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Safety Improvements of an Industrial Irradiation Facility

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The operational experience feedback is a powerful tool to implement corrective actions after an incident. These corrective actions, discussed and adequately defined with the regulator consist in a powerful way to improve the safety of a facility.

Belgium hosts two cobalt-60 industrial irradiators that have now been used for more than 30 years. During this period, the facility dealt with a few incidents that have driven improvements through implementation of adequate corrective actions in the existing design and processes.

The licensee promoted transparency towards the regulator (Bel V and the FANC) and declared all technical events related to safety and radio-protection. The licensee has proposed technical and organisational solutions that were reviewed independently by Bel V to avoid the recurrence of similar incidents. Short term improvements were immediately set-up after the incidents. Mid-term improvements were also implemented. For more complex issues such as the removal of the broken sources, a long term planning was established requiring the participation of a large number of stakeholders: transport, safety authorities, waste disposal facility, ... For this type of issue a long term approach was favoured.

The will of the licensee to declare incidents to safety authorities and to implement adequate corrective actions in agreement with the safety authorities, allows a regular improvement of the facility in order to keep it up to date with safety standards and best practices.

This proactive management of incidents and corrective actions has also strongly increased the safety culture awareness of the operators.

Country/Organization invited to participate

Belgium

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