign in to the platform with their username and password;
 - Persons without an existing NUCLEUS account can register [here](#).
2. Once signed in, prospective participants can use the InTouch+ platform to:
 - Complete or update their personal details under ‘Complete Profile’ and upload the relevant supporting documents;
 - Search for the relevant event under the ‘My Eligible Events’ tab;
 - Select the Member State or invited organization they want to represent from the drop-down menu entitled ‘Designating Authority’ (if an invited organization is not listed, please contact InTouchPlus.Contact-Point@iaea.org);
 - If applicable, indicate whether financial support is requested and complete the relevant information (this is not applicable to participants from invited organizations);
 - Based on the data input, the InTouch+ platform will automatically generate the Participation Form (Form A) and/or the Grant Application Form (Form C);
 - Submit their application.

Once submitted through the InTouch+ platform, the application, together with the auto-generated form(s), will be transmitted automatically to the required authority for approval. If approved, the application, together with the applicable form(s), will automatically be sent to the IAEA through the online platform.

NOTE: The application for financial support should be made, together with the submission of the application, by **10 April 2026**.

For additional information on how to apply for an event, please refer to the [InTouch+ Help](#) page. Any other issues or queries related to InTouch+ can be sent to InTouchPlus.Contact-Point@iaea.org.

Selected participants will be informed in due course on the procedures to be followed with regard to administrative and financial matters.

Participants are hereby informed that the personal data they submit will be processed in line with the [Agency's Personal Data and Privacy Policy](#) and is collected solely for the purpose(s) of reviewing and assessing the application and to complete logistical arrangements where required. The IAEA may also use the contact details of Applicants to inform them of the IAEA's scientific and technical publications, or the latest employment opportunities and current open vacancies at the IAEA. These secondary purposes are consistent with the IAEA's mandate. Further information can be found in the [Data Processing Notice](#) concerning IAEA InTouch+ platform.

Papers and presentations

The IAEA encourages participants to give presentations on the work of their respective institutions that falls under the topics listed above.

Participants who wish to give presentations are requested to submit an abstract of their work. The abstract will be reviewed as part of the selection process for presentations. The abstract should be in A4 page format, should extend to no more than 2 pages (including figures and tables) and should not exceed 500 words. It should be sent electronically to Karina Lange, the Scientific Secretary of the event (see contact details below), not later than **10 April 2026**. Authors will be notified of the acceptance of their proposed presentations by **20 April 2026**.

Expenditures and Grants

No registration fee is charged to participants.

The IAEA is generally not in a position to bear the travel and other costs of participants in the event. The IAEA has, however, limited funds at its disposal to help meet the cost of attendance of certain participants. Upon specific request, such assistance may be offered to normally one participant per country, provided that, in the IAEA's view, the participant will make an important contribution to the event.

The application for financial support should be made, together with the submission of the application, by **10 April 2026**.

Venue

The event will be hosted by the Czech Radioactive Waste Repository Authority (SÚRAO) and virtual participation via Microsoft Teams.

Visas

Participants who require a visa to enter Czech Republic should submit the necessary application as soon as possible to the nearest diplomatic or consular representative of Czech Republic.

IAEA Contacts

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Subsequent correspondence on scientific matters should be sent to the Scientific Secretary/Secretaries and correspondence on other matters related to the event to the Administrative Secretary.

Event Web Page

Please visit the following IAEA web page regularly for new information regarding this event:

<https://www.iaea.org/events/evt2503815>