

# ATAL-BELGOPROCESS JOINT VENTURE

**Contract No. EP/SP/40/02**

## **Low Level Radioactive Waste Storage Facility at Siu A Chau**

**Fourth Environmental Monitoring and Audit Report  
(Operation Phase)**

**Version 2.0**

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Certified By \_\_\_\_\_



(Environmental Team Leader)

**REMARKS:**

The information supplied and contained within this report is, to the best of our knowledge, correct at the time of printing.

The Environmental Team Leader accepts no responsibility for changes made to this report by third parties.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the results of the radiological monitoring work performed between October 19, 2005 and November 16, 2005. The sampling was done on November 16, 2005.

Baseline  $\gamma$  dose-rate at Location A is conservatively estimated to be  $0.21 \mu\text{Sv h}^{-1}$ , which is one of the lowest among all the locations. The investigation level at Location A then becomes  $0.23 \mu\text{Sv h}^{-1}$ . This will prevent unnecessary exceedance of the investigation level due to the wrong baseline level.

The beaches on both sides of the jetty have been formed. Sediment samples were collected on those places. Only one sediment sample was collected on the north-eastern shore.

No non-compliance with the environmental performance requirement was observed.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

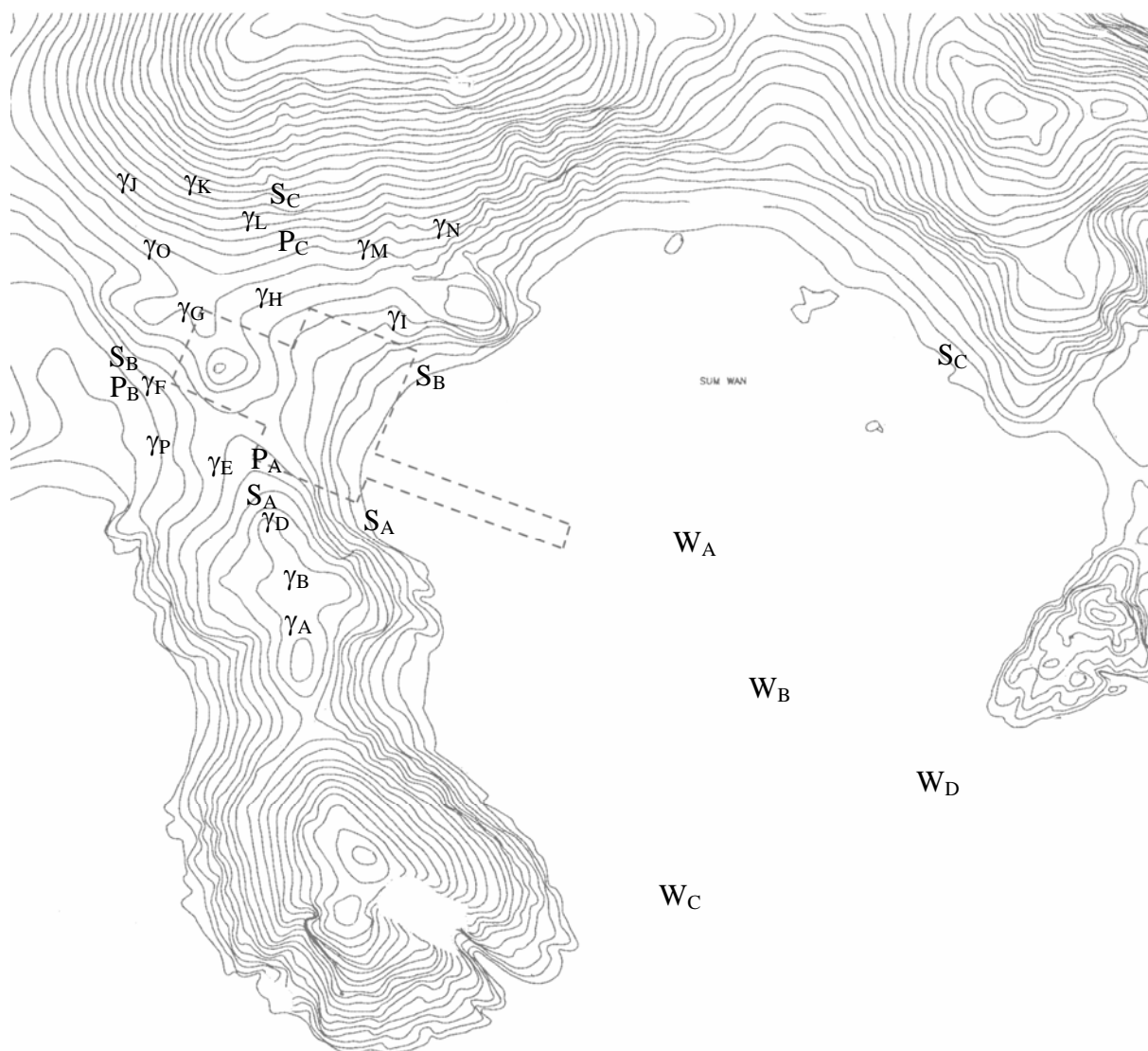
- 1.1 Various industrial, educational and medical facilities in Hong Kong have, for a number of years, used radioactive materials and generated radioactive waste. Most of the existing waste arisings are stored in disused air raid tunnels close to Queen's Road East in Wan Chai. Other arisings are stored temporarily (although in some cases for several years) at the point of use in educational institutions or hospitals.
- 1.2 A consultancy study in 1995 concluded that Siu A Chau was a suitable location for a purpose-built storage facility to which all waste will be transported, placed in stainless steel drums and stored.
- 1.3 In July 2003 ATAL-Belgoprocess Joint Venture Limited (ABJV) was awarded a contract to design, construct, and operate the LRWF at Siu A Chau. Thereafter, the ABJV will transfer the waste management skills for this Facility to Hong Kong.
- 1.4 The LRWF was designed to have a storage vault that can initially store 260 drums of waste, each drum of 275 litres net capacity. The building will also contain facilities for waste reception and repackaging waste, and administering the process. A jetty will be built to provide marine access to the Facility.
- 1.5 The Facility is equipped with various radiation monitors inside the building specially installed for detecting all possible leakage of effluents from the building.
- 1.6 However, it is possible that minute activities may escape from detection and enter the biosphere, or an unexpected incidence would have resulted in a significant release of radionuclide from the Facility. It is one of the objectives of this environmental monitoring scheme to monitor whether in the long-term, the operation of the Facility will cause deterioration to the environment.

### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.7 This is the fourth EM&A (Operation Phase) report, which is also the third report on measurement results of environmental samples taken after the commencement of operation of the LRWF on July 28, 2005. This report covers the monitoring period from October 19 to November 16, 2005.
- 1.8 The requirements of the operation phase monitoring and audit; monitoring scheme and monitoring equipment and procedures have been fully described in the First EM&A (Operation Phase) Report. Please refer to that report for reference.
- 1.9 This report also covers the monitoring of personnel doses, the non-active areas of the Facility and the liquid and gaseous effluents.

## 2. MONITORING RESULTS

- 2.1 The sampling scheme remained unchanged. 15 in-situ ambient  $\gamma$  dose rates were measured. 3 soil samples; 3 sea sediment samples; 3 grass samples; 8 seawater samples from 4 locations at two depths; 3 fish; 1 kg of sea snails and 3 airborne particulate samples were collected and analysed as in previous monitoring. **Figure 2.1** shows the locations for taking various samples.
- 2.2 Ambient  $\gamma$  dose rates were taken at exactly the same locations and would give a true picture of the variation of the radiation environment if there were any.
- 2.3 Soil and grass samples were collected at more or less the same place as for the baseline. Since we need fresh surface soils that would have stored information of fallout since the commencement of the operation, the sampling sites shifted a little bit every time.
- 2.4 The uncertainties of the measurement results are given as standard deviation (SD) or standard uncertainty (SU). SD is given for individual sample and is calculated according to the number of counts recorded and assuming a normal distribution for the counts. SU is reported for each group of samples and it takes into account of the variance between samples. Please refer to the First EM&A Report (Operation Phase) for details.



**Fig. 2.1 Locations of the Sampling Sites**

( $\gamma$ : Ambient gamma dose rate; S: Soil or Sediment; W: Water; P: Air particulates)  
(Grass sampling sites are the same as soil sampling sites)

**Ambient  $\gamma$  Dose Rates**

- 2.5 Baseline  $\gamma$  dose-rate at Location A is conservatively estimated to be  $0.21 \mu\text{Sv h}^{-1}$ , which is one of the lowest among all the locations. The investigation level at Location A then becomes  $0.23 \mu\text{Sv h}^{-1}$ . This will prevent unnecessary exceedance of the investigation level due to the wrong baseline level.
- 2.6 There are changes in ambient  $\gamma$  dose rate with time at the various monitoring locations. However, the variations are within the uncertainties.

**Soil**

- 2.7 Soil samples were collected at 3 locations only, all from the undisturbed areas. These locations correspond to the passive air sampler locations which aim to detect dispersion of effluent leakages, if any, in the prevailing wind directions.
- 2.8 There was a slight increase in the average  $^{228}\text{Th}$  activity when compared to previous results, but it was still below the investigation level.

**Sand**

- 2.9 From this time onward, only one sand sample along the north-eastern shore will be collected. This is because two small sandy beaches have formed at both sides of the jetty and sand from these beaches will be collected. These locations were not sampled in the baseline monitoring.
- 2.10 There was a marked increase in radioactivities in sample C, however they are still below the Investigation Level

**Grass**

- 2.11 Grass samples were collected in locations near to the soil samples. The  $\gamma$ -spectra are identical to the background of the  $\gamma$  spectrometer and do not reveal the presence of any significant  $\gamma$ -emitting radionuclides.
- 2.12 All gross  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  activities are within the normal fluctuation of the baseline values.

**Sea Water**

- 2.13 The same 4 locations were chosen to collect the water samples at 2 depths.
- 2.14 There is no sign of presence of  $\gamma$  emitters and all gross  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  activities are comparable to the baseline levels.

**Marine Organisms**

- 2.15 Three fish were caught at the jetty and sea snails were collected randomly along the shores.



2.16 All gross  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  activities are comparable to the baseline levels.

**Airborne Particulates**

2.17 The sampling period was from October 19, 2005 to November 16, 2005.

2.18 A small amount of both  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  activity was detected in Location A & B, which are still below the background activity in the cloth. However, an increasing trend is apparent.

2.19 Since the airborne particulates are collected monthly, no re-sampling can be done and the next samples will only be available on mid-December.

**3. REPORT ON ELEVATED ENVIRONMENTAL RADIATION BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Investigation Levels for environmental samples have been established and they are given in Appendix 1. The relevant action plan is given in the First EM&A Report (Operation Phase).
- 3.2 Sediment sample C has recorded an increase in  $^{226}\text{Ra}$  and  $^{228}\text{Th}$  activities, but they are still below the Investigation Level.
- 3.3 The passive cloth samplers at Location A & B recorded minute airborne activities and they seem to indicate an increasing trend of collected activities with time.
- 3.4 All other measurement results are more or less the same as those reported in the Third EM&A Report.

#### **4. REPORT ON NON-COMPLIANCE**

4.1 The Action Level and Limit Level (A/L Levels) for non-compliance have been established and they are given in Appendix 1 for easy reference. The relevant Event and Action Plan have been developed. Please refer to the First EM&A Report (Operation Phase) for details.

##### **Dose for Radiation Workers**

4.2 There was no record of exceeding the statutory dose limit as recorded by TLDs.

##### **Dose Rates at Un-controlled Areas**

4.3 No exceedance of the Action/Limit Level was observed.

##### **Liquid Effluent Discharge**

4.4 There was no liquid effluent discharged during the monitoring period.

##### **Airborne Effluent Discharge**

4.5 The total radon released during the monitoring period was estimated to be  $7.8 \times 10^8$  Bq/month, which is about 30% of the discharge limit.

4.6 The discharged  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  activities were also below the discharge limit.

**5. RESULT OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AUDITS**

- 5.1 Radon emission is now under control. But it is anticipated that the situation will get worse when Batch B wastes and hospital wastes are transported to the LRWF in the near future. Hence methods for identifying the high radon-emitting drums and for relevant mitigations are being studied.
- 5.2 No compliant was received during the period.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Limit Level and Action Level**

The Limit Levels for non-compliance with the Environmental Performance Requirements during the Operation are shown in **Table A1-1**.

**Table A1-1 Limit Levels for Non-compliance and Action Levels**

<b>Environmental Performance Requirements</b>	<b>Limit Levels</b>	<b>Action Levels (3/10<sup>th</sup> of Limit Levels)</b>
Dose for radiation workers	1.67 mSv per month	0.5 mSv per month
Dose rate at un-controlled areas	1 µSv per hour	0.3 µSv per hour
Liquid effluent discharge	10 ALI per month	3 ALI per month
Airborne effluent discharge	10 ALI per month	3 ALI per month

**Investigation Level**

With the help of all the internal monitoring, it is unlikely that the effluents will cause any observable increase in the radiation levels in the vicinity of the Facility under normal operation. It is also not anticipated that any significant quantity of the radioactive wastes would be released to the environment under even the most severe natural disasters. Nevertheless when the environmental samples are found to have radioactivities higher than the normal fluctuation of the established baseline levels, some investigation has to be initiated. The levels that trigger the investigation are called investigation levels and they are given in **Table A1.2**.

**Table A1.2 Investigation Levels for Environmental Samples**

<b>Environmental Samples</b>		<b>Investigation Levels</b>	
Ambient $\gamma$ dose rate ( $\mu\text{Sv h}^{-1}$ )	A	0.23 *	3 × SD of individual baseline dose rate
	B	0.25	
	D	0.27	
	E	0.29	
	F	0.28	
	G	0.27	
	H	0.31	
	I	0.32	
	J	0.24	
	K	0.32	

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	L	0.25	
	M	0.31	
	N	0.29	
	O	0.24	
	P	0.29	
Soil (Bq kg <sup>-1</sup> )	<sup>226</sup> Ra	91.7	3 × SU of baseline samples
	<sup>228</sup> Th	128.5	
	<sup>40</sup> K	1497	
	<sup>137</sup> Cs	1.36	
	Other γ emitters		Occurrence in any quantities
Sand (Bq kg <sup>-1</sup> )	<sup>226</sup> Ra	32.0	3 × SU of baseline samples
	<sup>228</sup> Th	38.1	
	<sup>40</sup> K	894	
		Other γ emitters	
Grass (Bq g <sup>-1</sup> )	Gross α	0.22	3 × SU of baseline samples
	Gross β	0.43	
		γ emitters not found in baseline	
Sea water (Bq L <sup>-1</sup> )	Gross α	1.52	3 × SU of baseline samples
	Gross β	9.3	
		γ emitters not found in baseline	
Fish (Bq g <sup>-1</sup> )	Gross α	0.021	3 × SU of baseline samples
	Gross β	0.076	
Sea snails (Bq g <sup>-1</sup> )	Gross α	0.048	3 × SU of baseline samples
	Gross β	0.076	
Airborne particulates (cpm)	Gross α		Occurrence in any quantities
	Gross β		

- SD is the standard deviation of a single sample.

- SU is standard uncertainty of the sample group.

\* Modified investigation level. Please refer to text for detail.