

IAEA Mission Concludes Peer Review of France's Regulatory Framework for Nuclear Safety

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Paris, France – An IAEA-led team of senior international nuclear and radiation safety experts today concluded a 12-day mission to review the French regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety.

The Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) team found that the French Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN) operates as an independent regulatory body and that its effective regulatory structure benefits from advice provided by the Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN) and specialized standing Advisory Committees.

“Our review shows that there is a strong commitment to safety in France,” said IRRS team leader Mark Satorius, Executive Director for Operations of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. “The team found that ASN has an effective organizational structure and that it places great emphasis on the impartiality of ASN commissioners, committees and staff.”

The French Government had invited the peer review, which included interviews and discussions with regulatory staff and stakeholders as well as site visits. The mission compared the French regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety with the IAEA Safety Standards. The team included 22 experts from 17 IAEA Member States.

“IRRS missions bring significant added value to the international system of safety and radiation protection,” said ASN President Pierre-Franck Chevet. “ASN is therefore willing to participate strongly in missions in other countries, and decided to host this new full-scope IRRS mission in France. The feedback that we have just received from the IRRS team will definitely be of great value to further improve the French framework for nuclear safety and radiation protection.”

Good practices identified by the IRRS team included:

- The involvement of stakeholders in the regulatory processes and transparent decision-making, as well as extensive communication to promote stakeholder participation in regulatory activities and decisions;
- The independence of ASN Commissioners and staff in the performance of their regulatory responsibilities, and
- Coordination between regulatory organizations involved in emergency planning and effective cooperation with licensees in this area.

The mission identified some issues in need of attention or improvement, including the following:

- The regulatory framework for the control of medical exposure should be reviewed to ensure there are no gaps and that the organizations involved are properly coordinated;
- ASN's system for reviewing and revising its regulatory framework should be strengthened;
- All processes needed to deliver ASN's mandate should be addressed in ASN's integrated management system and fully implemented, and
- New ways should be explored to assure ASN the human and financial resources it needs for effective regulation of nuclear and radiation safety into the future. .

The final mission report will be provided to the French Government in about three months. French authorities have announced that they will make the report public.

Quick Facts

France has 58 operating nuclear power reactors and one under construction. Nuclear power produces about 75 per cent of the country's electricity. In addition, the country has 10 operating research reactors.

About IRRS Missions

IRRS missions are designed to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the national nuclear regulatory infrastructure, while recognizing the ultimate responsibility of each State to ensure safety in this area. This is done through consideration of regulatory, technical and policy issues, with comparisons against IAEA Safety Standards, and, where appropriate, good practices elsewhere.