

Sellafield Ltd confirms contract for waste storage boxes

Sellafield Ltd has awarded a contract to manufacture up to 1,000 stainless steel boxes that will store radioactive wastes retrieved from the Pile Fuel Cladding Silo (PFCS) and Magnox Swarf Storage Silo (MSSS) at Sellafield.

The award marks a move to the second phase of Sellafield Ltd's contract with the British manufacturer Stainless Metalcraft, which won an initial contract to prototype, refine and build a pre-production batch of 50 boxes in 2015.

With the first trial waste retrievals from the PFCS set to begin this year, Stainless Metalcraft will play a key role in the UK's most important hazard and risk reduction jobs.

The firm has successfully established a steady-state production of around 2 boxes per week, and phase 2 of the contract will see Stainless Metalcraft produce a further 1,000 over the next decade.

The boxes are a key enabler of waste retrieval operations at the PFCS and MSSS; some of the world's oldest nuclear stores and 2 priority projects for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

Susan Lussem, Sellafield Ltd supply chain director, said:

Retrieval of wastes from Sellafield's Legacy Ponds and Silos is nationally important work, and we're dedicated to ensuring this is done as safely, quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

Moving the waste into modern storage will mean a huge reduction in the UK's nuclear hazard, but before we can remove the waste we have to be confident we have somewhere safe to put it and that we have a reliable supply of containers for decades to come.

The development, innovation and investment that Sellafield Ltd and Stainless Metalcraft have delivered on this project to date gives us this confidence.

The 3 metre cubed boxes – so called because they can store three cubic metres of waste – are built from duplex stainless steel and are highly engineered to allow any hydrogen to be safely vented. Each box weighs over a tonne and is designed to safely store radioactive waste for at least 500 years.

Once filled, the boxes will be transported to interim stores on the Sellafield site before final disposal in a geological disposal facility.