

IAEA Press Releases

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International Nuclear Safety Experts Complete IAEA Peer Review of German Regulatory System

Berlin, 19 September 2008 | An international expert team has today completed a two-week IAEA review of Germany's nuclear regulatory system. The team identified good practices within the system and gave advice on some areas for further improvement. The IAEA has conveyed the initial findings to German authorities but the final report will be submitted within two months.

At the request of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) assembled a team of 14 experts to conduct an Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission. This is a peer review based on IAEA Standards. It is not an inspection, nor an audit.

The scope of the mission was limited to the safety regulation of nuclear power plants.

Experts from Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, the UK, the US and from the IAEA took part in the mission, which was conducted from 7 to 19 September in Bonn, Stuttgart and Berlin.

The main basis for the review was a well-prepared self-assessment made by the Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the Ministry of Environment of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg (UM BW).

"The team members were impressed by the extensive preparation and dedication of the staff both at BMU and UM BW to excellence in nuclear safety," said Mike Weightman, IRRS Team Leader and Chief Inspector of the UK nuclear regulatory body, the Nuclear Directorate of the Health and Safety Executive. "We hope the IRRS mission will facilitate further improvements in the safety regulation of nuclear power in Germany and throughout the world."

"Germany's invitation to undergo such a detailed review is a clear demonstration of its openness and commitment to continuously improve nuclear safety regulation," said Philippe Jamet, Director of the IAEA's Nuclear Installation Safety Division.

Among the particular strengths of BMU and UM BW associated with their policies, the regulatory framework and activities identified by the IRRS team were:

- Both BMU and UM BW have high quality and experienced staff, which are supported by experienced and competent technical support organizations.

- Both organizations have a high commitment to learning and self improvement;

The team has also made recommendations and suggestions related to areas where the regulatory system as a whole could be improved. Examples include:

- There is room for improving information exchange and communication between the Federal and State regulatory bodies. Such enhanced communication would also lead to increased mutual trust and public confidence.
- In order to fulfill their regulatory responsibilities, BMU and UM BW should be staffed appropriately and develop a plan for a succession planning strategy.
- It could be very beneficial for the regulatory system, and helpful for worldwide learning, if all German "Länder" (states) with nuclear power plants also took the opportunity to benefit from the experience of an IRRS mission, including making self-assessments against international best practice.

The peer review consisted of an analysis of technical regulatory information, interviews, and discussions with key personnel at BMU and UM BW, as well as with regulatory inspectors at Neckarwestheim-1 Nuclear Power Plant to witness a regulatory inspection. Regulatory aspects were also discussed with Federal Minister Sigmar Gabriel and Minister Tanja Gönner of Baden-Württemberg.

Other organisations such as the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BFS), the Reactor Safety Commission (RSK), the technical support organisation Gesellschaft für Anlagen- und Reaktorsicherheit (GRS), and the Nuclear Safety Standards Commission (ILK) were also involved.

General information about the [Integrated Regulatory Review Service \(IRRS\) and previous missions](#) can be found on the [IAEA's website](#).

Press Contacts

Ayhan Evrensel

Press Officer

Division of Public Information

[+43] (0) 699-16521271

Press Office

Division of Public Information

[+43-1] 2600-21273

[press at iaea.org](http://www.iaea.org/press)

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