

Middle East and Central Asia Regional Meeting for Sharing Experience and Lessons Learned in Implementing the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its Supplementary Guidance

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

21 to 25 October 2024

Summary of the Chairperson

1. The Middle East and Central Asia Regional Meeting for Sharing Experience and Lessons Learned in Implementing the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its Supplementary Guidance was held from 21 to 25 October 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates under the chairmanship of Ms Aayda Al Shehhi (United Arab Emirates).
2. The meeting was attended by 42 experts from 16 Member States of the IAEA (Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen). The Scientific Secretary for the meeting was Mr Timothy Hayes (IAEA / Division of Radiation, Transport and Waste Safety, NSRW) and Mr Juan Carlos Benitez Navarro (IAEA / Division of Nuclear Fuel Cycle and Waste Technology, NEFW) and Mr Muhammad Waseem (IAEA/ Division of Nuclear Security, NSNS) served as IAEA Technical Officers.
3. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a platform for States to exchange experiences, lessons learned, successes and challenges in the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources (Code of Conduct) and its Supplementary Guidance. Participation in the meeting and the making of presentations were voluntary, and the meeting was open to IAEA Member States and non-Member States from the Middle East and Central Asia regions, whether or not they had made a political commitment to the Code of Conduct or its supplementary Guidance.
4. The meeting was opened by Mr Raoul Awad, Deputy Director General of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR). In his opening remarks, Mr Awad highlighted the benefits that radioactive sources have on society while noting the need to ensure their safety and security to reduce the likelihood of accidents and/or malicious use. Mr Awad recognized the Code of Conduct as the cornerstone in the global framework for assisting States to effectively manage radioactive sources under an appropriate regulatory framework from cradle to grave. Mr Awad stressed to participating States that the Code of Conduct goes far beyond national borders as adoption and implementation of the Code of Conduct and supplementary Guidance signals to the global community that the State prioritizes the safety and security of radioactive sources both domestically and internationally.
5. The meeting included several presentations by the IAEA Secretariat highlighting the importance of effective implementation of the Code of Conduct and supplementary Guidance on topics related to regulatory requirements, regulatory processes, lessons learned and best practices. IAEA presentations covered topics in relation to safety, security and management options for disused radioactive sources while highlighting cradle to grave and graded approach. Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria, Türkiye, and the UAE shared their experiences through national presentations, while other States actively participated in discussions to exchange their insights. All presented material were made available on a shared and secure web page.

6. The IAEA also conducted a scenario-based exercise on the assessment of Import and Exporting State capacity to effectively manage radioactive sources throughout its lifecycle and presented a case study on the application of paragraph 15 of the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources covering Exceptional Circumstances.
7. Based on the IAEA and invited national presentations, exercise and discussions, the following observations were made in relation to participating States' implementation of the Code of Conduct and supplementary Guidance:

Regulatory Framework:

- 7.1. Most of the participating States reported that they have established regulatory frameworks for the control of radioactive sources with effectively independent regulatory bodies.
- 7.2. Some States reported that they have integrated safety and security requirements for radioactive sources and in some cases reported use of one regulation covering both safety and security.
- 7.3. Most participating States encouraged the IAEA to continue development of the Code of Conduct Self-Assessment Tool for use to identify implementation gaps and assist in enhancing the safety and security of radioactive sources.
- 7.4. Most participating States recognized that this region presents unique regulatory challenges due to various regional conflicts which may require additional IAEA guidance to assist to enhance the safety and security of Category 1 to 3 radioactive sources.
- 7.5. Most participating States reported the use of electronic systems for performing core regulatory functions and for maintenance of the national register of radioactive sources. The IAEA's new Regulatory Authority Information System (RAIS+) was demonstrated and recognized as a comprehensive tool to support Member States in effectively managing their regulatory processes.

Import and Export:

- 7.6. All States reported import and export controls for the import and export of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources, but few States reported having developed and/or implemented procedures which align with the Code of Conduct and Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources (Guidance on Import and Export).
- 7.7. One State reported a process for confirming receipt of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources with the Exporting State Authority. This was highlighted as a good practice given that confirmation of receipt, although requested by many States to include in the Guidance on Import and Export, is currently not a provision.
- 7.8. Most States noted the important role that the national Points of Contact have for facilitating the import and export of radioactive sources and reported the need to actively sustain this role (i.e., include on job description).
- 7.9. Some States reported issues with the transit and transshipment of radioactive sources noting that the Code of Conduct and Guidance on Import and Export lacks appropriate guidance in this regard.

Management of Disused Radioactive Sources:

- 7.10. The Establishment of policies and strategies for the management of disused radioactive sources as outlined in the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources (Guidance on Disused Source) was reported by most States to be implemented under their national radioactive waste management policy and strategy.
 - 7.11. Most of the participating States reported that they are Importing States for Category 1 to 3 radioactive sources and rely primarily on “Return to Supplier” as their main management option for the management of disused radioactive sources.
 - 7.12. Most States that use “Return to Supplier” reported challenges with this strategy and identification of the appropriate financial mechanism. Several State also noted that current financial provisions for the management of disused radioactive sources are often inadequate and have not been adjusted for inflation.
 - 7.13. Some States reported the establishment of long-term storage facilities for disused radioactive sources and the ability to consolidate and condition sources.
 - 7.14. One State presented on extensive use of reuse and recycling of radioactive sources as a management option. It was noted that the topic of reuse and recycling requires additional guidance and/or sharing of information.
8. The regional meeting provided an excellent venue for learning opportunities, fostering connections, and sharing knowledge among participants. The following recommendations have been made based on the meeting observations.

Recommendations:

- 8.1. The IAEA Secretariate is encouraged to continue conducting regional Code of Conduct meetings for facilitating the sharing of implementation experience.
- 8.2. The IAEA Secretariate is encouraged to continue development of the Code of Conduct Self-Assessment Tool to assist States in identifying implementation successes, gaps and enhance the delivery of targeted support.
- 8.3. The IAEA Secretariate is encouraged to highlight the management options for disused radioactive sources at the upcoming Open-ended Meeting.

Chairperson

Ms Aayda Al Shehhi

25 October 2024