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Towards Strengthened Regional Cooperation on Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Material: The ASEAN Information Exchange Arrangement

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Abstract

The dynamic economic growth of ASEAN Member States has led to an increasing use of radioactive materials across multiple sectors, including industry, healthcare, services, oil and gas, and construction. Various regulations on the safety and security of radioactive materials utilization have been enacted and are strictly enforced. Nevertheless, incidents of loss or theft of movable radioactive sources remain a potential risk, particularly during cross-border transport. This challenge poses significant implications for regional nuclear safety and security, thereby necessitating a collaborative approach among ASEAN Member States under the ASEANTOM network. This paper aims to propose a framework for cross-border information sharing on the movement of radioactive materials, based on a review of national regulations, relevant international standards (IAEA), and an analysis of the concept note “*ASEAN Regional Arrangement for Information Sharing on the Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Material*” submitted by Singapore to the ASEANTOM forum. The analysis identifies the need for arrangements that include: (i) an information-sharing mechanism through designated Points of Contact (PoC) among competent authorities, (ii) the specification of Category 1 and Category 2 radioactive sources as the scope of application, and (iii) provisions covering two principal scenarios, namely, the authorized transboundary movement of radioactive sources for export–import, and the interdiction of unauthorized shipments of radioactive material between ASEAN Member States. For the first scenario, information exchange is conducted via email between the competent authority of the exporting State and that of the importing State. For the second scenario, information is exchanged via email between the competent authority of the State of destination and that of the State of origin. The establishment of an ASEANTOM information-sharing platform will enhance oversight of radioactive material movements, strengthen the safety and security of cross-border transport, and reinforce regional preparedness in addressing radiological threats.

Keywords: ASEAN, information sharing, transboundary movement, radioactive material, ASEANTOM