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ICRP Committee 4 Meeting (November 22-24 2024 – Iwaki, Japan)

The annual meeting of Committee 4 (C4) took place over three days in Iwaki, supported by the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) and the Fukushima Research Education and Training Initiative (F-REI). It was organised in conjunction with the technical visit to the Interim Storage Facility and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant site on 21 November, a special session on the afternoon of 24 November to discuss the recovery process and the management of contaminated soil in Fukushima with MoE's representatives, and the joint ICRP-F-REI workshop on 25 November. The agenda covered the C4 full work programme, with a particular focus on its development in the context of the review and revision of the next ICRP general recommendations.

Ongoing key Task Groups (TG) activities at a glance

The ICRP C4 continues its robust programme in several TGs, with notable progress in 2024. ***TG97*** has completed the publication process of its report on ***surface and near-surface disposal of radioactive waste***, accompanied by the preparation of a webinar with expert contributions in early 2025. ***TG98*** on ***"Radiological Protection in the Management of Exposure in Areas Contaminated by Past Activities"*** completed the public consultation and incorporated over 200 comments into a revised report that is awaiting approval for publication. ***TG99*** refined its ***"Reference Animals and Plants monographs"*** in a report entitled "*Benchmark Criteria for Environmental Radiological Protection: Broadening the Reference Animals and Plants Approach and related Derived Consideration Reference Levels*". The document has received the green light from the Main Commission to start a pre-consultation of experts/representatives of Specific Liaison Organisations in early 2025. Close cooperation with ***TG105*** on ***"Considering the Environment when Applying the System of Radiological Protection"*** and the development of an IT tool to display data and assist users in implementing new data processing continues. ***TG106*** on ***"Application of the Commission's Recommendations to Activities involving Mobile High Activity Sources"*** focused on revitalising and restructuring its efforts following a brief pause. ***TG114*** advanced a revised application framework on ***tolerability and reasonableness in radiological protection*** for different domains, sharing findings across several conferences. ***TG120*** on ***"Radiological Protection for Radiation Emergencies and Malicious Events"*** made strides in preparing 15 case studies and guidance covering a wide range of radiation emergencies and malicious events, with further dissemination planned. ***TG123*** initiated discussions on the further development of the ***"Classification of Harmful Radiation-induced Effects on Human Health for Radiological Protection Purposes"***, emphasising ethical considerations and the approach to assessing impact of potential revision. Similarly, ***TG124*** focused on refining the ***"application of the principle of justification"***, highlighting ethical considerations and societal and sustainable development aspects to guide justification. ***TG125*** on ***"ecosystem services in environmental radiological protection"*** focused on the complementarity of such approaches, and the distinction from environmental monitoring, with ***TG99*** and ***TG105***, in close interaction with the IAEA and contributing to the Main Commission's reflections on sustainable development. ***TG127*** on ***"exposure situations and categories of exposure"***, is currently focusing on harmonisation of definitions, *e.g.,* the meaning of the application of tolerability, reasonableness and justification for Existing Exposure situations. ***TG128*** on ***"individualisation and stratification approaches in radiological protection"***, focused on variability, uncertainties, and communication. Emerging initiatives include a ***Working Party on Artificial Intelligence***, which is preparing a workshop in 2025 to identify the key challenges for the application of the RP system. A new ***TG*** on ***Ethics*** was submitted (now accepted as ***TG129***) to the Main Commission for establishment in 2025 to examine practical applications in radiological protection in different sectors and scenarios. Collaboration, international engagement, and workshops remain central to these initiatives, ensuring their alignment with evolving ICRP recommendations and global needs.

Identifying other key priorities for the next set of general recommendations

Committee 4 has identified key priorities for the coming years, including progress on dose limits and individual protection through strong interactions between ***TG114***, ***TG124***, ***TG127***, and ***TG128***, and a possible new task group to be established in 2025-2026. Radiological protection in space is under review, with discussions on the outcomes of ***TG115*** on ***"Risk and Dose Assessment for Radiological Protection of Astronauts"*** potentially shaping a roadmap for a new task group on a framework for applying the System in space. Efforts to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals include the creation of a Working Party to develop a position paper. Other areas of focus include the review of the primary objective of the System and related human and environmental objectives, the combination of optimisation and holistic approach, as well as the stakeholder involvement process, the clarification of potential exposures to better address safety in the nuclear sector. Cross-cutting issues related to management of uncertainties, education and training, and communication through dialogue with stakeholders, are still on the agenda.

By the end of the current term (30 June 2025), one virtual C4 meeting will be organised in April or May.