

IAEA laboratory modernization efforts continue to progress

By Matt Fisher

Modernization of the IAEA's nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria, is well under way as the IAEA works to bolster its capacity to better support Member States' needs through applied research, capacity-building and technical services in the applications of nuclear sciences. The initiative is partly financed through the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI).

The modernization initiative includes the construction of two new laboratory buildings. One of these, the Insect Pest Control Laboratory (IPCL), was inaugurated on 25 September 2017 and is planned to become operational at the beginning of 2019. This laboratory will augment the IAEA's ability to provide assistance to Member States in using the sterile insect technique to combat insect pests.

"With new and modern facilities, the IPCL will in the future be able to do even more to help Member States control insect pests that endanger our crops, our livestock and our health," said IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano during the inauguration.

The new Flexible Modular Laboratory building, to be inaugurated by the end of 2018, will house three laboratories — the Food and Environmental Protection Laboratory, the Soil and Water Management

and Crop Nutrition Laboratory and the Animal Production and Health Laboratory.

Member State contributions to the modernization have amounted to more than €32 million in extrabudgetary funding, including over €12 million via PUI. As of February 2018, 33 Member States have provided financial or in-kind contributions. Donors are being recognized with a place on the donor wall, located in the lobby of the new IPCL. The next funding targets will focus on the remaining infrastructure needs, equipment and start-up activities, as well as enhancement of the other laboratories.

Efforts aimed at extending the IAEA's resource mobilization base beyond its traditional donors resulted in a partnership with Varian Medical Systems for a ten-year loan of a linear accelerator (linac) to the Dosimetry Laboratory. Preparatory work for the construction of the bunker to house the linac started in August 2017.

The IAEA has also received a High-Speed Liquid Chromatograph Mass Spectrometer, based on an agreement with Shimadzu Corporation for its donation through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. It will enable the IAEA to better support Member States in research and training on food safety.



Inauguration of the Insect Pest Control Laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria on 25 September 2017 (from left to right): Assistant Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Ren Wang, Resident Representative of Germany to the IAEA Friedrich Däuble, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations Christine Stix-Hackl, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations Darmansjah Djumala and Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations Tebogo Seokolo. (Photo: D. Calma/IAEA)