

ERDO Association Annual Report 2025

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Acronyms

Acronym	Expansion
ERDO*	ERDO Association
ARAO*	Slovenian Agency for Radioactive Waste Management
COVRA*	Netherlands Central Organisation For Radioactive Waste
Dekom*	Dansk Dekommissionering
ENEA*	Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development
IFE*	Institute for Energy Technology
NND*	Norwegian Nuclear Decommissioning
ONDRAF/NIRAS*	Belgian National Agency for Radioactive Waste and enriched Fissile Material
TNO*	Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research
MCM*	MCM Environmental Services Ltd.
<i>*ERDO member and secretariat support organisations</i>	
ASTRA	Alternative RWM Strategies
CRP	Co-ordinated Research Project
DBDC	Deep Borehole Demonstration Centre
DG-ENER	European Commission Directorate General for Energy
EG	Executive Group
EURAD	European Partnership on Radioactive Waste Management
FoJARM	Forum on Joint Approaches to Radioactive Waste Management
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IGD-TP	Implementing Geological Disposal of radioactive waste Technology Platform
MIRA	Multinational Infrastructure for Managing Radioactive Waste
MNR	Multi-national Deep Geological Repository
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency
RWM	Radioactive Waste Management
SAPIERR	Strategic Action Plan for Implementation of European Regional Repositories
SIMS	Small Inventory Member States
SMR	Small Modular Reactor
USDOE	United States Department of Energy
WP	Work Package

Introduction

The ERDO Association was established in Vlissingen, the Netherlands, by Dekom (Denmark), NND (Norway) and COVRA (Netherlands). The ERDO Association continues the activities run for over ten years by the broader the ad-hoc ERDO Working Group to promote multinational cooperation in radioactive waste management. The Working Group was established allowing the preparatory work based on the outcome of the Strategic Action Plan for Implementation of European Regional Repositories (SAPIERR) projects, organised by the Arius Association and funded by the European Commission.

The ERDO Association was established as a legal entity in order to allow organizations to work even more closely together on the common challenges in managing radioactive waste safely by sharing knowledge, implementing joint projects and promoting multinational waste management solutions internationally.

Organization

Board and Secretariat

In January 2025, the ERDO Board members were: Ewoud Verhoef (COVRA, President), Ole Nielsen (Dekom, Vice President), Nils Bøhmer (NND, Treasurer), Leon Kegel (ARAO) and Philippe Lalieux (ONDRAF/NIRAS). During 2025, Ole left his role as an ERDO member representative. Dekom representation was taken on by Steen Nordstrøm and Charlotte Hjorth. Ole's role as Vice President on the ERDO Board was transferred to Leon.

The Secretariat is located in the COVRA offices in Nieuwdorp and its work is performed principally by Marja Vuorio (COVRA), who is also responsible for maintaining the ERDO website (www.ERDO.org). Independent consultants Charles McCombie and Neil Chapman act as advisors to ERDO, and Jake Kinghorn-Mills from MCM¹ assists the Secretariat.

Members

As of the end of 2025, the ERDO Association was made up of the following members: ARAO (Slovenia); COVRA (Netherlands); Dekom (Denmark); ENEA (Italy); Fund (Croatia); NND (Norway); and ONDRAF/NIRAS (Belgium), with TNO (Netherlands) and IFE (Norway) as associate members.

Meetings

Three ERDO Association meetings were organised during 2025. A face-to-face meeting was held in Slovenia (Ljubljana on 4th June and Vrbina on 5th June), with virtual meetings held on 13th March, 21st October and 20th November.

Two additional virtual meetings were held as a pre-cursor to the first DG-ENER pilot project workshop (17th February, attended by ERDO Board only) and a follow-up to the second DG-ENER pilot project workshop (20th November, opened to all).

Minutes were sent to participants after the meetings, with summaries circulated to all ERDO members, and digital versions are saved in COVRA's documentation system.

¹ MCM Environmental Services Ltd. is a team of radioactive waste management experts, see <https://mcmenvironmental.co.uk/>.

Projects

SMR Study

Based on priorities outlined by current US administration, United States Department of Energy (USDOE) support for collaboration around any international projects, including with ERDO, was withdrawn. As such, the study on the potential impacts of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) on multinational cooperation at the back end of the fuel cycle was reviewed, and appropriately updated, to ensure its relevancy (given the original completion was in April 2024) in readiness for publication.

The final scope and conclusions of the study were presented by Jake Kinghorn-Mills at the 10th Implementing Geological Disposal of radioactive waste Technology Platform (IGD-TP) Exchange Forum² in November.

The final report is approved by ERDO and MCM and will be published on both the ERDO and MCM websites and supported by ERDO-based outreach in 2026.

MIRA Project

In prior years, ERDO initiated efforts to establish a project focusing on A Multinational Infrastructure for Managing Radioactive Waste (MIRA) through the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA). A 2-month preparatory phase took place in Spring 2025, with formal kick-off on 26th May. ERDO is no longer involved in the project as an Association. Instead, ERDO member nations with a specific interest have joined the project as separate entities. It is understood that, should the DG-ENER DG-ENER pilot project continue into future phases, the MIRA project would become obsolete, due to duplication.

Potential New ERDO Project

Two new ERDO-led projects were proposed in the second half of 2025, with the scope of one of them expanded into a project scoping document titled *“Assessment of potential mechanisms to bring forward an MNR”*. A decision around how to move forward with the scope will be made in Q1 2026.

Collaboration

European Commission Directorate General for Energy (DG-ENER)

ERDO has been fully supportive of the DG-ENER pilot project and its aim to establish a discussion platform for policymakers, currently referred to as a *“Forum on Joint Approaches to Radioactive Waste Management (FoJARM)”* and has engaged with the pilot project as part of its steering committee.

ERDO member representatives have engaged in both planning and execution of the two workshops, which took place in March and November 2025, representing both ERDO and their respective organisations.

Marja Vuorio and Leon Kegel have chaired the scoping of two different workstreams that would be discharged by a FoJARM (focused on policy requirements for collaborative radioactive waste disposal and organisational structures for collaborative radioactive waste disposal, respectively) throughout the development of the pilot project in 2025.

ERDO has volunteered to participate in a FoJARM, through various potential mechanisms e.g. as part of a stakeholder group, as part of a technical support group. ERDO currently expects to play an advisory role on the FoJARM Steering Group. ERDO has stated its plan to continue with independent (ERDO-

² The paper submitted to the IGD-TP 10th Exchange Forum is available on the IGD-TP website here: <https://igdtp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/09-3-EF2025-JakeKinghornMills-Potential-Impacts-of-SMRs-on-Multinational-Back-End-Cooperation.pdf>.

led) projects in parallel to any activities carried out by a FoJARM once established, and ERDO has offered to share progress and outputs of those independent projects with the FoJARM.

Tellus Holdings

ERDO entered into industrial collaborative partnership with Tellus Holdings Ltd. through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in support of promoting achievable and sustainable radioactive waste management solutions for all nations, whether or not they operate nuclear power programmes.

The MoU outlines the agreement of both parties that multinational disposal solutions are essential to the long-term success of global radioactive waste management and that achieving this will require the active engagement of a wide range of stakeholders at both national and international levels. Opportunities for collaboration will be investigated in early 2026.

DeepGeo

Communication with DeepGeo remained in 2025, but with no significant collaboration.

European Partnership on Radioactive Waste Management 2 (EURAD-2)

ERDO Members are involved in different Work Packages (WP) under the European Commission's EURAD-2 Program. The Alternative Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) Strategies WP (ASTRA) is one of the strategic studies WP where several ERDO members and other Small Inventory Member States (SIMS) collaborate in tasks about Long-Term Storage, Deep Borehole Disposal and alternative RWM options for SIMS (including shared solutions). Several ERDO members are interested in continuing their work in the newly proposed Alternative Strategies Research and Development (ASTRAD) WP.

Implementing Geological Disposal of radioactive waste Technology Platform (IGD-TP)

ERDO Members are involved in the IGD-TP, e.g., COVRA is a member of the Executive Group (EG). Marja Vuorio, Leon Kegel and Jake Kinghorn-Mills attended the 10th Exchange Forum in Prague, representing both ERDO and their respective organisations, see Papers and Presentations below.

IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Coordinated Research Project on Deep Borehole Disposal started 2023 and several ERDO members are participating, there are 15 countries and 18 organizations in this Co-ordinated Research Project (CRP).

Deep Borehole Disposal Center (DBDC)

DBDC an independent, nonprofit organization that aims to advance the maturity of the safety case for deep borehole disposal and the technical readiness levels of the disposal concept was launched 2023.³ COVRA, DEKOM and NND decided to participate DBDC work and share the costs of membership

Papers and Presentations

To publicise the ERDO-MCM Joint SMR Project and, also therefore, ERDO more generally, a presentation was submitted to the 10th IGD-TP Exchange Forum conference:

- Jake Kinghorn-Mills, Neil Chapman, Leon Kegel, Charles McCombie, *Potential Impacts of SMR Deployment on Multinational Cooperation at the Back End of the Fuel Cycle*, 10th IGD-TP Exchange Forum, Czechia, 2025, available online: [here](#).

³ A press release for this launch can be found on the Deep Isolation website here: <https://www.deepisolation.com/press/the-deep-borehole-demonstration-center-launches-today-at-waste-management-symposia-in-phoenix-arizona/>.

Marja Vuorio, Leon Kegel and Jake Kinghorn-Mills attended the forum in Prague, Czechia in November 2025, with the latter presenting the study and taking part in the special panel focused on SMRs.

To publicise ERDO, a poster was presented FISA-EURADWASTE'25 (May 12 - 16th):

- Marja Vuorio, Neil Chapman, Charles McCombie, Ewoud Verhoef, European Commission Involvement in Multinational Repository Initiatives, Warsaw, 2025.

Charles McCombie and Neil Chapman drafted an article titled *“Can Europe’s dynamic response to its defence and security crisis be extended to its energy security?”* that links multi-national disposal solutions with energy security and (inter)national security more broadly through the removal of a significant hazard that exists in most countries at this time. It is yet to be published, but publication in a magazine as an opinion piece is targeted for 2026.

ERDO Policy-based Initiatives

The current emphasis in ERDO is on the need to ensure support for Multi-national Deep Geological Repository (MNR) concepts by governments at the strategic and political level. Policy-based initiatives are considered very important on the road towards one or more MNR, and other joint RWM initiatives.

The primary way in which ERDO has aimed to progress this in 2025 is to engage closely with the DG-ENER pilot project, as summarised in *Collaboration* above. However, discussions between government representatives of ERDO Member countries have been ongoing during 2025, with the objective of organising a ministerial-level meeting between European countries that support a dual-track disposal policy that keeps open both national and multinational disposal options. In this framework, engagement between representatives from the Netherlands and Belgium representatives continue to be pursued at a bilateral level.