

Protecting the public and the environment from radioactive waste in Latin America

The challenge...

In many countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region, radioactive waste is generated as a result of the use of radiation sources in industry, medicine, research and other activities. While adequate control of sealed radioactive sources is ensured during manufacturing, distribution and use, such control may become weaker when the sources become disused. A deficient national infrastructure for radioactive waste management could lead to orphan sources, unnecessary doses to workers, a risk of increased public exposure, economic impacts, an unnecessary increase in radioactive waste generation, a negative impact in the environment and enhanced concerns from the public.

The project...

This technical cooperation project aimed at strengthening national regulatory infrastructures, to ensure that practices and activities in the region involving the generation and management of radioactive waste, including disused sealed sources, are conducted in accordance with international safety standards, ensuring a high degree of protection to the public and the environment.

Representatives from regulatory bodies and operators in the Latin American and the Caribbean region worked hand in hand with the IAEA in this project to overcome their common challenges in the management of radioactive waste and disused sealed sources. The project focused on strengthening the regulatory framework and policy as well as improving the technical capacity of the participating Member States for radioactive waste management. The project also covered control of public exposure in cases of naturally occurred radioactive material, control of scrap metals, authorized radioactive releases and environmental monitoring.

State accession to the *Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management* was also encouraged.

The impact...

Member States from the Latin-American and Caribbean region are now better prepared to face existing problems and new challenges related to the safe management of radioactive waste and disused radioactive sources.

Young staff as well as experienced professionals from twenty Latin American countries enhanced their capacity through on-the-job training and workshops. These countries are now able to develop essential safety documents, such as regulations, safety guidelines for assessment, licencing and inspection of facilities. Prototypes of national policy and strategy, model regulation and guides for the licensing of centralized storage facilities were developed and implemented in participating countries.

Considerable progress was also made in the development and control of radioactive waste inventories. Additionally, an important number of orphan sources were recovered and safely stored with the assistance of international experts. Finally, all countries are aware of the benefits of joining the Joint Convention with five countries becoming parties.



Participants were trained in new radiation safety techniques.