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Ensuring Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems: IAEA Conference Begins


13 Feb 2023

Annie Engstroem, IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication



(https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/styles/original_image_size/public/whatsappimage2023-02-13at061619.jpeg?itok=Y2Og4sho)

IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security Lydie Evrard opens the International Conference on Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (Photo: A.Dixit/IAEA)

Rapid technological advancements in nuclear applications, emerging issues related to climate and other unexpected threats are evolving the regulatory landscape towards ensuring the safety and security of nuclear and radiation applications. 

Regulating nuclear installations under new external hazards and adapting regulations to new digital and advanced technologies, are focusing attention towards strengthening regulatory resilience.

To support these developments, in one of the biggest conferences of nuclear and radiation regulators in the world, more than 600 participants from 95 IAEA Member States and four international organizations have gathered in Abu Dhabi this week at the International Conference on Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems (/events/regcon2023). Participants will exchange regulatory practices, such as strategies for public and stakeholder involvement during the regulatory process, sustainable capacity building techniques and regulatory programmes related to the full lifecycle of nuclear and radiation facilities.

“This week’s conference is a flagship conference for nuclear safety and security. The topics covered will address some major changes faced over the past three years, that include the increasing interest for new and innovative technologies, the global COVID-19 pandemic that brought its share of change, and in some contexts extremely difficult conditions we have been experiencing for ensuring nuclear safety and security,” said Lydie Evrard, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security.

“We have had to adapt our way of working to address these new challenges, while keeping the focus on maintaining nuclear safety and security. Collectively we can develop our capacity to be more resilient while facing unexpected and unprecedented situations and working together will cement our continued commitment and combined efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and security worldwide,” Evrard added.

The four-day conference, organized by the IAEA and hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is the sixth of its kind in a series of conferences on effective nuclear and radiation regulatory systems over the last 17 years.



“This conference plays a vital role for the global community of regulators, in enhancing nuclear safety and security worldwide,” said Shahid Mallick, Director of the IAEA Office of Nuclear Safety and Security Coordination, and conference Scientific Secretary. “Discussions will focus on how regulatory agility and resilience in a rapidly changing environment help in achieving effective and sustainable regulatory systems to ensure robust nuclear safety, radiation safety and nuclear security worldwide. The facilitating role of international cooperation will also be highlighted.”

The future of nuclear regulation

This year’s conference theme is ‘Preparing for the Future in a Rapidly Changing Environment’, focusing on the ways in which the global regulatory community can address new and emerging challenges and cross-cutting regulatory areas related to the security of nuclear and other radioactive material in the future. These include regulatory implications of climate change and cybersecurity, sustainable capacity building, preparing the next generation of regulatory professionals, and challenges related to the life cycle of nuclear and radiation facilities as well as ensuring regulatory credibility and trust.

“The nuclear industry is changing and evolving, and regulators across the globe need to ensure that they are ready to deal with new innovative technologies and approaches, in order to continue to assure nuclear safety and security. These types of sessions are an excellent way to hear about best practices and lessons learned, so that we can benefit from each other’s knowledge,” said IAEA Director of Division of Nuclear Installation Safety Anna Hadjuk Bradford, in regard to the topics of the conference this year.

Topical sessions will enable participants to explore the regulatory strategies related to the development of new nuclear applications, such as small modular reactors, transportable reactors and fusion reactors, and radiological applications such as medical and industrial technologies.







Panel discussions will enable attendees to highlight the progress made since the previous regulatory conference and address current and upcoming priorities and initiatives in the field.

In conjunction with the conference, at the end of last year the IAEA held a competition (/sites/default/files/22/10/cn-309_youth_side_event_announcement.pdf) for young professionals to showcase their knowledge and engage with the international nuclear and radiation regulatory community. Today, five finalists from the competition presented their proposed ideas and solutions addressing one of six possible emerging challenges at a Youth Panel event.

Awards will be presented to three winners and their proposed idea or solution will be further promoted for a sponsorship opportunity. In line with the theme of the conference, the competition aims to ensure the continued sustainability of the work force in the nuclear regulatory sector.

The IAEA offers extensive support to countries in nuclear and radiation regulation and assists in the application of its safety standards and nuclear security guidance documents. It also supports countries embarking on nuclear power programmes in the development of comprehensive regulatory frameworks to maintain the highest standard for nuclear safety and security globally.

Related resources

-  International Conference on Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems (<https://www.iaea.org/events/regcon2023>)
-  Regulatory infrastructure (<https://www.iaea.org/topics/regulatory-infrastructure>)
-  Governmental, legal and regulatory framework (<https://www.iaea.org/topics/governmental-legal-and-regulatory-framework>)
-  IAEA Safety Standards (<https://www.iaea.org/resources/safety-standards>)

More

International Atomic Energy Agency

Vienna International Centre, PO Box 100

A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Telephone: +43 (1) 2600-0, Facsimile +43 (1) 2600-7

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