

IRRS Good Practices

Responsibilities and Functions of the Government (Module 1)

Coordination of authorities with responsibilities for safety within the regulatory framework

Saudi Arabia– Initial Mission

Mission date: October 2023

Good Practice

Establishment of JGoPs (Joint Government organization Policies) as a legally binding mechanism for ensuring legal division of labour to deliver effective joint working arrangements and coordination between the Nuclear Radiation Regulatory Commission of Saudi Arabia (NRRC) and other relevant Government agencies for the tasks and responsibilities to be clearly assigned to avoid any omissions or undue duplication and to avoid conflicting requirements.

Observation

NRRC took the initiative of establishing Joint Government organization Policies (JGoPs) between the NRRC and other relevant Government agencies to ensure legal division of labour between Government agencies for fulfilling the specific safety, security and safeguards objectives and provisions of the relevant laws.

Basis

GSR Part 1 Requirement 7 states that “*Where several authorities have responsibilities for safety within the regulatory framework for safety, the government shall make provision for the effective coordination of their regulatory functions to avoid any omissions or undue duplication and to avoid conflicting requirements being placed on authorized parties*”

IAEA Comments/Highlights

Article III (7) of the Statute provides for the NRRC to cooperate with relevant governmental agencies as well as with other regulatory bodies in other countries and international organizations, in the performance of its regulatory functions in ensuring safety, security and safeguards.

The Kingdom’s arrangement for overseeing and mandating the need for national coordination and cooperation arrangements (JGoPs) under the leadership of the Council of Ministers and the Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers provides the basis for NRRC for taking

proactive steps to coordinate joint working arrangements and to ensure delineation of roles and responsibilities (legal division of labour) with agencies with complementary regulatory responsibilities. Indeed, the JGoPs describe in detail the tasks and responsibilities of each entity and the concept of operation between NRRC and the other entities to conduct these tasks. The JGoPs are approved by the Council of Ministers with mandatory implementation and overseen by the Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers. The establishment of such collaborations assists in benefiting from each other's operating experiences including pre-empting risks and issues that may lead to degradation of safety.

At the time of the mission, the Government had approved JGoPs between the NRRC and:

- Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to the role of each entity in the international representation of The Kingdom, including IAEA, and in relation to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, nuclear regulatory matters, and nuclear non-proliferation; and
- Other Governmental entities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Customs, Presidency of State Security) in relation to specifying the roles and responsibilities of these entities for IAEA Safeguards inspections.

The NRRC was in process of finalising the JGoPs with other national agencies, including:

- Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority (ZATCA) responsible for the control of the import and export of nuclear materials, radioactive materials, and nuclear related items. ZATCA has a role in controlling illicit trafficking including items that could be contaminated with radioactive material through all the national ports (air, sea, and land);
- Riyadh Airports Company - Dammam Airports Company - King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah to limit the illegal movement of nuclear and radioactive materials;
- Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, and Ministry of Health to clarify the respective roles in issuing licenses in all activities in which nuclear materials are used for non-nuclear purposes; and
- Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) that sets and issues special standards.

Such a mechanism for ensuring effective joint working arrangements and coordination between government agencies is considered to be more effective than other coordination mechanisms such as the Memoranda of Understanding which are not legally binding.

Norway – Initial Mission

Mission date: June 2019

Good Practice

The formalized cooperation group of regulatory authorities, proactively devising joint guidelines and training for harmonising inspections and the performance of joint inspections,

integrating radiation protection with overall health and safety aspects was identified as a good practice.

Observation

The Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (DSA) was a member of a formalized cooperation group with six other regulatory authorities and a non-governmental organization that had responsibilities for health, safety and environmental (HSE) protection under the Internal Control Regulations. The authorities cooperated to coordinate strategic plans for inspection and had established joint guidelines for inspections, a database for coordinating inspections and joint training of inspectors.

Basis

GSR Part 1 (Rev 1) Requirement 29 para 4.53 states that “*in conducting inspections, the regulatory body shall consider a number of aspects, including:*

- Liaison with the relevant organization for joint inspections, where necessary.”

IAEA Comments/Highlights

One of the main goals of this cooperation group was to ensure that that inspections were carried out as uniformly and in as coordinated a manner as possible.

The HSE authorities had also established courses, for example in communication related to inspection and on performing risk-based inspections. All DSA inspectors received the HSE training in addition to in house training in DSA processes for inspection. This cooperation was recognized as a good practice for its holistic approach to integrating radiation protection with overall health and safety aspects, devising joint guidelines and training to harmonize inspections.

Belarus– Initial Mission

Mission date: October 2016

Good Practice

Recognizing the importance of strong collaboration during the construction, commissioning and future operation of the NPP, the Government:

- has established an “*inter-ministerial commission on coordination of the plan of major organizational arrangements for construction of nuclear power plant in the Republic of Belarus and control over its implementation*”;
- has created a working group led by MES (Ministry for Emergency Situations) for the coordination of state control (supervision) activities for the construction of the NPP, in order to discuss matters of mutual regulatory interest;

- held multiple meetings with all suppliers, the operator and the regulator.

These initiatives demonstrated a strong commitment of the Government, and went beyond the standard practice for embarking countries and help ensure high-level and effective coordination and oversight of NPP construction projects.

Observation

The Republic of Belarus and regulatory agencies had established a number of practices and mechanisms to ensure strong collaboration in the oversight of the construction and commissioning of the Belarusian NPP.

Basis

GSR Part 1 (Rev.1) Requirement 7, para. 2.18 states that: “*Where several authorities have responsibilities for safety... the government shall ensure that there is appropriate coordination of and liaison between the various authorities...*”

IAEA Comments/Highlights

Working arrangements were in effect for interfaces between different regulators. The sequence of regulatory decisions appeared well understood, e.g. a conclusion on safety was required from the Ministry of Health (MoH) before MES could make a decision on a licence for radiation sources. In addition, state authorities were consulted for input during the development of regulatory documents.

The inter-ministerial commission supports identifying and dealing with any possible omission or duplication of responsibility among the different regulators. In addition, the commission supports preventing conflicts between different authorities that could lead to conflicting requirements and undermine the authority of the regulatory body.