

2016 ECOSOC Integration Segment:
“Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration”

IAEA Contribution

Based on its role as a scientific and technical organization within the UN family, and as an organisation with longstanding cooperation with many national laboratories and institutes across the world, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has considerable experience in helping to bridge the gap between scientific and technical institutes, and national policy makers. The IAEA also acts to bring together institutes that apply nuclear science and technology, while allowing them to link up with other relevant international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Hereafter, we provide two best practices that demonstrate how the work of the IAEA through its Technical Cooperation Programme contributes to policy innovation and integration for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Bringing together science and policy I: Soil example

As well as providing the medium for plant growth and food production, soil is essential to the supply of clean water, and for resilience to flood and drought. Soil is also the largest store of terrestrial carbon. Its preservation contributes to climate change adaptation and mitigation, while its erosion can lead to the damage or even destruction of infrastructure. Proper defence and management of soil therefore have implications for SDGs 2, 6, 13 and 15. The IAEA has worked collaboratively through its joint FAO/IAEA Division for Food and Agriculture and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to bring nuclear science to use for improved evidence-based planning and decision-making. By supporting national technical institutes, the IAEA has brought techniques for understanding soil erosion patterns and the effects of land management initiatives to the attention of decision makers. In doing so, IAEA has also enabled scientific and technical institutes to play a greater role with respect to planning and understanding the effects of national programmes and policies. Currently, there are about 50 national, regional and interregional TC projects in the field of water and soil management. A regional project on assessing soil erosion using radionuclides in the Asia & Pacific region, for example, has provided the scientific basis for the development of soil conservation strategies that enable policy makers and end users to counter further soil loss through appropriate measures such as terracing, mulching, tilling less and planting cover crops. This has resulted in the reduction of soil erosion by up to 50% in some sites in five Asian countries.

Bringing together science and policy II: Nutrition example

The increasing prevalence of childhood obesity in Latin America has been a cause for concern. In Chile, the IAEA has been working with the University of Chile, Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology (INTA), to address malnutrition in the country since 1997. At INTA, the Energy Metabolism and Stable Isotopes Laboratory (EMSIL) was established in 1998 to provide analytical services, in particular as they relate to assessing body composition, infant feeding practices and total energy expenditure. EMSIL has since become a regional centre of excellence, providing analytical services to the region. A pilot study focussed on energy expenditure in children, aged 4-5 years, attending day care centres in Santiago. The children had an energy intake of 10% over recommended values and they were also found to be physically inactive. An intervention programme was developed and evaluated as part of two IAEA-support nutrition projects between 2005 and 2012, supported by the Ministry of Health. Subsequently, a physical activity programme was incorporated into the curriculum of day care centres in half of the country, and, as a result, obesity in preschool children was reduced from 10.4% in 2000 to 8.4% in 2010.