

All foreign-owned waste at Sellafield packaged and set for return

The work is part of the closing out of commercial reprocessing contracts.

Sellafield received spent nuclear fuel from around the world to be reprocessed at its Thorp plant, generating £9 billion in revenue for the UK.

Waste created during the process remains the property of overseas customers who are contractually obliged to take it back.

Before it's returned, Sellafield converts the waste, known as highly active liquor, into glass. The process, called vitrification, makes it more stable and easier to handle.

It's then packaged into metal containers and 'pre-attributed' at Sellafield's Residue Export Facility. This means it's weighed, cleaned, inspected, and monitored for gamma radiation, and then set down for storage.

The work began in 2008. In total, 1,840 containers have been prepared and cleaned.

Tony Meggs, Sellafield Ltd chairman, visited the plant to celebrate the completion of the process.

He said:

It was great to meet the team who have achieved this important milestone.

This is another significant step towards achieving Sellafield's purpose of creating a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Stuart Pearson, Sellafield Ltd's head of high level waste plants, said:

Our teams have shown resilience, determination and nuclear professionalism to overcome a range of operational challenges, including maintaining operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have delivered on our commitment to our overseas customers.

More than half have been sent back to customers in Japan, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands.

The remaining containers will be sent back to Japan, Germany and Italy over

the next 6 years. Japan is the biggest customer, with half of all containers returning there.

Waste returns are managed by [Nuclear Transport Solutions \(NTS\)](#).

Sam Wilkinson, NTS communications director said:

This is a fantastic achievement that sets a strong foundation for NTS to safely and securely transport vitrified waste to our overseas customers in the coming years.

The way we transport this material is tried and tested, and we know that by continuing to work closely with Sellafield we can continue to deliver good progress in this important programme.

Sellafield's vitrification plant will continue to operate into the 2030s to manage the UK's inventory of highly active liquor.