



# **Institute of Energy and Climate Research IEK-6: Nuclear Waste Management Report 2011/2012**

## ***Material Science for Nuclear Waste Management***

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Report 2011 / 2012**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Institute's Profile .....	5
1.1.	Staff .....	7
1.2.	Organization chart .....	8
1.3.	Budget .....	9
2	Key Research Topics .....	11
2.1.	Long Term Safety of Nuclear Waste Disposal .....	11
2.2.	Innovative Nuclear Waste Management Strategies .....	13
2.3.	Structure Research .....	15
2.4.	Solid State Chemistry of Actinides (Helmholtz Young Investigator Group) .....	16
2.5.	Jülich Young Investigator Group: Atomistic Modeling .....	17
2.6.	Characterisation of Nuclear Waste .....	18
2.7.	Nuclear Data for Waste Characterisation .....	20
2.8.	Nuclear Waste Treatment .....	21
2.9.	International Safeguards .....	22
2.10.	Product Quality Control of Radioactive Waste & Packages .....	24
2.10.1	Product Quality Control of Radioactive Waste – High Level Waste from Reprocessing .....	25
2.10.2	Product Quality Control of Low and Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste (LAW/MAW) .....	26
3	Facilities .....	27
3.1.	Single Pass Flow Through Experiments (SPFT) .....	27
3.2.	X-ray Diffraction Analysis .....	28
3.3.	Hot Cell Facility, GHZ .....	29
3.4.	Raman Spectroscopy .....	29
3.5.	Gas Chromatography .....	30
3.6.	Electron Microscopy .....	30
3.7.	Non-destructive Assay Testing .....	31
3.8.	Radiochemical Analytics .....	32
3.9.	Miscellaneous .....	32
4	Scientific and Technical Reports 2011/2012 .....	33
4.1.	UO <sub>2</sub> spent fuel – microstructure and radionuclide inventory .....	33
4.2.	Preparation, structure and stability of Zr(IV)-containing layered double hydroxides (LDHs) .....	38
4.3.	Properties of USiO <sub>4</sub> , coffinite – a high pressure Raman study .....	43

4.4.	Recrystallization of Barite in the presence of Radium .....	48
4.5.	The recovery of minor actinides from high active waste solutions using innovative hydrometallurgical partitioning processes .....	53
4.6.	Synthesis and dissolution kinetics of $ZrO_2$ - $Nd_2O_3$ pyrochlore and defect fluorite ceramics .....	63
4.7.	Monazite as a suitable actinide waste form.....	68
4.8.	Differentiating between actinide borates obtained from normal and extreme conditions. ....	74
4.9.	Efficient methods for computation of actinides: uranium compounds and monazite orthophosphates from first principles .....	79
4.10.	MEDINA – Multi Element Detection based on Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis – a Nondestructive Analytical Technique for the Assay of Toxic Elements and Substances in Radioactive Waste Packages .....	85
4.11.	SGSreco: An improved method for the reconstruction of activities in radioactive waste by segmented $\gamma$ -scanning.....	90
4.12.	Actinide nuclear cross section data for characterization of nuclear waste .....	96
4.13.	Location and chemical bond of tritium and radiocarbon in neutron-irradiated nuclear graphite .....	101
4.14.	Assessment of proliferation risks based on mathematical models.....	107
4.15.	The Cooperation between Forschungszentrum Jülich and the IAEA Safeguards Analytical Service .....	113
4.16.	2011-2012 annual report of PKS-WAA .....	118
4.17.	Disposal of Radioactive Graphite.....	120
4.18.	Evaluation and Parameter Analysis of Burn up Calculations for the Assessment of Radioactive Waste.....	125
4.19.	Non-nuclear applications .....	129
5	Education and training activities .....	131
5.1.	Courses taught at universities by IEK-6 staff.....	132
5.2.	Graduates.....	134
5.2.1	Bachelor, Diploma, Master Thesis.....	134
5.2.2	Doctoral Thesis .....	135
5.3.	Vocational training .....	135
5.4.	Further education and information events.....	135
5.5.	Institute Seminar.....	137
5.5.1	Internal talks 2011.....	137
5.5.2	Internal talks 2012.....	138
5.5.3	Invited talks 2011 .....	140

5.5.4	Invited talks 2012 .....	141
5.6.	Visiting Scientists / Research Visits .....	143
6	Awards .....	145
7	Selected R&D projects.....	147
7.1.	EU projects .....	147
7.2.	More projects.....	147
8	Committee work.....	149
9	Patents .....	153
10	Publications .....	155
10.1.	Publications 2011 .....	156
10.1.1	Journal papers .....	156
10.1.2	Proceedings/Books .....	158
10.1.3	Internal reports.....	159
10.1.4	Poster .....	162
10.1.5	Presentations .....	164
10.2.	Publications 2012 .....	168
10.2.1	Journal papers .....	168
10.2.2	Proceedings/Books .....	171
10.2.3	Internal reports.....	172
10.2.4	Poster .....	173
10.2.5	Presentations .....	175
11	How to reach us.....	185
12	List of figures .....	189
13	List of tables .....	195

The Nuclear Waste Management section of the Institute of Energy and Climate Research (IEK-6) performs fundamental as well as applied research and development for the safe management of nuclear waste covering issues from the atomic scale to the macroscopic scale of actual waste packages and waste compounds/materials.

After the reactor accident in Fukushima (Japan) in 2011, the German Government decided to shut down immediately eight of 17 nuclear power plants. In the following, the German parliament decided with support of a broad societal consensus to terminate nuclear energy production in Germany, with the last nuclear power plant to be shutdown in 2022. Projections indicate that about a total of 17,200 tons of spent nuclear fuel will be generated by 2022. About 300,000 m<sup>3</sup> of low and intermediate level mostly cementitious waste are forecasted to accumulate after shutdown and decommissioning of all German nuclear power plants. The safe management and ultimately the safe disposal of radioactive waste remain grand scientific, political and societal challenges to be met in the next decades. IEK-6 research addresses a number of challenges arising from these new constraints.

IEK-6 research with respect to the **long-term safety of nuclear disposal** includes work on spent nuclear fuel corrosion and the formation of secondary phases – the radio(geo)chemistry of the deep geological repository nearfield, thus contributing to the scientific basis of the safety case. In order to study **innovative waste management strategies** IEK-6 research groups are also focusing on partitioning of actinides and ceramic waste forms. The research programme is supported by a strong “**structure research**” group covering the field of solid state chemistry, crystallography and computational science to model actinide bearing compounds. Application oriented waste management concepts for special categories of radioactive waste are developed by integrating (1) the development of **non-destructive essay techniques**, for which IEK-6 is well known for decades and (2) **waste treatment procedures**. Furthermore, (3) some of this research is guided by the **product quality control group for radioactive waste (PKS)** which is operated by IEK-6 on behalf of the Federal Office of Radiation Protection (BfS) since 1987, to qualify radioactive waste packages in Germany. The IEK-6 **nuclear safeguards group** coordinates on behalf of Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi) the German contribution to the **IAEA safeguards support programme**. JÜLICH will become a member of the **IAEA network of analytical laboratories** (qualification process started in 2013) by combining the analytical capabilities of three units (IEK-6, ZEA-3 & S) in JÜLICH. A **scientific collaboration with the IAEA safeguards laboratories** has been established to develop actinide bearing reference materials for particle analysis within the framework of nuclear forensics.