

NORM Transportation in the Port of Antwerp

From Megaports to a special-purpose measurement methodology

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Federale
Overheidsdienst
FINANCIËN

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met steun van het
Agentschap Ondernemen





Outline

- Megaports project – Port of Antwerp
 - Procedures
 - Conclusions
- NuTeC-NORM project
 - Project objectives
 - NORM Inspection Database
 - Measurement methodology
 - Case studies at companies
- Discussion & Outlook



Megaports Project

- US Government initiative
- Nuclear detection equipment in ports
- Track nuclear smuggling
- NuTeC
 - Support for Belgian Customs
 - Radiological study of container transport



NORM in the Port of Antwerp: Procedure – Primary Inspection

- 3-phase inspection
- Primary inspection
 - Entrance gate
 - 4 plastic scintillation detectors (γ) and neutron detector
 - Documents check
 - Alert: 3 (legally) accepted possibilities
 - Licensed transport
 - Error in measurement (e.g. sudden high BG)
 - **NORM beneath acceptable limit!**
 - Otherwise → secondary inspection

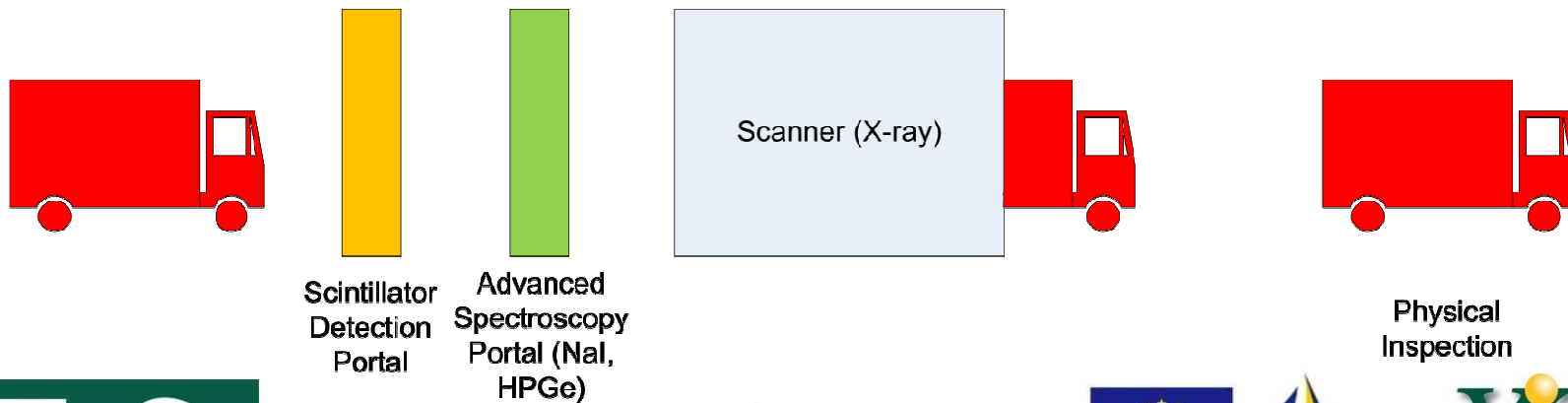
NORM in the Port of Antwerp: Procedure – Primary Inspection



NORM in the Port of Antwerp: Procedure – Secondary inspection

○ Secondary inspection

- Lorry is sent to Central Alert Station (CAS)
- Extra measurements
 - 4 larger plastic scintillator detectors (γ) and neutron detector
 - Advanced Spectroscopy Portal (NaI or HPGe)
 - X-ray scanner (examine content)
 - Physical inspection





NORM in the Port of Antwerp: Procedure – Ternary inspection

- Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC) becomes owner of the situation

- FANC determines further steps in agreement with radiation experts



Conclusions Megaports project

- NORM cause of many alarms
- A lot of secondary inspections are NORM-related
- BSS draft: legislation based on activity concentration
 - U-238 & Th-232 → 1 Bq·g⁻¹
 - K-40 → 10 Bq·g⁻¹
- Need for measurement methodology
 - Determine whether activity concentration is below the limits
 - Avoid sample analysis if possible



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“NuTeC – NORM” project

- New project:
 - *“Knowledge diffusion” regarding Natural Occurring Radioactive Materials by supporting the Flemish Non-Nuclear industry. Preparing companies for future European directives.*

- The roots of the project:
 - **1st Workshop of the European ALARA Network for NORM**
 - **Megaports project (a lot of NORM is detected!)**

- Duration of the project: 15/12/08 – 14/12/10

NuTeC-NORM project objectives:

1. Making an inventory of NORM in the Port of Antwerp:
primary + secondary inspections



NuTeC-NORM project objectives:

2. Developing a tool to estimate the activity concentration of NORM in large quantity containers



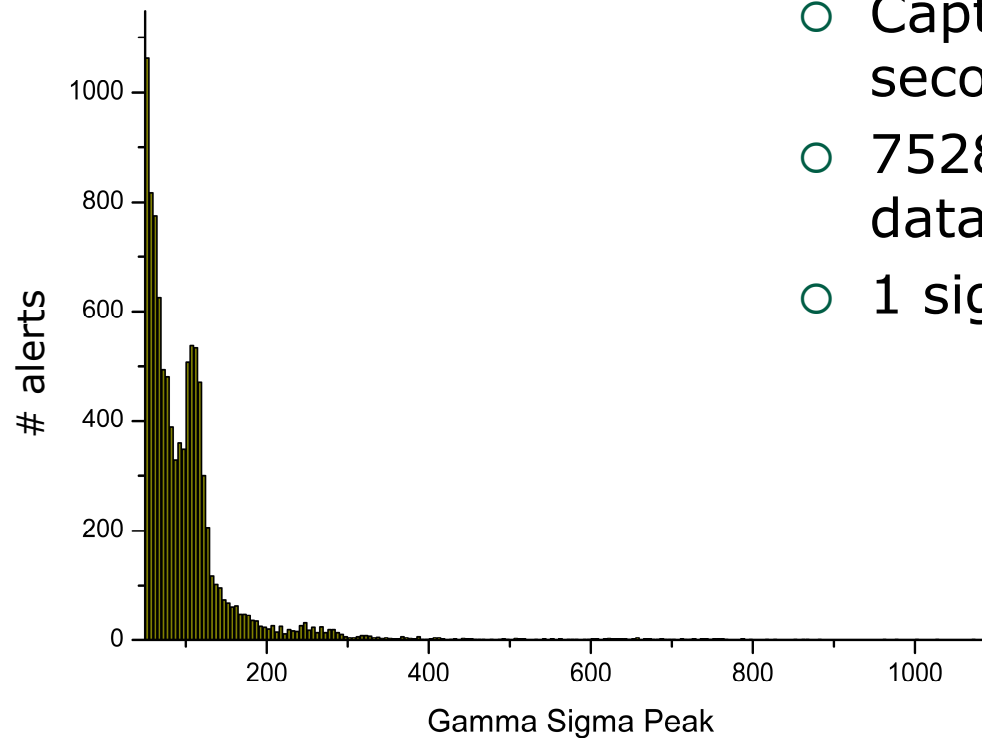
NuTeC-NORM project objectives:

3. Case Studies at several NORM Companies

- Supplying information and training for companies that work with NORM
- Making an inventory of the presence and activity of NORM and propose appropriate action.



NORM inspection database



- Capturing primary and secondary inspections
- 75289 primary alerts in database
- $1 \text{ sigma} = \sqrt{\text{BG}}$



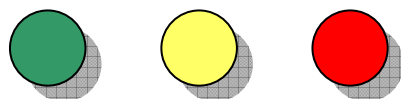
METHODOLOGY

- Objectives
- Sample
- Detector Position
- Detection Time
- Analysis



METHODOLOGY – Objectives

- Output = activity concentration radionuclide lies beneath, around or above the limits given by European Directives for NORM nuclides



- Methodology = estimation of the activity concentration within certainty limits of NORM nuclides in sample, for a certain geometry

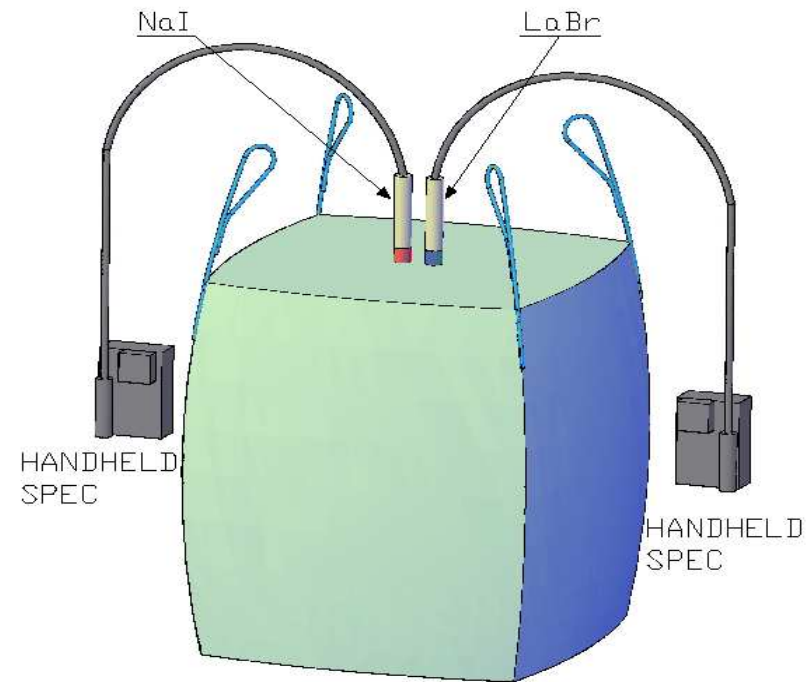
METHODOLOGY – Sample

- Sample = big bag, shipping container
- Geometry (bb)
 - Height
 - Nett Mass
 - Perimeter
 - Bag thickness



METHODOLOGY – Detector Position big bag

- Detectors: temp. stabilized NaI and LaBr coupled with handheld spectrometer
- Position: On top of big bag, in centre



METHODOLOGY – Detector Position container

- Detectors: temp. stabilized NaI and LaBr coupled with handheld spectrometer
- Position: in centre of container sidewall





METHODOLOGY – Detection Time

○ Big Bags:

- Each sample is measured ten times
- Detection Time: 900 s

○ Shipping containers

- Container is measured once
- Detection Time: 600 s



METHODOLOGY – Analysis

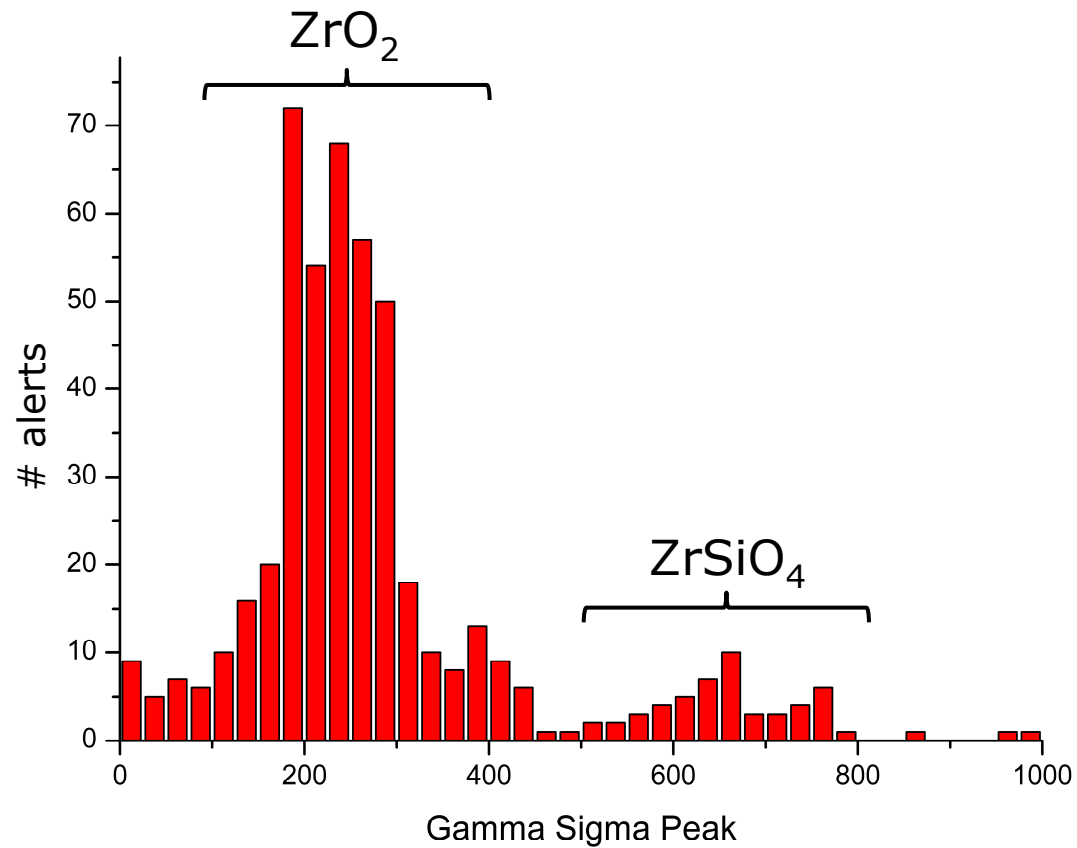
- Energy calibration
 - Efficiency calibration
 - Peak locate
 - Peak area
 - NID plus Interference Correction
-
- NOTE: assumed secular equilibrium for ^{238}U and for ^{232}Th



3. Industrial Case Studies

- Transport Company in the Port of Antwerp
- Dry bulk material
- Processes
 - (Re)bagging
 - Reconditioning
 - Sieving
 - Blending

Zirconium (493 alerts)



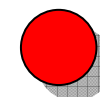


Zirconium Analysis Results

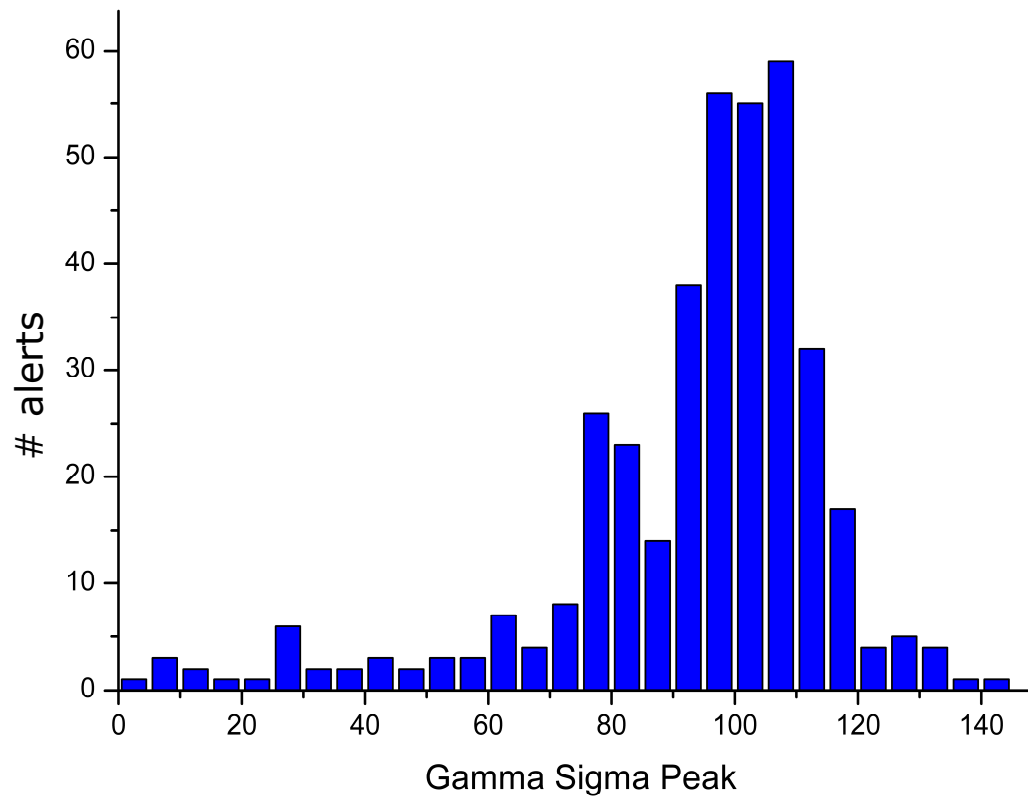
- Following results are based on:
 - sample of zirconium coarse grade
 - Number of measurements: 10
 - Land of origin: Australia
 - Weight: $2 \cdot 10^3$ kg
 - Packaging: big bag
 - Detector used: NaI

Zirconium Analysis Results

Nuclide	Average Activity Concentration (Bq·g ⁻¹)	Rel.Error (%)	Stand Deviation (Bq·g ⁻¹)
²³⁸ U	1.51E+00	-22	4.3E-01
²³² Th	5.11E-01	4	1.8E-02
²²⁶ Ra	2.09E+00	4	8.6E-02



K_2SO_4 (383 alerts)






K_2SO_4 Analysis Results

- Following results are based on:
 - sample of K_2SO_4
 - Number of measurements: 10
 - Weight: $1.2 \cdot 10^3$ kg
 - Packaging: big bag
 - Detector used: NaI

K₂SO₄ Analysis Results

Nuclide	Average Activity Concentration (Bq·g ⁻¹)	Rel.Error (%)	Stand Deviation (Bq·g ⁻¹)
 ⁴⁰ K	8.68E+00	-18	8.0E-02



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


Conclusions

- Measurement methodology
 - determination of radionuclides
 - industrial settings
- Good results
 - Th-232, Ra-226
- More research required
 - U-238, K-40



Outlook

- Analysis of LaBr spectra
 - Higher resolution
 - Less peak interference
- More samples to determine uncertainty and range of  zone
- Other substances & geometries

To be continued ...

NORM & Natural Radiation Management 2010, London
IRPA 2010, Helsinki

Q&A



To be continued ...

NORM & Natural Radiation Management 2010, London
IRPA 2010, Helsinki