

0. Introduction and Short History of the Project Development

The basic idea for this project dates back to the mid-80s. Already at that time the aims and main solution basics were fixed:

- Utilization of the Peckensen salt dome for the construction of a cavern field
- Utilization of depleted parts of a natural gas field below the salt dome for the brine injection

Due to permanent energy supply problems and small financial funds (convertible currency) of the GDR economy we searched for an explored salt structure (minimization of the geological risk) on the one side and for the re-use of existing wells for brine injection on the other side at that time.

In 1988, after assessment of all geological data, a first exploration well was drilled in order to clarify the last questions concerning the geological structure and provide sufficient sample material for the rock mechanical studies.

In the same year a brine injection test over a period of three to four months was carried out in an abandoned well.

After the fall of the German wall the idea of constructing a cavern field was resumed. Beside the mentioned geological and technical advantages of the location, other questions had also then got on the agenda. So the location of the project related to the overall German pipeline network had become one new criteria for selection, another one was the rentability of the project under the conditions of a market economy (in the GDR the rentability of the project under economic aspects counted as ensured?).

In 1997 the decision was made to launch the project, and only one year later – on 5 August 1998 – the leaching of the first cavern as a pilot project began. The first cavern had the task to help clarify the last questions concerning the rentability of the project, with the most important risk being the costs for the brine injection process.

Annex 1 gives a summary of the project data.