

The Border Monitoring Working Group Achievements and History

The Border Monitoring Working Group (BMWG) was established in 2005 by the IAEA, European Union (EU) and United States (US) to promote co-operation between its members and serve as a forum for discussion and exchange of information on plans and programs to be implemented by the members in cooperation with the recipient countries to combat the illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material that is out of regulatory control. Since its establishment, the BMWG has proven to not only be an effective tool for avoiding duplication and maximizing and targeting resources, but also a forum to address common technical concerns and jointly develop capacity building tools.

For almost fifteen years, the BMWG has proven to be an effective tool for de-conflicting the assistance provided to partner countries thus avoiding duplication and optimizing resources among the group. Among its many accomplishments, the BMWG has coordinated joint training, workshop and exercise activities; developed a progressive and modular front line officer curriculum and a corresponding train-the-trainer concept; coordinated assessment and deployment activities; shared advances in technical issues through providing a collaborative forum for scientific studies and technology applications associated with combating illicit nuclear trafficking; and promoted fixed and mobile detection while extending the impact of increasingly constrained resources. This joint enterprise has developed robust best practices for planning and delivering international assistance for capacity building related to nuclear security.

In its capacity as the coordination mechanism for issues related to illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials, the BMWG meets twice a year for direct information sharing, coordination and collaboration discussions on respective members' implementation plans and programs. There are two standing subgroups with a pragmatic focus on training/exercises and technical issues. The subgroups meet on the margins of the biannual meetings and also at other times for special topics and related activities as deemed necessary. Those extra-meetings have focused, for example, on the development of joint training curricula, best practice documents, and detection performance evaluation. The sub-groups report activities and findings to the plenary biannual meetings.

Collaborative efforts resulting in concrete coordinated implementation is a basic tenet of the BMWG actions. The BMWG strives for comprehensive assistance to partner countries through integrated planning and coordinated equipment deployment. In some cases the BMWG jointly engages with a partner country and develops an integrated schedule pulling resources and competences from the different international assistance providers, thereby better accommodating the recipient country's priorities and needs. Such joint ventures have resulted in, among other things, shared equipment deployments; that is, one partner procures the equipment while another performs the installation or supports maintenance.

Joint projects for curriculum development and training activities have been especially fruitful. Benefits of such joint training include exposure to complementary approaches, global view of international efforts, as well as concrete representation of coordination and integration. The success of this approach is due, in large part, to the contributions from the EC Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD) and other international organizations, such as the World Customs Organization (WCO) and INTERPOL. These curricula for Front Line Officers and Training the Trainers have been successfully delivered locally, regionally, and within the European Nuclear Security Training Centre (EUSECTRA) established at the EC-JRC sites in Karlsruhe, Germany and Ispra, Italy.

Making sure that equipment functionalities and performance are commensurate with end-users needs and constraints is another issue that the BMWG tackles. The group is involved in the testing of the equipment that is used in EU, US and the majority of countries receiving assistance from BMWG members, for the detection of nuclear and other radioactive materials. The BMWG developed a workshop for assisting partner countries build their own capabilities for evaluating detection equipment. The inaugural session of the workshop was hosted by the IAEA at their laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria in 2018.

The BMWG continues to be well positioned to continue to meet the needs of global security by providing practical, beneficial assistance in an agile manner that is responsive to emerging trends and an evolving understanding of capabilities and gaps.

State

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Gender

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Track Classification: MORC: Building and maintaining nuclear security detection architecture