



Tripartite Partnership Formalised to Establish and Operationalise a Cytotoxic Waste Treatment and Storage Facility in Addu City

Addu City, Maldives, 19 August 2026

The Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy, Addu Equatorial Hospital (AEH) and Waste Management Corporation Limited (WAMCO) today signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish and operationalise a pilot cytotoxic waste treatment and storage facility in Addu City. The signing ceremony was held at Addu Equatorial Hospital.

The Ministry also formally handed over the designated project site adjacent to the Interim Hazardous Chemicals and Waste Storage Facility in Hithadhoo, Addu City, to the contractor, marking the commencement of the construction phase. The facility is expected to be completed and operationalised within 2026.

The initiative responds to a critical challenge identified by AEH in the management of waste generated through chemotherapy services. AEH has provided chemotherapy services since 2019, and reported that approximately 70 kg of cytotoxic waste had accumulated under unsuitable storage conditions because no established local system was available for its treatment and secure storage.

This will be the first dedicated facility of its kind in the Maldives. The pilot will test the proposed treatment method and operational arrangements, with the experience and lessons gained helping to inform potential solutions for other healthcare facilities facing similar cytotoxic waste management challenges across the country.

Cytotoxic waste includes expired or unused chemotherapy medicines and materials contaminated during their preparation and administration. These medicines are designed to destroy cancer cells but if handled or disposed of unsafely, they can expose healthcare workers, waste workers and communities to serious health risks. Leaks or uncontrolled disposal may also contaminate soil and water and harm the surrounding environment.

The facility will introduce a controlled, non-burn approach in which cytotoxic waste is treated using soda lime, securely encapsulated with cement in high-density polyethylene barrels, labelled and stored under controlled conditions. This will reduce the risk of direct exposure and provide safe interim containment, supported by appropriate documentation.

The intervention also contributes to national efforts to reduce release of Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants (u-POPs) to the environment. Unsafe practices such as the open burning or uncontrolled incineration of healthcare waste can release toxic pollutants,

including dioxins and furans. These pollutants can remain in the environment for long periods, travel through air and water, and end up in the food chain.

The MoU provides a shared framework for bringing the facility into operation. The Ministry will coordinate its establishment, AEH will support the safe handling and transfer of cytotoxic waste and the initial operation of the facility, while WAMCO will manage and maintain the facility as part of its waste management services. The ceremony was attended by senior officials and technical representatives from the three institutions.

Construction of the facility is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the ‘Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Maldives (NIP Update)’ project, with technical support from the ‘Eliminating POPs through Sound Management of Chemicals’ project.

The Government of Maldives continues to strengthen medical and hazardous waste management systems and infrastructure across the country to protect healthcare and waste workers, surrounding communities and the environment. This pilot marks an important step towards ensuring that hazardous waste generated through expanding healthcare services is managed safely and responsibly.

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