

# IAEA Mission Says Nigerian Nuclear Regulator Committed to Safety, Sees Areas for Improvement

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Nigerian flag. (Photo: jbdodane/Flickr)

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts said that Nigeria has a committed regulatory body that works for the continuous improvement of nuclear and radiation safety, but noted challenges related to its independence in implementing regulatory decisions and activities.

The Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) team concluded a 10-day mission today to assess the regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety in Nigeria. The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) is the body responsible for regulatory oversight in the country.

“The IRRS team recognizes the strong commitment of Nigeria to improving nuclear and radiation safety. The team was extended full cooperation by all parties in this review,” said team leader Lamberto Matteocci, Technical Coordinator for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection at the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA). “We believe the outcome of this mission will be of great help to the country in order to enhance its national regulatory framework.”

IRRS missions are designed to strengthen the effectiveness of the national regulatory infrastructure for nuclear and radiation safety, while recognizing the responsibility of each State to ensure safety.

Nigeria makes extensive use of radiation sources in medical and industrial applications as well as in science and research. The country also has a research reactor used for the analysis of materials and training. Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country, has decided to include nuclear power in its energy mix to meet an increasing demand for electricity and support economic development. The country has been developing its nuclear power infrastructure for several years.



The team of experts made recommendations and suggestions to the Government and the NNRA to help them further enhance the country's regulatory framework in line with IAEA safety standards.

The team recognized that the NNRA is committed to improving safety and to protecting people and the environment. It noted that the regulatory body faces challenges in ensuring its full independence in decision-making and in developing its competence to effectively conduct regulatory activities, particularly in light of Nigeria's planned nuclear power programme.

The 12-member IRRS team comprised senior experts from France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Latvia, Morocco, Pakistan, Slovenia, Turkey, and Zimbabwe, as well as three IAEA staff members.

"The Nigerian Government will work with the IAEA to develop a work-plan for the implementation of the mission's recommendations and suggestions," said NNRA Director General Lawrence Dim. "Nigeria is always ready to cooperate with the Agency in the area of nuclear and radiation safety, as well as in other areas. We are committed to using the IAEA safety standards and international best practices to improve our policy, and legal, technical and regulatory infrastructure."

During the mission, team members observed regulatory activities and held interviews and discussions with the Government and NNRA management and staff. They also visited the Abuja National Hospital, a gamma irradiation facility and the Centre for Energy Research and Training.

The team identified a good practice in the NNRA's routine training for news media to inform them about its processes and decisions as well as the possible radiation risks associated with facilities and activities.

The mission provided recommendations and suggestions for improvements, including:

- The Government should establish a national policy on safety and ensure that the corresponding legal framework is in line with IAEA safety standards.
- The Government should ensure that the NNRA is effectively independent and is functionally separate from entities having responsibilities or interests that could influence its decision-making.
- The NNRA should carry out an analysis of all competencies needed to cover its responsibilities, and develop and implement a human resource and training plan.
- The regulatory body should ensure that all facilities and activities have a valid authorization, and establish and implement an enforcement policy to respond to non-compliance.
- The NNRA should consider formalizing cooperation with other authorities having responsibilities related to safety.

The final mission report will be provided to Nigeria in about three months. Authorities in Nigeria have told the IAEA that they plan to make the report public.

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## Related Resources

- 🔗 [Integrated Regulatory Review Service \(IRRS\) \(https://www.iaea.org/services/review-missions/integrated-regulatory-review-service-irrs\)](https://www.iaea.org/services/review-missions/integrated-regulatory-review-service-irrs)
- 🔗 [Department of Nuclear Safety and Security \(https://www.iaea.org/about/organizational-structure/departments-of-nuclear-safety-and-security\)](https://www.iaea.org/about/organizational-structure/departments/departments-of-nuclear-safety-and-security)
- 🔗 [IAEA Safety Standards \(https://www.iaea.org/resources/safety-standards\)](https://www.iaea.org/resources/safety-standards)

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