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NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY
COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

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I. Introduction

The NEA's Strategic Plan, published in 1999, has recommended that all committees review their programme and working methods, and develop their own strategic plan. As a result, the CNRA Bureau developed the strategic plan described herein. Its purpose is to provide the general orientations and objectives to be pursued by the CNRA over the next five years. In 1997, the CNRA conducted an 'external' review of its activities and working methods (T.E. Murley *et al.* "A Review of the Role, Activities and Working Methods of the CNRA") and, in 1998, published a report on "Future Regulatory Challenges". These two reports are still relevant today and guide the Committee's current programme of work. They are to be used in conjunction with the Strategic Plan as they provide the basis and the justification for CNRA activities.

The intention is to update the report on "Future Regulatory Challenges" periodically, to reflect the changing trends in nuclear safety. Similarly, periodic reviews will be conducted to assess whether the CNRA is effective in meeting its mandate and the needs of the NEA Member countries.

II. Mission and mandate of the Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA)

Mission

The mission of the CNRA is to assist Member countries in maintaining and further developing efficient and effective nuclear regulation that is based on current technical and regulatory knowledge and gives priority to factors most important to the safety of nuclear power reactors and other civilian nuclear installations.

Mandate

The mandate of the CNRA as approved by the Steering Committee on 1-2 October 1998 is retained. The mandate is:

The CNRA shall be responsible for the programme of the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) concerning the regulation, licensing and inspection of nuclear installations with regard to safety.

The CNRA shall constitute a forum for the exchange of information and experience among regulatory organisations. To the extent appropriate, the CNRA shall review developments which could affect regulatory requirements with the objective of providing members with an understanding of the motivation for new regulatory requirements under consideration and an opportunity to offer suggestions that might improve them or avoid unwarranted disparities among Member countries. In particular it shall review current practices and operating experiences with a view to disseminating lessons learned.

The CNRA shall promote co-operation among Member countries to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the regulatory process and to maintain an adequate level of capability and competence.

The CNRA shall focus primarily on existing power reactors and other nuclear installations; it may also consider the regulatory implications of new designs of power reactors and other types of nuclear installations. Furthermore, it shall examine any other matters referred to it by the Steering Committee.

The CNRA shall collaborate with, and assist, as appropriate, other international organisations for co-operation among regulators and consider, upon request, issues raised by these organisations.

The CNRA shall organise its own activities. In implementing its programme, the CNRA shall establish co-operative mechanisms with the Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations, the Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health and the Radioactive Waste Management Committee to work on matters of common interest and to promote sharing of information and resources avoiding unnecessary duplication. It may sponsor specialist meetings and working groups to further its objectives.

To implement its mission, the CNRA relies upon a membership of senior representatives of the national nuclear regulatory authorities of the Member countries, authorised to present their national nuclear regulatory and safety policies.

III. Areas and scope of work

The CNRA shall focus primarily on existing power reactors and other nuclear installations; it may also consider the regulatory implications of new designs of power reactors and other types of civilian nuclear installations. Furthermore, it shall examine any other matters referred to it by the Steering Committee.

Activities carried out by the CNRA should be focused on the following objectives:

Objective 1

To ensure an effective exchange of information on regulatory response to operating events and other operating experience.

- Focusing on issues of greatest safety significance, encountered at nuclear installations in Member countries, the CNRA will organise discussions and workshops on possible approaches and strategies for their resolution.
- Placing the emphasis on respective regulatory actions, the CNRA will compare and document the knowledge in regulatory policies.

Objective 2

To ensure sound technical basis for regulatory positions on specific issues.

- Focus on the adequacy of state-of-the-art knowledge and of the safety margins.
- Suggest that regulatory issues in need of further research be included in the programme of work of the Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (CSNI).
- Request that the CSNI review technical developments that might call for changes in regulatory requirements.
- Request that the CSNI report on their results that are relevant to regulatory positions concerning safety issues.
- Request that the CRPPH and the RWMC regularly inform the CNRA on the progress of their work and on their planned activities and establish joint task groups when appropriate.

Objective 3

To provide a consistent regulatory response to new issues emerging from changes in the work environment.

- Analyse emerging regulatory issues such as ageing, safety culture, quality of safety management, and the impact of deregulation of electricity markets.

Objective 4

To obtain a better understanding of national regulatory requirements, and contribute to harmonise regulations.

- Exchange information on developments and changes in national regulations and on the bases for the changes made.
- Carry out comparisons of national regulations, and review and analyse regulatory experience and practices in Member countries.

Objective 5

To help maintain an adequate level of capability and competence in nuclear safety.

- Review needs, identify critical areas, and define possible international approaches.
- Assist Member countries in organising programmes to strengthen staff competence at national or international institutions.

Objective 6

To promote exchange of information among Member countries on the bases, effectiveness, and efficiency of regulatory programmes and processes.

- Identify and disseminate information on good practices in regulatory inspections.
- Exchange information on methods to measure the effectiveness of regulatory bodies.
- Provide a forum where Member countries can ask for feedback from the other regulators when planning major changes in their regulations and regulatory approaches.
- Disseminate information on the applications of different approaches aimed at improving the effectiveness of the regulatory process and public trust in the regulator.
- Help Member countries to establish liaisons between regulators, to perform peer reviews, and to implement quality assurance programmes.

Objective 7

In co-ordination with other international organisations for co-operation among regulators, promote co-operation with non-member countries, with a view of advancing their nuclear safety technology and regulatory framework.

- Make available appropriate safety related publications and report.
- Organise where appropriate, joint workshops with the IAEA.
- Progressively integrate Russian experts into the CNRA activities where their participation can be mutually beneficial, or is in the broader interest of NEA Member countries.

IV. Structure and methods of work

In order to achieve the objectives of the CNRA, the structure will comprise the features and working methods described below:

- The membership of the CNRA will comprise senior representatives of the national nuclear regulatory authorities of the NEA Member countries and observers of relevant international organisations (IAEA, CEC, WWER Regulators Forum).
- The programme of the CNRA will be guided by a Bureau. The Bureau will consist of the chairman and four vice-chairmen of the CNRA.
- The CNRA will strive to be more efficient by identifying and benefiting from both expertise and existing safety and regulatory information from all international sources. Increased emphasis will be placed on making the work of the CNRA and the CSNI complementary. Thus, the outcomes of the work of the CNRA could contribute in developing the bases of the programme of work of the CSNI. Conversely, some of the outcomes of the work of CSNI will assist the work of the CNRA.
- The CNRA will be informed periodically by the CRPPH and the RWMC on their future activities. The CNRA may suggest that these two committees undertake reviews on specific topics for its deliberation and joint task groups will be established whenever appropriate.
- The CNRA will have one working group, the Working Group on Inspection Practices (WGIP). The mandate of WGIP, as revised and approved by CNRA 23 June 1998, is given in Appendix A. The WGIP will receive guidance from the CNRA in formulating and implementing its programme of work.
- The WGIP will allow inspectors, from different regulatory organisations, to directly exchange information among themselves on selected issues as defined by the CNRA. The results of the WGIP work, including good inspection practices and lessons learned, will be reported to the CNRA.

- In addition to the WGIP, the CNRA will achieve its mission by tasking ad hoc groups, which will focus on one specific regulatory issue until a defined outcome is achieved. Each task group will consist of a small number of senior regulators representing the membership of the CNRA. Such task group members may also be delegates to the CNRA. Each task group will develop strategies and working approaches for achieving its specified outcome and seek advice and approval from the full CNRA before proceeding. Each task group may be assisted by a facilitator who would normally be, in the role of consultant to the NEA, an experienced senior regulator.

V. Challenges and issues

The programme of work of the CNRA is closely related to the issues defined in the 1998 NEA report entitled: “Future Regulatory Challenges.” These issues which are being addressed in the CNRA programme are: Regulatory Effectiveness, Ageing and Life Extensions, Safety Margins, Safety Culture, Maintaining Competence, the effect of Electricity Market Deregulation, Regulator/Public Interface and Staff Training. The programme of work and priorities will be updated and modified as necessary as new issues arise and the needs of the Members countries change.

APPENDIX

MANDATE OF THE WORKING GROUP IN INSPECTION PRACTICES (WGIP)

1. The Working Group on Inspection Practices shall report to the Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA) and assist that committee with its work concerning the inspection of nuclear installations with regard to safety.
2. The Working Group shall constitute a forum for the exchange of information and experience among regulatory organisations. In particular, it shall review the effectiveness of inspection practices, disseminate lessons learned, and identify commendable inspection practices.
3. The Working Group shall focus on inspection practices by regulatory organisations and associated regulatory frameworks primarily on existing power reactors. It shall also examine other matters referred to it by CNRA.
4. The Working Group shall agree on its programme of work with CNRA. It shall also, with the agreement of CNRA, sponsor specialist meetings and workshops to further its objectives.
5. The Working Group with the prior agreement of CNRA shall collaborate with, and assist as appropriate, other NEA Committees or other international organisations for co-operation among regulators.