

Strengthening the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials in Costa Rica: Regulatory, Administrative, Technological, and Regional Advances

Dear Members of the Scientific Programme Committee,

It is my honor to submit the following synopsis for consideration as a presentation at the International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Material, organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The proposed presentation will focus on Costa Rica's recent efforts to enhance safety and radiological protection in the transport of nuclear and radioactive materials through regulatory, administrative, technological, infrastructural, and regional initiatives.

Synopsis

Costa Rica has been developing a set of regulatory, administrative, technological, and infrastructural actions aimed at strengthening safety and radiological protection in the transport of nuclear and radioactive materials, in accordance with international standards and the recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This presentation seeks to highlight the progress achieved, as well as the remaining challenges, in consolidating a robust framework for the safe transport.

First, significant progress has been made in the regulatory sphere, particularly through the review and updating of the current legal framework. Among the most relevant initiatives is the joint effort with the Ministry of Health, in its role as regulatory authority, to draft the Technical Regulation on the Safe Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials, which represents a step toward harmonizing national regulations with IAEA guidelines. Furthermore, the promulgation of Executive Decree No. 44653-S (2024), which strengthens the Regulation on Safety and Radiological Protection, are noteworthy. These legal reforms seek to eliminate regulatory gaps and ensure that national procedures are fully aligned with international best practices in radiological protection and safe transport.

In the administrative sphere, significant improvements have been implemented in the procedures related to the issuance of Weights and Dimensions permits. Through coordinated efforts with the Single Investment Window (VUI), the Ministry of Foreign Trade (COMEX), and PROCOMER, the authorization processes and the issuance of permits for the transport of hazardous materials have been optimized. These enhancements have reduced processing times, while increasing transparency and traceability. This modernization directly contributes to risk minimization and ensures that authorized vehicles comply with the established requirements for the transport of dangerous goods.

Third, the Department of Weights and Dimensions has driven a process of technological transformation aimed at strengthening control and enforcement capacities. Notable innovations include the implementation of a digital appointment system, specialized Weights and Dimensions control software, and the acquisition of mobile devices (tablets and smartphones) that facilitate vehicle diagramming and field monitoring. These tools have improved operational efficiency, enhanced the quality of collected data, and reinforced response capacity in the event of contingencies.

Likewise, investments in public infrastructure have been made to ensure more effective controls at strategic locations across the country. Notable examples include the inauguration of the La Julieta weight station and the Integrated Control Centers at Paso Canoas and Peñas Blancas, which strengthen supervision at key border crossings for regional transit, as well as at weighing stations for domestic transport. These facilities, equipped with specialized resources, represent a model of interinstitutional cooperation and modernization of border control processes.

Finally, Costa Rica is actively working on regional coordination with the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) with the goal of moving toward the unification of control criteria for international transit vehicles. This initiative not only enhances safety in the transport of materials, but also contributes to trade facilitation by avoiding duplication of requirements and promoting system interoperability at the regional level.

In conclusion, Costa Rica's experience reflects a comprehensive approach that combines regulation, administrative simplification, technological innovation, infrastructure modernization, and regional coordination.

I sincerely thank the Committee for considering this proposal, and I remain at your disposal for any additional

information

Country or International Organization

Instructions

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