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IAEA Press Releases

Press Release 2012/25

International Expert Team Concludes IAEA Peer Review of Finland's Regulatory Framework for Nuclear and Radiation Safety

26 October 2012 | *Helsinki, Finland* -- International safety experts today concluded a two-week International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) mission to review the regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety in Finland.

In its preliminary report, the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission team found that the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority of Finland (STUK) is a competent and highly credible regulator that is open and transparent and derives great strength from the technical competence of its staff.

"Finland's comprehensive regulatory framework allows STUK to operate in practice as an independent regulatory body," said team leader Philippe Jamet, a commissioner of the French regulatory body ASN.

The mission was conducted at the request of the Government of Finland from 15-26 October. The team interviewed members of STUK and officials from various ministries, as well as key players in the Finnish safety framework. Such IRRS missions are peer reviews based on IAEA Safety Standards, not inspections or audits.

The team was made up of 18 members from Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as six IAEA staff members.

"The IRRS mission and preparation for it was a unique occasion that involved the whole organization, provided motivation for improvement of the safety framework in Finland and assists STUK review its mission," said Tero Varjoranta, Director

General of STUK.

The IRRS team identified a number of good practices and achievements, including:

- ε STUK's excellence in its safety assessment of nuclear power plants and waste repositories, in particular its demonstration that long-term political commitment is a necessity to sustain the creation of a waste repository as well as its regulatory oversight of medical applications of radiation sources; and
- ε STUK's excellent record in contributing to enhanced safety worldwide through international cooperation.

In line with the *IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety*, the mission reviewed the regulatory implications for Finland of the March 2011 accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in Japan. The mission found that STUK's immediate- and longer-term response was timely and effective. Although short-term safety issues were not identified, a number of safety improvements have been initiated and STUK performed extremely well in informing the public.

The IRRS team identified a number of areas where the overall performance of the regulatory system could be improved, including:

- ε Although STUK operates in practice as an independent regulatory body, the government should strengthen the legislative framework by embedding in law the regulatory body, separate from entities having responsibilities or interests that could unduly influence its decisions;
- ε The Finnish legislative framework should be further developed to cover authorization for facility decommissioning and the waste repository shutdowns; and
- ε STUK can improve the effectiveness of its inspection activities by enhancing the focus of inspection on the most safety-significant areas and developing a formal qualification programme for inspectors.

In its preliminary report, the IAEA team's main conclusions have been conveyed to STUK. A final report will be submitted to the Government of Finland in about three months. STUK has informed the team that the final report will be made publicly available. The IAEA encourages nations to invite a follow-up IRRS mission about two years after the mission has been completed.

Background

The team reviewed the legal and regulatory framework for nuclear safety and addressed all facilities regulated by STUK with the exception of the research reactor FiR 1, which STUK decided to exclude because the operator is shutting it down. This was the 44th IRRS mission conducted by the IAEA.

Quick Facts

- ε Finland has four operating nuclear power units at two sites (two in Loviisa and two in Olkiluoto) and a third unit is under construction at the Olkiluoto site.
- ε A decision in principle has been taken to build two more units, one at Olkiluoto and another at a new site.
- ε Final low- and intermediate-level waste disposal facilities are in operation at the Loviisa and the Olkiluoto sites and interim spent fuel storage facilities are operated within operating power plants. Preparation is being made for construction of a final disposal facility for spent fuel at Olkiluoto.
- ε Nuclear power plants generate about 30% of Finland's electricity.

About IRRS Missions

IRRS missions are designed to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the national nuclear regulatory infrastructure of States, while recognizing the ultimate responsibility of each State to ensure safety in this area.

This is done through consideration of both regulatory, technical and policy issues, with comparisons against IAEA safety standards and, where appropriate, good practices elsewhere.

More information about IRRS missions is available on the [IAEA Website](#).

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