IAEA Input to part II of the report of the Secretary General on oceans and the law of the sea

As nuclear technologies are increasingly being used to monitor and to protect the environment, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) provides, inter alia, support to its Member States to develop and improve the relevant nuclear and isotope-based tools and techniques. This support is provided by the IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco as well as through the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme.

The IAEA Environment Laboratories are developing analytical methods to assist Member States laboratories and Regional Seas Conventions to accurately measure radionuclides, organic contaminants (including Persistent Organic Compounds – POPs) and hazardous trace elements, such as mercury. Monitoring the concentrations of these contaminants in environmental matrices is an obligation for Member States, in the framework of Global Conventions, such as the Stockholm Convention on POPs and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Furthermore, through the production of Certified Reference Materials, the organisation of Interlaboratory Comparisons and Proficiency Tests and the organisation of Regional and National Training Courses, the IAEA assists Member States in producing quality assured data on hazardous contaminants in marine samples, which is essential information for accurately assessing pollution status and trends in the coastal and marine environment. Quality assured data is a prerequisite for the drafting of action plans and measures to protect the oceans, to assure the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services and to enhance human health and prosperity.