THE REGIONAL PROJECTS FOR THE SAFE TRANSPORT OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

Background

For several years (at least since 2008) the General Conference of the IAEA has recognised the benefits that can be achieved by the creation of regional networks dedicated to strengthening the safety of the transport of radioactive material and has instructed the IAEA’s Secretariat to encourage and promote the creation of such networks.

Several of these networks are currently being developed, notably in Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean Islands. An older network, the European Association of Competent Authorities, in operation since 2008 brings together, on a voluntary and non-legally binding basis, the Competent Authorities / transport safety regulators for radioactive material of the Members States of the European Union.

The Regional Projects for the Safe Transport of radioactive material.

The mission of the regional projects is to foster a coordinated approach amongst the Member states of the region in order to develop a common or harmonised view for the interpretation and implementation of the regulations for the transport of radioactive material in the region. The aim is to provide proactive means of maintaining and developing a consistent high level of safety for the transport of radioactive material in the individual region and also in relation to and with the neighbouring networks.

Objectives

The objectives are fairly simple:

- Develop common understanding and promote more effective interaction between competent authorities at a working level
- Share knowledge and relevant good practices and, potentially, resources
- Identify need and participate in joint working groups with defined outputs
- Establish working links between the neighbouring networks.

Relations with other neighbouring networks for transport of radioactive material

Relations with neighbouring networks for transport of radioactive material will be beneficial for all the parties concerned. Sharing of documents that have been developed in one network is also encouraged

Mode of operation of the networks

The networks will provide opportunities to establish personal contacts in order to promote confidence and mutual respect of competences amongst the members and to set up the network on a proper basis. In the main, exchanges will be carried out by e-mail or video conferences if there is a
need for discussing a particular issue amongst the members (most likely between a few members at a time and not necessary between all members)

Ownership of the network

It is important to stress that these are networks of the participating members, which will decide the issues to be discussed, the timetable of their work, the actions/ measures to be taken as an independent body. In the long run, the networks are not going to be driven by the IAEA, although the IAEA will put at the disposal of the network all necessary support for the successful operation of the network and the European Union and the US have provided financial support for the creation of some networks.

Membership to the networks

Membership to the networks is restricted to regulators for the transport of radioactive material in order to promote open discussion between the members. Membership is on a voluntary basis and is non-legally binding: there is no legal obligation on any participating member to apply/implement documents or approaches that have been discussed/developed in common within the network.

Past meetings

Several meetings have already taken place in the various regions.

For some networks, the first meetings consisted in an introduction to the basic requirements for the transport of radioactive material.

For other networks with a more developed infrastructure, the objectives were to initiate the process for self-assessments of their members’ regulatory infrastructure for transport (TSA7), carry out “peer reviews” of the Self- Assessment exercises and develop plans of actions.

Amongst the actions identified as a first priority and common for most of the networks will be to draw a list of import-export and transit requirements, and develop an approach for compliance inspection and approval of packages. More information could be found on the Share Point sites for the different networks.

Website

The Share Point site of IAEA is providing space for exchange of information. It contained information on the legislation and the country situation regarding the transport of radioactive material of participating members. It contains also the results of past meetings. As the networks are developing more information will be made available in the Share point site. It is foreseen to develop later websites for the individual networks.