

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON EXPOSURE DUE TO RADIONUCLIDES IN FOOD IN NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has conducted a training workshop on Exposure Due to Radionuclides in Food in Non-Emergency Situations from 21 to 23 October 2025 at the IAEA's Laboratories in Seibersdorf, Vienna, Austria. The workshop was attended by 31 participants from Austria, Argentina, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, the UAE, the USA, and Zimbabwe. The three-day workshops cover lectures and classroom presentations as well as a tour of the Terrestrial Environmental Radiochemistry Laboratory.

The purpose of the event is to introduce the newly developed international guidance on radiation safety in food for non-emergency situations. For the record, the international guidance suggested the use of 'about 1 mSv' of total radionuclides in food. It also aims to facilitate discussions on the potential national and international impacts of the guidance. Furthermore, this workshop also provides a platform for exchanging insights on the opportunities and challenges associated with its application. During this training workshop, participants were given lectures on radioactivity in food in non-emergency situations and an overview of the Codex standard, as well as other international standards' requirements regarding radioactivity in food, including the IAEA, WHO, and UNSCEAR. This is followed by a sharing session by Mr. Kevin Kelleher, an IAEA expert, on Ireland's experiences in establishing the baseline data for exposure due to radionuclides in food, including the diet surveys and measurement and laboratory techniques.



The experts and participants of the training workshop (left) and Member State's presentation (right).

In addition, selected participants were also given chances to present their member state's experiences in assessing radionuclide doses from total diet and individual foods, total diet studies, and measurement techniques of radionuclides, including those of natural origin in food. From Malaysia's perspective, the country has yet to establish legislation / guidelines in place for radionuclides in food or the diet in the country. The legislation is important as it helps to establish safe limits to minimize human exposure and health risks while adhering to international standards. Furthermore, it helps to ensure food safety and consumer confidence. The current food dietary survey conducted by the Ministry of Health (MOH) is a good start to set a radioactivity baseline in food in Malaysia.

One of the key findings of the workshop is the recommendation to apply the reference level of 'about 1 mSv' when managing radionuclides in food. To do so, it is advised to characterize the levels of radionuclides in food before any legislation is put through. Countries are also advised to choose independently which radionuclides are important to screen in foods. Some of the challenges were also identified, such as the misinterpretation of the 95th percentile of the radionuclide dose that could hinder international trade. Other than that, it is also important to have a protection strategy when designing the legislation / guideline in the country with regard to radionuclides in food so as to protect cultural habits and the local economy.



Visit to the Terrestrial Environmental Radiochemistry Laboratory.



Walking around Seibersdorf and Vienna.