

ITC Objective

The ITC School provides both theoretical and practical training and research in all aspects of science, engineering, decision-making and communication concerned with underground waste management and related environmental issues. It has close links with active underground experimental facilities - in particular, the Grimsel Test Site. It offers professional training at all levels, ranging from academic courses and modules in association with universities around, to summer schools and retreat facilities for think-tanks and policymakers.

World-wide, there are many initiatives to store or dispose of highly toxic chemical and radioactive wastes in deep underground facilities. Geological disposal is seen as the only safe, practical and sustainable solution for many of the intractable residues that inevitably remain after waste minimisation and recycling.

The timescale over which any one of these projects will be developed, operated and subsequently decommissioned is typically several decades. Those who initiate the planning of projects will be unlikely to implement them or see them through to completion. In some countries, there is already a problem of maintaining the expertise base and ensuring that trained scientists and engineers will be available when and where they are needed.

The ITC School provides a focus for the propagation of knowledge and experience and the continued training and education of scientists, engineers and decision-makers to meet the future needs of industrial organisations and government agencies world-wide. The ITC School is not biased towards implementor, regulator, research organisation or any interest group, but provides a balanced service for all, in the interests of environmentally sound waste management.

The impetus to launch the School came from the radioactive waste management sector. However, almost all of the science, engineering and societal issues involved in that sector are mirrored in other environmental areas. Chemical waste and contaminated land management, as well as the broad field of environmental decision-making, require scientists, engineers, managers and regulators with the same key skills.

ITC integrates teaching and experience across all of these fields with an intention to act as the hub of a network of industrial, academic and governmental organisations and to provide a broad service to all of them. It is principally a venue for structured teaching activities and an anchor point for individuals undertaking progressive learning programmes over several years. It is not intended to usurp the functions of any organisation, but to supplement and enhance their activities.

The ITC School is one of several planned training centres that are currently being discussed/developed in Europe, the USA and Japan. The demand is such that a network of facilities would be expected to develop as more projects move from a planning to an implementation stage.