



**IRPA**

**INTERNATIONAL RADIATION PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**

## **IRPA Strategic Programme for 2016 -2020**

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# IRPA STRATEGIC PROGRAMME FOR 2016 -2020

## 1. Introduction

The International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) is an independent non-profit association of radiation protection professionals joining through national and regional radiation protection societies (the Associate Societies - AS). The defined **Mission Statement** of IRPA is as follows:

***IRPA is the international professional association for radiation protection. Through national and regional Associate Societies and radiation protection professionals, IRPA promotes excellence in radiation protection by providing benchmarks of good practice and enhancing professional competence and networking. IRPA encourages the application of the highest standards of professional conduct, skills and knowledge for the benefit of individuals and society.***

IRPA has the following **Vision**:

***IRPA is the international voice of the radiation protection profession.***

This is a simplified and more focused Vision Statement compared to the first version developed around 2008/9. It acknowledges that we have made significant progress on our aspiration to be recognised by all our stakeholders as the international organisation representing the views of the radiation protection profession in the enhancement of radiation protection culture and practice worldwide.

This document sets out the way forward for the IRPA Executive Council (EC) to lead the development of IRPA over the current four-year cycle up to IRPA15 International Congress in Seoul in 2020. We believe that the IRPA Vision represents a major breakthrough in how we and our stakeholders should see IRPA. Bringing the vision to reality should become the dominant force in all activities over the coming period.

This programme takes full account of the discussions at the Associated Societies Forum (ASF) during the 2016 IRPA14 Congress in Cape Town, the views and priorities of the AS as presented in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary posters at the Congress, and AS views expressed during the IRPA AS Questionnaire exercise. An essential element is also ensuring continuity with the strategy developed in the previous EC period, although with some re-emphasis of priorities.

Our strategic priorities are grouped under four headings:

- To promote our role as the international voice of the RP profession through engagement with other international organisations and professional bodies on the development of the system of protection, giving emphasis to impacts on practical implementation.
- To support the needs of the Associate Societies by developing, enhancing and sharing good practice and high standards of professionalism.
- To support the education and training of RP professionals
- To enhance IRPA Governance and the interface with the Associate Societies.

The above bullets provide the key themes which are proposed as the core of IRPA's programme for the current term. Within these strategic priorities there are many separate work streams. These are developed in the sections below.

## 2. The International Voice of the RP Profession

Fig.1 shows schematically the relationship of the international organizations and professional bodies in the system of radiation protection. It identifies the primary functions of organizations in the four pillars of science, principles, standards and practice, and underlines the organizations having a leading role and a responsibility in these functions.

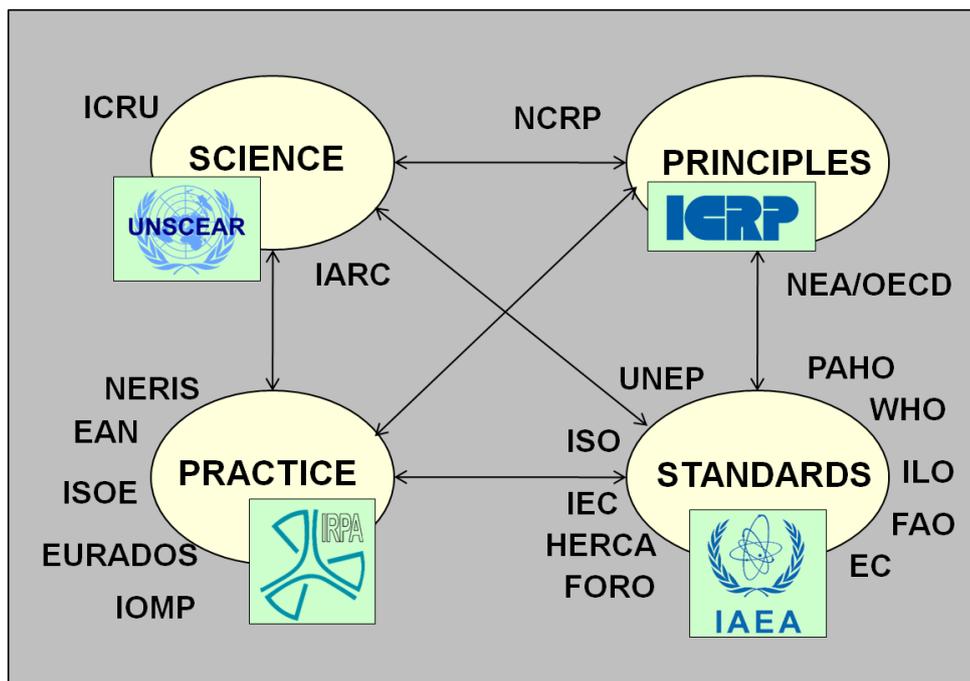


Figure 1: The Four Pillars of Radiation Protection

IRPA has the pre-eminent role in the generic field of 'practice'. Our strength is the involvement of professionals/practitioners across all fields of radiation protection, covering scientific research, teaching, regulation, medical practice, nuclear and non-nuclear industry, national/international policy and all other fields. Through our 18,000 members in 52 Associate Societies covering 67 countries, we encompass the full spectrum of national experiences, from large developed countries through to practitioners working in small developing nations.

It is noted that the diagram is not an exhaustive identification of all the organizations involved in radiation protection worldwide. The diagram also illustrates the evolution of the international organization of radiation protection with the increasing role of professional networks.

There are some specific work streams which aim to support the 'international voice of the profession' and the interface with international organisations, as follows.

### 2.1 Liaison with our partner International organisations

IRPA has both formal and informal relationships with a wide range of international organisations, including many of those identified in Fig 1 above. Given our somewhat limited resources there is a need to prioritise

our efforts, and the following criteria are used for the prioritisation of our interactions with international organizations and professional bodies:

- **Impact on professionalism**  
Any issues which impact on professionalism, qualifications and the competence of RP practitioners, including roles and responsibilities.
- **Impact on the credibility of the RP profession**  
The profession will lose credibility if it is expected to implement proposals which are unclear, impracticable or misaligned with the core values and ethical foundations of radiation protection and the profession.
- **Impact on enhancing the identification and sharing of good practice**

Focussing on areas relevant to IRPA's core interests implies working closely with international organizations and professional bodies of highest relevance to our mission. Such organizations and professional bodies include in particular ICRP, IAEA, IOMP and WHO, as well as other relevant organizations including the EC, ILO, ICRU, UNSCEAR, ICNIRP, NEA, HERCA, FORO, and NCRP.

A precondition for an excellent collaboration with international organizations is a living IRPA 'voice' internally to receive the opinion and experience of the practitioners, which is the strength of IRPA. This requires close and effective interactions with the AS and, through them, the individual members and practitioners. Collectively, we need to become more efficient at developing 'the view of the profession', and this is addressed further in section 5 below.

Lead: An EC member is allocated as the lead interface with each organisation.

## 2.2 Consultation on the system of protection

IRPA is engaged on a consultation on the system of protection. We are seeking input from the worldwide ASs in order to determine the views of the practitioners on what steps should be taken to ensure that it is fit for purpose, credible and able to be presented to, and understood by, all those impacted by radiation. This is vital, both for its own sake and to ensure that IRPA really is able to act as 'the international voice of the RP profession'.

Many AS responded to the initial request for views, which have now been compiled into a 'Phase 2' consultation document to give every AS an opportunity to contribute. Our intention is that our final conclusions should make a contribution in two general areas. Firstly, the views of the professionals should be shared with all those international organisations who are stakeholders in the system of protection in order to help guide its future development where appropriate. Secondly, the views should guide IRPA's considerations on our developing approach to public understanding and the communication of radiation and risk.

One particular issue arising from this consultation is the understanding of what is 'ALARA', and in particular the interpretation of the word 'reasonable'. Further reflection on this topic will be undertaken.

Lead: Roger Coates

## 2.3 Horizon scanning

IRPA needs to develop a mechanism to more effectively identify the key developing issues which could have a significant impact on RP practice. In the main this will involve a close monitoring of the work of the other international organisations, particularly ICRP and IAEA but also many others, to identify the small number of key issues for practical application in the profession. In addition we need to be responsive to issues arising from within the profession as identified through the AS. Our role is to keep practitioners informed

on developments and to work with the other organisations to ensure that practical implementation issues are fully integrated into their considerations.

Lead: Roger Coates

#### **2.4 Enhancing the interface with key international organisations in the medical sector**

Across the world of radiation protection there is a growing awareness, recognition and emphasis on exposures in the medical sector. Whilst we do indeed have some successful work programmes with our international partners in the medical sector, we are aware that we will benefit from some reinforcement in this area. We are establishing a 'medical focus group' comprising of some EC members with a medical background together with invited members with a close connection to current health sector practice. This group will help us to determine our priorities and to forge stronger relationships with the other key players in this sector, particularly IOMP and WHO, together with ISRRT and PAHO.

Lead: Bernard Le Guen

### **3. Good Practice and Professionalism**

High on our list of priorities is to support the needs of the Associate Societies by developing, enhancing and sharing good practice and high standards of professionalism. This can be achieved by developing and publishing good practice guidance on selected topics identified by the profession, and also by working closely with the AS to share good practices which already exist within a society and which could assist other societies. Our intended work in this section is identified below.

#### **3.1 Radiation Protection Culture**

In 2014 IRPA published our Guiding Principles for Establishing a Radiation Protection Culture. All AS are encouraged to develop plans and additional material to support local implementation. It also became apparent that it would be helpful to develop high level guidance specifically for the medical sector. This ongoing joint programme with IOMP and WHO is very active and well supported.

There is also a proposal to explore the development of higher level guidance for the Higher Education, Research and Teaching (HERT) sector, building on existing work in the UK. IRPA will endorse this proposal, and indeed proposals for further work in other sectors, provided that there is wider support from the AS.

Lead: Bernard le Guen

#### **3.2 Ethics in Radiation Protection**

During the previous term IRPA has worked to support the ICRP TG94 on Ethics in Radiation Protection. Exceptionally, ICRP circulated to IRPA Associate Societies a draft report for feedback. This was discussed at the IRPA14 Cape Town Congress. We understand that ICRP will shortly conduct their usual public consultation on a revised draft, having taken into account comments already received. In the light of this exercise, IRPA intends to review our Code of Ethics to consider whether there is a need to strengthen the code to ensure relevant high standards in implementation of radiation protection by the professionals.

Lead: Dick Toohey

#### **3.3 Public Understanding**

During the previous IRPA term we established a Public Understanding Task Group to encourage and support the AS in the development of effective means of enhancing public understanding of radiation risk through the sharing of good practice, ideas and resource material. The EC believes that there is a growing

need and interest for the AS to enhance their programmes in this important area. This is a key but challenging activity which needs further support. The TG will therefore continue, with the objective of broadening from sharing materials to assisting the AS and individual professionals to better understand the challenges of communication, and to be better equipped to meet them.

As a major presence on the international radiation protection stage we believe that the IRPA website should contain some helpful information for wider stakeholders and the public on radiation and risk. However, given that there is considerable literature on this topic readily available, we are not intending to develop significant new material, and we intend to provide user friendly information essentially through links to existing documentation.

Lead: Hiroko Yoshida

### **3.4 Implementation of the Eye Dose Limit**

When the dose limit for the lens of the eye was reduced very significantly there were concerns within the profession over how this change could be implemented. IRPA established an Eye Dose Task Group, which has now completed a second report on how the profession has responded to the revised dose limit, which will outline the key issues and make recommendations. In addition we will publish IRPA guidance on eye dose monitoring and the use of eye protection. This completes the intended work programme, although the EC will maintain a watching brief on this topic.

Lead: Marie-Claire Cantone

### **3.5 Security of Radioactive Sources**

Recognizing the increasing importance of security of radioactive sources, there is a need to encourage the awareness and development of a strong responsibility and knowledge amongst radiation protection practitioners regarding the security of radioactive sources and interlinking this aspect into safety, including the promotion of an enhanced security culture. IRPA therefore established a Task Group on Radioactive Source Security, and whilst there has been some support from the AS, for this to proceed we believe that additional support is needed. We will continue to explore how best to include this topic within our ongoing programme.

Lead: Klaus Henrichs

### **3.6 Young Professionals Network**

We continue to attach great importance to encouraging our young scientists and professionals in the early stages of their career. One key component of this is the establishing of a Young Professionals Network to allow the younger members to exchange ideas, experiences and contacts across borders, to offer mutual support, and make their unique contribution to the work of IRPA. The network leader is appointed (Christoph Stettner from the Austrian Association for RP), and the AS are asked to ensure that their lead young person contact is engaged with this network.

Lead: Alfred Hefner

### **3.7 Sharing Good Practice through the Societies Admissions and Development Committee**

Other activities under this strategic priority of supporting the needs of the AS by developing, enhancing and sharing good practice and high standards of professionalism will continue to be focused under the Societies Admissions and Development Committee (SADC).

IRPA's support for the formation of new national or regional RP societies is a core activity which must continue and be strengthened, in particular in developing countries. Effective societies are essential in supporting the safe and secure use of radiation sources for the benefit of society throughout the world, and

developing professionalism in RP practitioners. The extent to which existing ASs within a region or with a common language can support immature or fledgling societies should be further explored. National, regional and international conferences and meetings should be used as a platform to encourage establishing Associate Societies. It is essential to understand the barriers in setting up Associate Societies and working as an effective society, and ways to get around them. The SADC will lead on this activity, and a core group of SADC members from the Executive Council will review applications for membership of IRPA from new societies.

The Societies Admissions and Development Committee will also lead on the following activities:

**3.7.1 To underpin the future of our profession** through sharing good practice and experiences in promoting RP as a career path and attracting new entrants into the profession, supporting young practitioners and scientists in their work in radiation protection, in their education and training, and in their efforts to become members of the radiation protection community. Close liaison with the Young Professionals Network will support this activity.

**3.7.2 To support the AS in developing effective national interfaces between the AS and the medical sector.** This will link closely to the work to enhance cooperation with the medical sector at an international level (see 2.4 above).

**3.7.3 Implementation of systems for the recognition of competence**, including RPE Certification. IRPA has recently published Guidance on the Certification of the Radiation Protection Expert, and it is appropriate to monitor to see if further support for this is necessary.

**3.7.4 To support the development of AS through the exchange of general good practice and experience**, with particular emphasis on new and smaller societies.

Lead: Eduardo Gallego (all 3.7)

## 4. Education and Training of Radiation Protection Professionals

### 4.1 Education and Training Practices

Our work on education and training will focus on cooperation with international and regional organizations dealing with E&T in Radiation Protection, where IRPA is representing the profession's views. This includes, between others, the IAEA at the global level, EUTERP and ENETRAP in Europe and the AAHP in the USA. IRPA is also co-organizer of the ETRAP conference series; the next one taking place in Valencia, Spain, 30 May-2 June 2017.

Lead: Eduardo Gallego (with Alfred Hefner and Marie Claire Cantone)

### 4.2 IRPA's Congresses

IRPA's International and Regional Congresses represent significant training opportunities for radiation protection professionals. This encompasses the general scientific programme and the Refresher Courses. Through our guidance to congress organisers we are constantly seeking to ensure the highest professional standards for the refresher courses, and we also aim to have the course presentations available to all our members through the IRPA website at the earliest opportunity after each congress. We are also seeking to improve the publication and availability of the full scientific proceedings of each congress in a more timely and consistent manner.

During this current term the Regional Congresses are:

- [Latin America](#), Havana, Cuba, 23-27 April, 2018
- [Asia/Oceania](#), Melbourne, Australia, 20-24 May, 2018
- [Europe](#), The Hague, Netherlands, 4-8 June, 2018 [irpa2018europe.com/]
- [Africa](#), Tunis, Tunisia, 6-9 September, 2018

The IRPA15 International Congress will be held in Seoul, Korea, 11-15 May 2020 .

Lead: EC members as appropriate [Havana – Ana Maria Bomben:  
Melbourne – Hiroko Yoshida, The Hague – Klaus Henrichs, Tunis – Eduardo Gallego]

#### **4.3 Coordination and promotion of AS training activities and associated events**

AS play an important role with regard to the continuous professional improvement of their members. Many AS regularly offer basic and specialised courses, and some have a role in certification of RP professionals in their countries. The distribution of a survey to AS on their education and training activities will help us to prepare a document mapping these activities in order to stimulate the sharing of good practices by AS belonging to the same region of having the same language. The IRPA website can host dedicated space to it.

Lead: Eduardo Gallego and Marie Claire Cantone

#### **4.4 Database of training events**

Work is continuing to establish a searchable database of conferences and training opportunities provided by the AS. Both announcements and resources (presentations, texts, videos, etc.) will be included.

IRPA receives many requests from organisations to promote their training activities and other events. Sadly there are so many of these that it is impracticable to provide publicity for all. We will use the above database to promote events run by the AS, IRPA's congresses and other international meetings that we co-sponsor. Other events can only be promoted in exceptional circumstances.

Lead: Eduardo Gallego

**4.5 Scientific developments update** We are aware that many AS and individual members have difficulty in keeping up to date with the developing science underpinning radiation protection. We will seek to develop a mechanism to share the learning from meetings and seminars attended on behalf of IRPA, possibly in the form of a periodic 'scientific newsletter'.

Lead: Roger Coates

## 5. Enhancing IRPA Governance and the interface with the Associate Societies

### **5.1 IRPA Governance and Regional Engagement**

The IRPA EC is committed to developing proposals to enhance regional engagement in the work of the EC and to provide greater opportunities for all AS to engage effectively at the General Assembly. Proposals will be presented for discussion in time for the 2018 Regional Congresses.

There will also be a general review of our Constitution and Rules to ensure that they are appropriate for the current times. The Rules Committee will be engaged in this activity.

Lead: Roger Coates

### **5.2 Interface and Communications with the Associate Societies**

We are committed to enhancing our communications and interfaces with the AS. This will be undertaken with assistance from the Publications Commission. It is our clear intention to provide a much greater visibility of the work we are doing so that we can secure the greatest involvement of the AS and individual members in our challenging programme. This will include direct feedback to the membership from relevant international meetings where key issues for the profession are under development. For this we will use the News section of our website, the quarterly Bulletin and, where appropriate, direct communication to the AS.

We recognize that the IRPA website is not very user-friendly and needs significant work to provide the AS and individual members with easier access to relevant information.

Lead: Christopher Clement

### **5.3 The 'View of the Profession'**

IRPA is increasingly recognised by our international organisation partners as 'the international voice of the radiation protection profession'. As such we are increasingly invited to present in many international forums, and to comment on documentation under development, with an emphasis on the practitioner's perspective. This presents us with a challenge – what is the 'view of the profession' on a particular topic? The timescales for responding are quite varied – the meeting may be held on a relatively short time, or comments on documentation (e.g. standards) under development may be 120 days, or even less.

Our mechanisms for developing a 'view' therefore need to be flexible. For some issues we can determine the timescale and establish a comprehensive consultation process, for example as for the consultation on the system of protection (see 2.1). On other occasions we can only ask an experienced individual to attend an event on our behalf and use their judgement. We believe that it will be helpful to develop a more formal framework to guide our approach to this challenge.

Lead: Klaus Henrichs

### **5.4 Guidance for the Organisation of IRPA Congresses**

We note in section 4.2 above that the International and Regional Congresses are an important part of IRPA's programme – indeed they are seen as our 'flagship', with many practitioners only having awareness of IRPA through these key events. Over the last two terms we have developed guidance for the organisation of these congresses, but experiences and learning continues apace and we recognise the need to renew and update our expectations and approach in order to assist the organising Associate Societies ensure that the congresses continue to be of the highest standard.

Lead: Klaus Henrichs

## **6. Other organizational matters**

The ongoing activities of IRPA not specifically addressed above will continue as usual, subject to the intention to review the Constitution and Rules as indicated above, including the Sievert Award Committee, the Montreal Fund Committee, the Rules Committee and the General Assembly Arrangements Committee

Approved by the IRPA Executive Council, 31 January 2017.

Roger Coates  
IRPA President  
On behalf of the IRPA Executive Council

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