

## IAEA Member States get access to radioactive source transport container, thanks to US contribution

The IAEA will now have access to a new container to transport disused sealed radioactive sources (DSRSs) thanks to a contribution from the United States Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA). The contribution was announced during a ceremony at the 63rd IAEA General Conference.

The container, a 435-B Type B(U) model, was designed for the domestic and international transport of various types of radioactive sources and devices. It is certified to transport both very high activity sources, such as teletherapy sources and irradiators, and sources with somewhat less activity, such as those used for industrial gamma radiography and high or medium dose rate brachytherapy.

The container's delivery was marked by a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the IAEA's Headquarters in Vienna.

“One of the major expenses associated with source removals from a Member State is the transport cost, as well as the leasing of an authorized transport container,” said Mikhail Chudakov, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear Energy. “As the IAEA will now have direct access to a licensed container, we will be able to provide a more effective method for the safe and secure transport of DSRSs from users' premises to an authorized recipient for further management.”

Radioactive sources, which are used for a variety of applications in areas such as medicine, industry, research and agriculture, must be managed properly, not only while they are in use but also once they have reached the end of their useful life. This usually involves transporting them to a location away from their place of use.

DSRS management options include interim and long term storage, recycling, repatriation and final



**IAEA Deputy Director General Mikhail Chudakov and U.S. Department of Energy Undersecretary for Nuclear Security Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty cutting the ribbon in front of a 1:10 model of the container for the transport of disused sealed radioactive sources, donated by the U.S. to the IAEA for use in other countries.**

(Photo: S. Krikorian/IAEA)

disposal. Transport is also an important step in DSRS management. For the removal of these sources from a country to an authorized facility, they must be properly transported.

“The IAEA having access to this certified shipping container will facilitate the IAEA's support to ensure the safe and secure management of our DSRSs,” said Marinko Zeljko, Director of the State Regulatory Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Transporting these sources for end-of-life management has been a challenge in many countries due to a lack of suitable containers that are specially licensed for transporting DSRSs. With this 435-B container now available, the IAEA can assist the organizations in charge to transport DSRSs more efficiently.

“Making the 435-B container available further strengthens the cooperation

between the USA and the IAEA, and I hope it is taken as a symbol of our long-term commitment to the IAEA's efforts to advance the proper end-of-life management of radioactive sources,” said DOE Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and NNSA Administrator Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty. “These efforts will not only strengthen global security but will also promote public health and safety.”

Since 2014, the IAEA has supported the removal of more than 60 high activity DSRSs from over 15 Member States. Numerous missions for the consolidation and conditioning of lower activity DSRSs have resulted in thousands of DSRSs being placed in safe and secure storage. In 2018, the IAEA helped five South American countries remove 27 DSRSs in what was the largest such project it had ever facilitated.

— *By Matt Fisher*