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## Soil Remediation

### Sources and additional information:

Umweltbundesamt <http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/umweltsituation/altlasten/problem/>

BALSA-GMBH <http://www.balsa-gmbh.at/index.html>

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Remediation of contaminated site and soil in Austria: a success story



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Contaminated sites are old deposits and old sites, which can cause harmful soil changes or other hazards for individuals or the general public. The reasons for this may be improper treatment, storage or deposition of waste or the improper use of environmentally hazardous substances. The accumulation of pollutants in the soil, water and air can lead to considerable effects on human health and on the vitality of the animal and plant world.

The most common dangers are

- contamination of the drinking water with pollutants
- risk of explosion by methane accumulation in rooms

- oral ingestion of harmful substances by direct contact
- the inhalation of dust-bound pollutants
- enrichment of pollutants in crops.

In Austria, old deposits and old sites, which have been reported as suspicious areas and which actually pose a threat to human health or the environment, are entered as contaminated sites in the contaminated sites atlas. The information is available on the websites of the Federal Environment Agency.

The remediation of contaminated sites shows considerable effects on the environment:

- contamination of the ground water is avoided - thus the drinking water reserves are protected
- more than 10 million tonnes of contaminated deposits and subsoils were removed
- the remediation measures to date have included areas of more than 1,000 ha. Formerly contaminated fallow land sites could be reused after restoration measures
- the emission of climatically-important methane gas from old deposits could be prevented with the use of remediation measures. Thus, the remediation of contaminated site makes a significant contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills by more than 80% compared to 1990.

At the international level, the Federal Environment Agency has been the main contact partner for the European Environmental Agency in the area of contaminated sites since 1996. Another area of interest is the participation in projects of the research framework programs of the European Union and co-operation with the accession countries to the European Union on the mediation of environmental standards.

The legal basis for the management of the contaminated site is the old law of ventilation. The controversy on contaminated sites is made known as a regulation in the Federal Law Gazette. The technical basis for the designation in the contaminated site is a risk assessment by the Federal Environment Agency.

If, after the completion of the remediation or safety measures, it is proved that a considerable environmental risk does not arise from a contaminated site, it is being marked as remediated or secured.

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