

Institutional donors from three countries contribute to IAEA laboratory modernization

Nuclear research institutions from Poland, Morocco and the Philippines have contributed close to €30 000 towards the ongoing modernization of the IAEA's nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria.

“The work of the IAEA in the areas of radiation protection, radiation dosimetry and nuclear medicine, among others, is crucially important to serve the needs of Member States and for the advancement of science,” said Andrzej Chmielewski, Director General of Poland's Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology. “With our contribution, we hope to add to the IAEA's capacity to carry out research and development and training.”

Besides the institute from Poland, two other institutions have made

contributions: the Philippines' Nuclear Research Institute and Morocco's National Centre for Energy, Science and Nuclear Techniques.

The modernization includes the construction of two new buildings: a new Insect Pest Control Laboratory and the Flexible Modular Laboratory, which will house the Animal Production and Health Laboratory, the Food and Environmental Protection Laboratory and the Soil and Water Management and Crop Nutrition Laboratory. It also includes the enhancement of the remaining laboratories, acquisition of new equipment and infrastructure upgrades.

“We are happy to have such great support from institutions that recognize the importance of the work we are doing in nuclear applications,”

said Andy Garner, Laboratory Coordinator, who is in charge of the laboratory modernization project at the IAEA. “We will continue to foster partnerships with national institutions as well as with private companies to enhance the IAEA's capacity to deliver quality support to our Member States.”

He added that Member States are recognizing new channels by which to contribute to the ongoing modernization work, and that institutions represent one such avenue.

Cash contributions to the modernization, primarily made as extrabudgetary contributions from national governments, have amounted to over €32 million since 2014.

— *By Matt Fisher*

Tackling childhood obesity in Europe with the help of nuclear techniques: IAEA symposium at the European Congress on Obesity

Childhood obesity is on the rise worldwide and is quickly becoming one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). An IAEA project presented at the 2018 European Congress on Obesity (ECO 2018) last May is helping nutrition and health professionals in ten countries in Europe assess body composition using stable isotope techniques. The data gathered will allow policy makers to design interventions to prevent and control childhood obesity.

The symposium titled ‘Assessing body composition for better understanding of risks related to childhood obesity and designing effective interventions’, organized by the IAEA, was held as a parallel session during ECO 2018. Case studies from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Latvia were presented on how the deuterium oxide dilution technique is used

to accurately measure body fat as a risk factor for obesity among school-age children in the respective countries. Information generated from this project will contribute to the formulation of policies and interventions to reduce obesity in Europe. The two countries are already involved in the WHO-led Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative.

Growing burden of childhood obesity

Every third eleven-year-old child in Europe and Central Asia is overweight or obese, according to the WHO. Changes in dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles and lack of physical activity are the leading causes of rising obesity rates. Without interventions, overweight and obese children will likely stay overweight or obese into adulthood and will be at increased risk of developing non-communicable illnesses, such as diabetes and

cardiovascular diseases, at a younger age.

“Closely linked to regional WHO strategies on childhood obesity and on the prevention of non-communicable diseases, the project will provide a much-needed evidence base to formulate policies and design effective interventions,” said Inese Siksnā, a nutritionist at Latvia's Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment.

Accurately monitoring obesity

During the symposium, IAEA experts discussed how body composition can be used as a tool to accurately monitor obesity, and representatives of the WHO and other partners discussed the importance of using accurate data, obtained with the help of stable isotope techniques, in policy making.