

International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Decommissioning, Environmental Protection and Remediation: Ensuring Safety and Enabling Sustainability



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APPROCHES IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE AND DISUSED SEALED RADIOACTIVE SOURCES IN ZIMBABWE

Sealed radioactive sources have been used in medical, research and industrial applications in Zimbabwe for socioeconomic development as is the case globally. Low level and intermediate waste and disused sources are generated from these practices every year albeit limited capacity to manage waste. Radioactive waste remains a topic of real concern with stakeholders and the public and the country set out measures to implement effective and safe solutions for the sustainable management of radioactive waste. The country has a return to supplier policy as a requirement for all import of sources. When they become disused, sources are stored at respective facilities pending return to manufacturer. To date the country has over 300 disused sources stored within the licensed holders with the facilities failing to return them to suppliers, these are still under regulatory control. They could not be returned to supplier because they are either legacy sources that were imported before existence of the regulatory body, damaged sources, failure to identify documentation and the supplier or because of the high cost of sending them back. Further, medical waste and other low-level waste from research and industry have been managed by individual waste generators. Noting the vulnerability of such arrangements and the challenges of the return to supplier policy Zimbabwe set out to create a lasting solution to the management of disused sealed radioactive sources and radioactive waste. This include the setting up of a centralized radioactive waste management facility with the assistance of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the facility shall be operationilised in the fourth quarter of 2023. An interim facility that resembles the centralized facility was established to ensure safe management during the phase of establishment of the centralized facility. To ensure sustainability government has proposed through review of the Act establishment of a waste management fund as levied in the licensing fees of the sources to ensure adequate funding of waste management operations and also for remediation measures.

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