

Waste-to-Energy Research and Technology Council, India (WTERT, India)

The Earth Engineering Center (EEC) at Columbia University in the City of New York decided to team up with the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to set-up Waste-to-Energy Research and Technology (WTERT) Council in India. This association between the above two prime research organizations in the world is established to address the rising interest, increasing investments, to create awareness and, to funnel important decisions related to municipal solid waste management (MSWM) in India in the right direction. WTERT, India would also be added to the WTERT's global charter where it would function as India's window to the world on the entire spectrum of solid waste management issues.

For nearly two decades, the Earth Engineering Center (EEC) of Columbia University has conducted research on the generation and disposition of used materials and products in the U.S. and globally. This research has engaged many researchers on all aspects of waste management. Since 2000, EEC has produced thirty M.S. and Ph.D. theses and published nearly one hundred technical papers. In 2002, EEC co-founded, with the U.S. Energy Recovery Council (ERC; www.wte.org), the Waste-to-Energy Research and Technology Council (WTERT), which is by now the foremost research organization on the recovery of energy and metals from solid wastes in the U.S.

The National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) headquartered at Nagpur and with five other branches in Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai is one of the prime research institutes in India. It is a forerunner in research on solid waste management with dedicated researchers. Research conducted by NEERI in 2005 on MSWM in fifty nine cities is one of the comprehensive studies on this issue. The other important studies on SWM include India's Initial National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The work related to Landfill Gas use as LNG in transport sector as well as new LFG model development is under progress with Texas Transportation Institute, US. The researchers engaged in solid waste management at NEERI are recognized internationally.

WTERT, India will be the latest addition to the global WTERT Council which is already operating in the U.S., Canada, Greece, China, Germany, Japan, Brazil, France, U.K. and Italy. The mission of this council is to identify the best available technologies for the treatment of various waste materials, conduct additional academic research as required, and disseminate this information by means of publications, the WTERT web pages, and periodic meetings. In particular, WTERT strives to increase the global recovery of materials and energy from used solids, by means of recycling, composting, waste-to-energy, and, sanitary landfilling with LFG utilization. The guiding principle is that responsible management of wastes must be based on science and best available technology at a particular location and not on ideology and economics that exclude environmental costs and seem to be inexpensive now but can be very costly in the future. WTERT, India is set-up with the understanding that solutions vary from region to region and is committed to researching locally available technologies.