

CRADLE TO GRAVE: MANAGING DISUSED SEALED RA



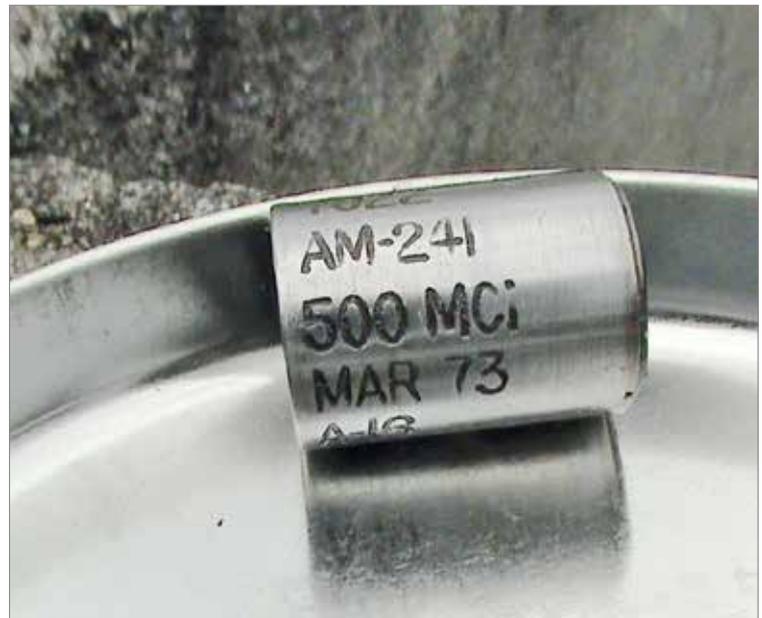
1 Some countries in the Mediterranean region lack appropriate facilities for the safe management or disposal of radioactive waste such as disused radioactive sources. Disused radioactive sources could be lost, stolen or abandoned and thus fall outside the regulatory control.



2 Such loss of control over disused sources presents a significant risk to the public and the environment.



3 At their request, the IAEA's Department of Technical Cooperation is helping countries in the Mediterranean region manage the problem, and reduce the risk of harm, through a four-year project that began in 2012. The European Commission, Spain and the USA have also supported the project with expertise and funding.



4 Sealed radioactive sources or “sealed sources” are radioactive materials that have been isolated/sealed in metal capsules like this one. Sealed sources are used in many fields, such as medical diagnostics and treatment, to control industrial processes, and to sterilize food and medical products.

RADIOACTIVE SOURCES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION



5 Radioactive sources that are no longer in use are still harmful because of the radiation they emit. Finding solutions for the safe and secure long term management of disused sources is, therefore, one of the most important steps in eliminating radiation hazards to the public.



6 Using workshops, one-on-one training, and demonstrations with actual sources, the IAEA interregional technical cooperation project has helped 15 countries around the Mediterranean to develop and implement strategies for the control of sealed sources from distribution to installation, use, disuse, and through to disposal, including storage and transport. This is referred to as cradle to grave management.



7 The project also addresses the governmental and regulatory aspects of source management, helping the countries formulate national policies, regulations, and guidance in line with the IAEA's safety standards and contribute to ensuring overall nuclear and radiation safety.



8 When the project ends in 2016, it will have contributed to strengthening the control of disused sealed radioactive sources on the shores of the Mediterranean, thereby protecting people and the environment.

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