



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NUCLEAR SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Norwegian Government's
Action Plan
2025–2030

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1 Introduction

Norway's international efforts to promote nuclear safety and security started in the 1990s, in the wake of the Cold War and the Chornobyl accident, when it became possible to establish project cooperation with the countries of the former Soviet Union. The Norwegian Government's Action Plan for Nuclear Safety and Security (Nuclear Action Plan) has provided the basis for this cooperation since 1995. The Action Plan has been revised at regular intervals to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. This is the sixth time the Action Plan has been revised. Norway's Nuclear Action Plan has been an integral part of the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine since 2023.

The global security situation has changed as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022. Russia's war against Ukraine, and in particular the occupation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and damage in the Chornobyl exclusion zone, has heightened the risk of incidents and radioactive releases at Ukraine's nuclear facilities. Russia's tactical attacks on Ukraine's non-nuclear power production facilities have increased the importance of power production at the country's nuclear power plants. These plants account for 60 % of Ukraine's electricity supply. They are dependent on offsite power sources to operate their safety systems. Russia's targeted attacks on the electricity grid thus also undermine nuclear safety. Norway is calling for closer coordination of international support for energy security and nuclear safety in Ukraine. At the same time, the risk of radioactive material falling into the wrong hands in Ukraine has increased. This has had a major impact on the priorities and focus of international nuclear safety and security cooperation. The international legal framework for ensuring nuclear safety and security at nuclear facilities was developed for peacetime. The ongoing efforts to update the legal framework and ensure close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are crucial to prevent unforeseen incidents. Norway will participate in this work in the time ahead.

The white paper on international cooperation on nuclear safety and security in a changed Europe (Meld. St. 30 (2023–2024), highlights only in English) describes how the focus of Norway's efforts shifted from northwestern Russia to Ukraine. The white paper also provides a history of cooperation in this area and outlines the results achieved. Norway's Nuclear Action Plan has been revised and its objectives more clearly defined as part of the work to follow up the white paper. Participation in international cooperation on nuclear safety and security is important for Norway and Norwegian interests. The Nuclear Action Plan is designed to ensure political backing for and continuity in Norway's cooperation on nuclear safety and security and to provide guidelines for the cooperation for the coming years. There is broad political consensus on the priorities and focus of our cooperation in this area. The present Nuclear Action Plan covers the period 2025–2030.

Context

Results achieved under the Nuclear Action Plan up until 2023 are described in the white paper on international cooperation on nuclear safety and security in a changed Europe (Meld. St. 30 (2023–2024), highlights only in English) and are therefore not discussed here.

A detailed description of Norwegian policy work within and vis-à-vis the IAEA falls outside the scope of this Action Plan.

Norway provides funding for a number of nuclear safety and security projects in Europe under the EEA and Norway Grants. This is a separate scheme that is part of Norway's cooperation with the EU. These projects are therefore not discussed here, but they are closely coordinated with activities carried out under the Nuclear Action Plan.

Chapter summaries: Chapter 2 of the Nuclear Action Plan sets out the primary objectives of Norway's nuclear safety and security cooperation; Chapter 3 outlines the focus areas and secondary objectives; and Chapter 4 describes how nuclear safety and security cooperation is organised. Information about relevant organisations, forums and conventions is provided in an appendix.

2 Objectives and scope

Nuclear accidents or incidents can easily lead to radioactive contamination beyond national borders, and it is important to take steps to prevent them. Material that has fallen outside the control of the authorities needs to be secured to avoid potential adverse impacts on human health and the environment, as well as to prevent this material from being used for criminal purposes, for example the production of nuclear weapons or dirty bombs. Strict safety standards and requirements for preparedness and response and transparency in this area have been established, partly in response to several serious nuclear incidents. The aim of Norway's international nuclear safety and security efforts is to protect human health and the environment. Through cooperation, awareness-raising and participation in relevant forums, we can enhance first-hand knowledge of issues relating to nuclear safety and security, including environmental issues, and thus prevent incidents from happening.

Activities under the Nuclear Action Plan have two primary objectives:

- To reduce the risk of serious accidents and radioactive contamination
- To minimise the risk of nuclear and other radioactive material falling into the wrong hands

Geographical scope

The Nuclear Action Plan's main geographical focus is Ukraine. Funding for project cooperation with the Russian authorities has been frozen as a result of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Project cooperation with Belarus has also been suspended due to the country's role in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Funding may be provided to support

cooperation between Norwegian and Russian environmental NGOs, where such cooperation is possible.

The geographical scope of the Action Plan also extends to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan if the activities are in line with the primary objectives and if the security situation permits.

Nuclear safety and security under the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine

The measures set out in the Action Plan to promote nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and Moldova are funded under the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine. The white paper on the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine (Meld. St. 8 (2023–2024), Norwegian only) discusses Norway's military and civilian support to Ukraine. Funding for nuclear safety and security cooperation is part of Norway's civilian support. This funding is intended to help Ukraine to maintain essential public functions and is being used to protect and rebuild critical infrastructure, secure Ukraine's energy supply and support capacity-building in the areas of democracy and good governance. As a result of Russia's war of aggression, Ukraine will need extensive support for a long time to come. To maximise the effectiveness of the funding provided for nuclear safety and security cooperation with Ukraine, Norway has identified the following priorities, as reflected in Chapter 3:

- Strengthen dialogue and cooperation with relevant authorities;
- Restore radiation protection and regulatory control and support the rehabilitation of facilities and sites affected by the hostilities, including the Chornobyl plant and, in the longer term, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant;
- Enhance safety and security at nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities;
- Prevent smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material;
- Map, and work to strengthen control of, radioactive sources and contamination;
- Disseminate information about nuclear safety and security and potential sources of radioactive contamination.

Overall guidelines for efforts under the Action Plan

Norway's nuclear safety and security cooperation is to be based on the needs and priorities of the partner countries and coordinated with international partners. Long-term cooperation should be maintained where possible. It is important to define clear objectives and a long-term strategy for efforts in this area in order to ensure predictability. At the same time, needs may change during the period covered by the Nuclear Action Plan, and the overall priorities for Norwegian funding must therefore be sufficiently flexible to accommodate this.

Norway's nuclear safety and security cooperation must be based on a coherent approach and, where relevant, on risk and impact assessments. In addition to ensuring cost-effective use of funding, this cooperation must adequately incorporate the four cross-cutting issues: human rights, women's rights and gender equality, climate change and environment, and anti-corruption.

New activities must support the achievement of the primary objectives. Projects in Ukraine must also be in line with the relevant guidelines for allocating funding under the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine. Certain of the priorities in the Action Plan's three focus areas only apply to Ukraine.

It is essential to strengthen environmental monitoring and nuclear emergency preparedness and response in the High North. There is a need to update our situational awareness and knowledge of nuclear installations and other potential sources of radioactive contamination in Russia, and revise the approach we have traditionally taken in this regard. It is important to follow technological advances and developments involving nuclear and other radioactive material that could increase the risk of accidents and incidents.

3 Focus areas

To promote the achievement of the primary objectives, activities under the Nuclear Action Plan are divided between the following three focus areas: capacity-building, safety and security, and non-proliferation, with secondary objectives defined for each of these areas.

3.1 Capacity-building among relevant authorities and organisations

Effective and accountable nuclear authorities and institutions are essential to achieving the overall objectives of nuclear safety and security cooperation, and to maintaining adequate nuclear emergency preparedness and response. Public trust in these authorities and organisations is crucial in this context. Reliable information on potential sources of radioactive contamination provides the basis for preventive action and the rapid implementation of emergency measures to safeguard important public interests.

Existing national legislation and international guidelines on nuclear safety and security were designed for peacetime. The challenges associated with maintaining nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict must be identified and addressed, and strategies for post-conflict restoration of nuclear safety and security must be put in place. Norway will play an active part in this work in the time ahead, and will assist nuclear authorities in the partner countries in adapting national legislation. The international community can learn from Ukraine's efforts and experience in this area.

3.1.1 *Enhancing nuclear emergency preparedness and response*

At operational nuclear facilities, there is always a risk of accidents or incidents that could lead to radioactive releases. Russia's full-scale invasion has heightened the risk of a nuclear accident or incident at Ukraine's nuclear power plants. This has highlighted the importance of preparedness to be able to respond effectively in the event of an accident. Good preparedness and crisis management systems make it possible to rapidly implement measures to protect life, health, the environment and other important public interests. Cooperation and coordination at the local, regional and international levels is vital in this context.

Priorities:

- Strengthen the authorities responsible for nuclear emergency preparedness and response in the partner countries;
- Maintain cooperation between emergency preparedness authorities in Norway and their counterparts in the partner countries;
- Carry out emergency response exercises;

- Strengthen the system for early notification of nuclear accidents at the bilateral, regional and international levels;
- Follow up bilateral notification agreements and procedures.

3.1.2 *Strengthening environmental monitoring*

It is important to monitor radioactive contamination of the environment. Reliable information on radioactive sources is needed in order to assess the possible impacts of future releases of radioactivity and identify appropriate response measures.

Priorities:

- Maintain an up-to-date overview of levels and time trends for radioactive contamination;
- Map possible sources of radioactive contamination;
- Promote cooperation on environmental monitoring between relevant authorities;
- Strengthen the response to incidents involving radioactive contamination.

3.1.3 *Increasing knowledge of nuclear safety and security*

Dissemination of accurate information about nuclear safety and security is crucial. The spread of disinformation presents a challenge, and raising awareness among the population will help to counter disinformation campaigns. While this is particularly important in the partner countries, it is also important in Norway and internationally. Further, it is vital to identify potential issues that could have impacts across national borders. International processes under the IAEA Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) have an important part to play here.

One of the aims of cooperation between Norwegian environmental NGOs and their counterparts in the partner countries is to sustain and develop civil society in these countries. Norway works to promote transparency and seeks to involve environmental NGOs and other stakeholders. At the same time, these efforts can entail risks due to the security situation in the respective countries. It is essential to assess the extent to which it will be possible to achieve the defined objectives and to ensure the safety and security of the stakeholders involved.

Priorities:

- Promote information and knowledge exchange between the partner countries and authorities and organisations in Norway;
- Disseminate information to the general public about radiation protection, nuclear safety and security, and radioactive contamination;
- Promote transparency as regards safety and security issues at existing nuclear power plants, and in connection with the decommissioning of reactors and construction of new reactors;
- Encourage exchange of experience between Ukraine and the international community on issues relating to radiation protection and nuclear safety and security during armed conflict;

- Support the IAEA's work in Ukraine.

3.1.4 Updating legislation and improving administrative regimes

Close contact between nuclear authorities serves to strengthen administrative regimes and preparedness and response systems in Norway and the partner countries alike. Increasing the authorities' insight into environmental protection, radiation protection and nuclear safety and security issues will provide a better basis for implementing measures. There is a particular need to provide assistance to Ukraine's nuclear authorities.

Priorities:

- Foster dialogue and cooperation between Norwegian authorities and authorities in the partner countries on issues relating to radiation protection and nuclear safety and security;
- Work to bring national legislation into line with international guidelines;
- Further develop legislation, procedures, inspection routines, and administrative regimes, facilitate a culture of safety and security at supervisory authorities that are responsible for radiation protection and nuclear safety and security, and encourage transparent administrative practices;
- Develop legislation to support the restoration of regulatory control of radiation sources and the rehabilitation of facilities and sites directly affected by armed conflict.

3.2 Safety and security at nuclear facilities

Norway seeks to support efforts to prevent accidents, incidents, sabotage and malicious acts at nuclear facilities. This includes measures to improve safety and security at operational nuclear power plants and waste repositories for spent nuclear fuel and nuclear material. Ensuring the safe and secure operation of facilities and handling of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste is crucial in order to reduce the risk of accidents. Accidents at nuclear facilities can have transboundary impacts.

3.2.1 Reducing the risk of accidents at nuclear power plants

Accidents at nuclear power plants can cause acute health problems for people in nearby areas and have long-term impacts over much wider areas. Maintenance and the ongoing implementation of existing safety and security measures are key priorities. Planning and preparation for the safe decommissioning of nuclear reactors is another important area of cooperation.

Priorities:

- Work to ensure the safe and secure operation of nuclear power plants both in peacetime and in situations of armed conflict;
- Foster a strong culture of safety and security at nuclear power plants in partner countries;
- Support efforts to plan and carry out the safe decommissioning of nuclear power plants;
- Work to secure a stable energy supply for Ukraine's nuclear power plants to ensure the ongoing operation of safety systems at the plants.

3.2.2 Reducing the risk of sabotage and terrorism at nuclear facilities

Special measures are needed to protect nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities against sabotage and other malicious incidents. Physical security measures, effective cybersecurity and efforts to counter insider threats are vital to prevent unauthorised access to facilities and sensitive material, and to prevent nuclear and other radioactive material from falling into the wrong hands.

Priorities:

- Improve physical security at nuclear facilities;
- Ensure cybersecurity at nuclear facilities;
- Work to counter insider threats at nuclear facilities.

3.2.3 Improving management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste

Spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste stored under unsatisfactory conditions can have adverse health and environmental impacts. Norway will do its part to ensure that this waste is dealt with in a responsible manner and is kept under control at all times.

Priorities:

- Work to ensure the safe and secure handling, storage and transport of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste;
- Promote safe, satisfactory working conditions for personnel responsible for dealing with spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste.

3.3 Non-proliferation of nuclear and other radioactive material

Norway supports efforts to prevent nuclear and other radioactive material that could be used to produce nuclear weapons or dirty bombs from falling into the wrong hands. Measures to uncover attempts to smuggle radioactive and nuclear material, to both state and non-state actors, are crucial in this context. There is also a need to retrieve and secure material that has fallen outside the control of the authorities or that has been used for criminal purposes. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an international treaty that aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

3.3.1 Preventing smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material

Preventing the smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material is an important task that requires international cooperation. Norway is calling for closer cooperation between the various authorities and organisations that are responsible for uncovering smuggling activities. Measures that strengthen border controls and thus prevent the smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material are a key priority. Such measures could include improving administrative procedures, providing more training for personnel and purchasing better radiation detection equipment. Insufficient capacity and inadequate national inspection and enforcement systems for nuclear and other radioactive material could result in material falling into the wrong hands.

Priorities:

- Tighten border controls to prevent the smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material;
- Strengthen cross-border cooperation between relevant authorities to prevent the smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material.

3.3.2 *Strengthening non-proliferation efforts*

Norway is seeking to strengthen regulatory and physical control of nuclear and other radioactive material and enhance the authorities' efforts to secure such material. Maintaining information exchange and international cooperation on non-proliferation issues is vital in this context.

Priorities:

- Strengthen regulatory and physical control of nuclear and other radioactive material and enhance the authorities' efforts to secure such material;
- Promote the development of techniques to determine the origin and history of nuclear material (nuclear forensics) in order to expose and prosecute criminal activities;
- Provide support for training in the detection of nuclear and other radioactive material.

4 How nuclear safety and security cooperation is organised

Efforts to promote nuclear safety and security require national coordination and international cooperation. This work is carried out at both bilateral and multilateral levels, as described in the white paper on international cooperation on nuclear safety and security in a changed Europe (Meld. St. 30 (2023–2024), highlights only in English). Some of the most relevant forums for cooperation are mentioned below.

Organisation of efforts at national level

Nuclear safety and security cooperation under the Nuclear Action Plan is funded through allocations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has overall responsibility for setting priorities for efforts under the Nuclear Action Plan and represents Norway in international forums that deal with nuclear safety and security.

To ensure broad political backing for strategic decisions and priorities, all relevant issues are discussed by the Ministry's advisory committee for nuclear issues. The committee has a wide range of members, including representatives of other ministries that are involved in nuclear safety and security and emergency preparedness efforts.

The Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (DSA) is responsible for following up the Nuclear Action Plan on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Maintaining contact and cooperation with relevant organisations and authorities in partner countries is a key part of this work. Particular importance is attached to bilateral cooperation between the nuclear authorities in Norway and their counterparts in partner countries.

DSA administers grant funding under the Nuclear Action Plan, including funding for nuclear safety and security cooperation with Ukraine and Moldova provided under the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine. DSA is responsible for assessing grant applications and reports, within the framework of the annual guidelines and allocations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Projects implemented by external actors that are financed under the grant scheme are crucial to achieving the objectives of the Nuclear Action Plan.

Bilateral cooperation

Bilateral cooperation offers flexibility and is an effective way to build trust, implement projects, and rapidly address specific needs. Bilateral contact promotes mutual capacity-building as well as the exchange of knowledge and information with partners.

A bilateral working group on cooperation with Ukraine has been established at political level. As well as ensuring that this cooperation has the necessary political backing, the working group serves as an important forum for discussing priorities, developing strategies and promoting effective project implementation. Cooperation on strengthening nuclear safety and security in Ukraine is set out in a number of bilateral agreements, including with the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine, with Ukraine's nuclear authority, with the Ukrainian state enterprise that owns and operates the country's nuclear power plants, and with the authority responsible for the Chornobyl exclusion zone.

Norway has also signed agreements on cooperation in the areas of radiation protection and nuclear safety and security with various authorities in Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In addition, Norway has entered into bilateral agreements with a number of countries on early notification of nuclear accidents and exchange of information on nuclear facilities. An agreement of this kind was signed with Russia in 1993, and procedures for notification were subsequently drawn up under the agreement. A notification agreement between Norway and Ukraine was signed in 1994. Notification procedures have also been developed under this agreement.

Multilateral cooperation

Due to the complexity and scope of most of the issues arising in the context of Norway's nuclear safety and security cooperation, multilateral coordination, cooperation and financing are essential. This takes place through various organisations and initiatives, such as the IAEA and the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (the Global Partnership). The Global Forum to Prevent Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism (Global FTRNT) is a platform that seeks to strengthen international efforts to combat terrorism involving the use of radioactive or nuclear material. Multilateral solutions are often needed, particularly in costly projects, where a multilateral approach can also help to ensure more efficient use of funding. The implementation of such projects often requires the involvement of major international institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The Arctic Council is an important forum for international cooperation on environmental monitoring and nuclear preparedness and response in the north.

Another important forum is the Information Sharing Initiative (ISI), which coordinates support for Ukraine, thus preventing overlapping initiatives.

APPENDIX: Relevant organisations, cooperation forums and conventions

Arctic Council	<p>Leading intergovernmental forum for cooperation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), one of the Arctic Council's six Working Groups, is designed to deliver sound science-based information for use in policy- and decision-making.</p> <p>The Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR) is one of the Arctic Council's six Working Groups. Its mandate includes search and rescue, preparedness and response to acute pollution, and radiological and nuclear preparedness.</p>
Espoo Convention	UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	An international financial institution established to support the development of market economies and democracy in former Communist countries, for example in Central and Eastern Europe. Owned by the EU, the European Investment Bank and more than 70 countries, including Norway.
Joint Convention	<p>Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management</p> <p>Entered into force in 1997.</p>
Global FTPRNT	Global Forum to Prevent Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism.
Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction	The G7-led Global Partnership, which currently has 30 members, was launched at the G8 Summit in 2002 and continued by the G7. The aim is to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material.
<u>Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons</u> (NPT)	International treaty that aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of disarmament. Under the Treaty, all non-nuclear-weapons states parties are required to enter into safeguards agreements with the IAEA.
Information Sharing Initiative (ISI)	Forum for coordinating international support for nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. Holds annual meetings at which participating countries can exchange information

	and experience. Also serves as an important platform where Ukrainian authorities can present their needs and priorities. The ISI provides information about its activities in international forums such as the G7-led Global Partnership.
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	A UN organisation whose mission is to promote the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The IAEA carries out safeguards inspections to verify that civilian nuclear facilities are not being used to produce nuclear weapons.
International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)	Criminalises nuclear terrorism and promotes cooperation between the states parties on prosecution of perpetrators.
Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS)	Seeks to achieve a high level of safety at nuclear power plants. Entered into force in 1994.