# **ReNuAL News Brief**



Winter 2023



### DG, Donors Break Ground on New Labs Building

Sporting hardhats and shovels, 24 Member State and Austrian host government representatives joined Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in ceremonially breaking ground for construction of a new Nuclear Applications laboratories building in Seibersdorf on 3 October 2022.

The event marked a pivotal milestone toward completing the final phase of the ReNuAL initiative, called ReNuAl2. The new building, which is the largest project element of ReNuAL2, will house the Plant Breeding and Genetics, Terrestrial Environmental Radiochemistry, and Nuclear Science and Instrumentation laboratories. The Agency's Nuclear Applications laboratories draw on peaceful nuclear technologies in supporting Member States with training, applied research and lab services to address development challenges in food and agriculture, human health, and environmental management.

Najat Mokhtar, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, told the gathering that, among other important efforts, the laboratories being modernized under ReNuAL2 are "central to the IAEA's work helping Member States build resilience and manage environmental resources in response to a changing climate, among the greatest challenges of our time."

### **ReNuAL2 to Finish with New Greenhouses to Strengthen Climate and Food Security Work**

ReNuAL2 is seeking extrabudgetary contributions urgently needed by March 2023 for procurement of greenhouses critical to the work of three laboratories supporting Member States in addressing 21st Century challenges, including climate change and food insecurity. Greenhouse construction is the final major project element of ReNuAL2 requiring extra funding. Approximately €3.4M is still needed toward the estimated €6M total greenhouse project cost.

Member States are urged to consider timely contributions, which will help control costs and keep ReNuAL2 on track to finish all major project elements by the end of 2024. Any Member State announcing contributions will be honoured at a side event on the margins of the March 2023 Board of Governors Meeting.



DG Grossi with representatives of recent contributors, including Minister of Energy HRH Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud (Saudi Arabia), Minister of Energy Tinne Van der Straeten (Belgium), and Deputy Chief of Mission Louis Bono (United States) at a ReNuAL2 donor recognition side event on the margins of the 66th General Conference.

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Describing the planned greenhouses as a "game changer," Soil and Water Management and Crop Nutrition Laboratory (SWMCNL) Head Gerd Dercon explained they would allow lab staff to replicate growing environments virtually anywhere in the world. This would enable the labs to tailor research activities precisely to the needs of specific regions or Member States, enhancing their impact.

The three labs that depend on greenhouses (i.e., the Plant Breeding and Genetics Lab, Food Safety and Control Lab, and SWMCNL) help Member States sustainably manage soil and water resources, enhance crop yields and resistance to drought, pests and diseases, and ensure food and nutrition safety in the context of a changing climate.



Architect's drawing of planned greenhouses

The new greenhouses will significantly increase space and capacities to train Member State experts and develop new methods in climate-smart agriculture and water productivity, for example in growing high-intensity crops in extreme heat or drought conditions. These new lab capacities will support work aligning with the COP28 focus on climate adaptation. The existing greenhouses are at the end of their service life, requiring frequent repairs and higher maintenance expenditures.

## NPT Delegates Tour Labs – Virtually

DDG-NA Najat Mokhtar led an online "Virtual Tour of the IAEA Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf" for delegates attending an NPT Review Conference side event in New York on 18 August 2022. The event, co-hosted by the United States and Friends of ReNuAL Co-chairs Germany and South Africa, highlighted the NA laboratories' support for Member States in using peaceful nuclear technologies to address development challenges. The event can be viewed at: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1v/k1v4szo0l8

## **Coming Soon! Virtual Laboratory Tours**

The Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications is developing virtual tours of all its 12 laboratories, in order to provide access and highlight the benefits of peaceful nuclear technologies for those who are not able to visit in person. Supported financially by the United States, the Virtual Tours project will be available for selfguided access online in March 2023. For those who are able to visit the labs in person, this can be arranged by contacting: NA-Labs@iaea.org.



Virtual tour screenshot from the Insect Pest Control Laboratory

# Steady Support Positions R2 For Timely Finish

Strong Member State support has kept ReNuAL2 on track to complete all major construction in 2024, notwithstanding recent procurement headwinds. A total of 32 new and repeat donors have provided over  $\pounds$ 23.5 M in extrabudgetary contributions to date, again demonstrating their commitment to the labs and their peaceful uses work. The resource mobilization progress leaves new greenhouses as the last major unfunded project element, for which an additional  $\pounds$ 3.4 M is needed by March 2023.



ReNuAL is an initiative to modernize the International Atomic Energy Agency's Nuclear Applications laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria, that are managed by the IAEA's NA Department. For more information on the greenhouse project, lab visits, or how to contribute to ReNuAL2 please contact: NA-Labs@iaea.org