

Assistance for Enhancing Nuclear and Radiological Security: Beyond the IAEA Alone

Many States need and have requested assistance to implement their national nuclear and radiological security objectives, especially their obligations under a range of legally binding international nonproliferation instruments. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a host of technical assistance programs to meet many of those needs, and an extensive record of providing such assistance. Unfortunately, persistent gaps in implementation, such as those identified in the 2016 Comprehensive Review of the UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), indicate that despite the IAEA's good work, the need for assistance has not abated.

Clearly, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has the central and most important role in providing and, where appropriate, coordinating these assistance activities. At the same time, many other entities have made important contributions to assistance in the realm of nuclear and radiological security, perhaps best recognized in the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit Action Plans with the United Nations, INTERPOL, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, as well as the Action Plan with the IAEA. Until now, however, no exploration of the work by other entities could draw on a comprehensive database of relevant assistance activities. With funding from the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFTAD), however, the Stimson Center has recently developed a searchable, open source, online database of more than 1500 WMD nonproliferation assistance programs and projects (available at <https://1540assistance.stimson.org>).

A preliminary analysis of the more than 400 entries in the database directly associated with either radiological or nuclear security indicates that many dozens of other entities participate as assistance funders or providers in the process. As important, an even larger number of entities serve as implementers, connecting those providing and those seeking assistance. In this paper, after a brief review of the extant coordination mechanisms for nuclear and radiological security assistance, the author will explore the scope and scale of the assistance contributions made by other international bodies, States, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and foundations, along with those of the IAEA. The paper will cover, for example, what types of assistance these organizations provide, the geographic location of their activities, and the relationship between the providers or funders of assistance programs and the implementers of the activities. The author will also explore how well these programs match needs expressed by UN Member States through requests for assistance to the Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and through requests for assistance expressed in national statements by IAEA members during the last five General Conferences. The author also will explore some of the challenges States face in requesting and securing assistance and generate some hypotheses for future research. To conclude, the author will use the findings to generate several recommendations on how the international community can enhance their efforts to assist States in meeting their nuclear and radiological security objectives, thereby contributing to increased international peace and security.

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Track Classification: MORC: The IAEA's technical support for States that takes into consideration complex threats and challenges including geographical condition