

# Particles Offshore Clean-up

In August 2008, Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd began work to clean up the seabed where the most hazardous particles are to be found.

During the first two seasons of seabed clean-up, the system used recovered 466 particles from 31 hectares of seabed.

Since particles were first found on the seabed in 1997, over 2300 particles have been recovered from the seabed by divers and remote recovery equipment. A further 481 particles have been recovered from local beaches and the Dounreay foreshore since 1983.

## Key Facts

- Contract was awarded to Land & Marine Project Engineering Ltd to build and operate an underwater particle detection system.
- The remotely operated vehicle (ROV) is lowered onto the seabed from a 60m long surface barge.
- The ROV monitored 23.5 hectares of the seabed, this season, 7 hectares more than planned. Approximately 3 weeks ahead of schedule.
- The ROV is controlled via a 500 metre long umbilical cable and operated by specialist staff aboard the barge.
- The ROV is similar in size to a small bulldozer and features a two-metre wide detection system.
- Detection is concentrated on the seabed where the particle population is highest.
- Data from previous surveys predict that up to 700 particles may be located in the target areas, 200 of these are thought to be in the significant category.
- Particles detected will be retrieved to the barge and then returned to the site for disposal.
- The detection system can detect significant particles buried up to 60 centimetres deep in sediment.
- The ROV system is based on technology developed for the offshore oil and gas industry.
- Around 20 workers employed by Land & Marine, Nuvia and DSRL will work around the clock in shifts on the barge.

