



France International
Nuclear Agency

The AFNI – a French initiative

to support countries interested in developing nuclear



A growing number of countries have plans to develop their nuclear energy sector between 2015 and 2020 and beyond. Drawing on its experience in building and operating the country's 58 reactors under optimum safety conditions, as well as its position as the world's leading constructor of nuclear reactors for the export market, the French government decided to set up the France International Nuclear Agency (AFNI) to allow countries interested in acquiring or developing nuclear energy to benefit from this experience.

The agency, created by decree, is part of the CEA (French Atomic Energy Commission), a research organisation founded in 1945. Its main purpose is to help foreign governments which are interested and with which France has signed a cooperation agreement to prepare the institutional, human and technical conditions required for setting up a civil nuclear programme that meets all requirements relating to safety, security, non-proliferation and environmental protection for present and future generations.

It exploits the skills and expertise of French national institutions in the nuclear field, including ANDRA, the national agency for radioactive waste management and the IRSN, the Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety.

The AFNI offers its support to all countries planning to develop nuclear energy for civil purposes within the context of intergovernmental cooperation. These activities do not only concern building and operating reactors but extend to every aspect of civil nuclear energy development: regulations, training, infrastructures, the back end of the fuel cycle, radioactive waste management, nuclear safety, radiation protection and funding.

energy for peaceful purposes



More precisely, the agency steps in once the government authorities have completed negotiations to establish the cooperation framework and ensures that the requirements expressed within this context are met.

During the initial phases of cooperation, its work consists in providing general information, arranging visits by delegations and organising seminars. It plays a crucial role in the preparatory phases for diagnostics, consultancy and training. Cooperation then becomes denser and is materialised in feasibility studies based on the work of a French task force that cooperates with its counterpart in the other country concerned. The dialogue and expert surveys conducted within this context lead to prefeasibility and feasibility studies.

In this way, AFNI cooperation helps to prepare the next phase, which is an industrial and commercial phase, during which the industrial partners step in once the country in question has decided to invest in production capacities.

The agency is a lightweight structure, composed of a small permanent team, which is responsible for organisation and coordination. Task forces that pool the skills and expertise of various French operators are set up for each country concerned.





The following fields of expertise are covered:

- *technical issues (choice of technology, siting, insertion in the distribution network, etc.),*
- *technical-economic and energy policy issues (share of the nuclear sector in the future energy mix, competitive edge in economic terms, funding methods),*
- *organisation and technical and legal environment (organisational structures to be set up to guarantee operating safety and security, legal environment, spent fuel and waste management),*
- *financial engineering,*
- *building the skills required for operation (human resources, training on the spot or abroad, role of research in training),*
- *information for decision-makers and the public.*

Thus the whole range of expertise and training available in France can be tapped for as long as necessary and in a way that is tailored to each country's needs.

The agency has an interministerial steering committee, chaired by the Director General for Energy at the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Town and Country Planning. This committee is responsible for:

- *state control of policies and activities,*
- *coordinating AFNI activities with those of the different operators,*
- *setting up task forces rapidly to meet the requirements of applicant countries. This is done by allowing the agency to express its requirements in terms of experts or expertise and ensuring validation by the representatives of the organisations concerned.*



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