

## Agreements signed for Nigerian nuclear project

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**Nigeria and Russia have signed agreements on the construction and operation of a nuclear power plant and a nuclear research centre, including a multi-purpose research reactor, in the African country.**



*The signing ceremony in Abu Dhabi (Image: Rosatom)*

The documents, as well as a roadmap for cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear technologies, were signed in Abu Dhabi yesterday by Anton Moskin, vice president for marketing and business development of Rosatom subsidiary Rusatom Overseas, and Simon Pesco Mallam, chairman of the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC). The ceremony was also attended by Rosatom Director-General Alexey Likhachov and Nigeria's permanent representative to the international organisations in Vienna, Vivian Nwunaku Rose Okeke.

"The development of nuclear technologies will allow Nigeria to strengthen its position as one of the leading countries of the African continent," Moskin said. "These are the projects of a large scale and strategic importance, that will determine the relationship between our two countries in the long term," he added.

Feasibility studies for the nuclear power plant project and research centre construction will include site screening and the determination of key "parameters of implementation", including capacity, equipment lists, timeframes and stages of implementation, as well as financing schemes, Rosatom said.

Nigeria has been a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since 1964. Faced with rapidly increasing baseload electricity demand, the country's federal government in 2007 approved a technical framework for a nuclear power programme.

Nigeria has sought the support of the IAEA to develop plans for up to 4000 MWe of nuclear capacity by 2025. IAEA support has included two missions to Nigeria in 2015, which found the country's emergency preparedness and response framework to be consistent with IAEA safety standards. A 10-day IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service peer review mission earlier this year described the country's nuclear regulator, the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority, as a "committed" regulatory body working for the continuous improvement of nuclear and radiation safety, but noted challenges related to its independence in implementing regulatory decisions and activities.

The NAEC was set up in 1976, and the country's first research reactor - a 30 kW Chinese Miniature Neutron Source Reactor similar to units operating in China, Ghana, Iran and Syria - was commissioned at Ahmadu Bello University in 2004.

Russia signed its first intergovernmental nuclear cooperation agreement with Nigeria 2009. This was followed by agreements on the design, construction, operation and decommissioning of an initial nuclear power plant. Two sites, at Geregu in Kogi State and Itu in Akwa Ibom State, were in 2015 confirmed as preferred sites for the country's first nuclear power plants after evaluation by the NAEC.

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