

A NEW HORIZON FOR THE NSSC NETWORK: GOOD PRACTICES IN TAKING A SYSTEMATIC AND SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR SECURITY

IAEA Member States dedicate significant resources and effort to develop and implement their national nuclear security regimes, which are based on the capabilities to prevent, detect and respond to criminal or intentional unauthorized acts involving or directed at nuclear material, other radioactive material, associated facilities, or associated activities. However, multiple examples and experience in member states has shown that the actions needed to sustain (ability to remain effective over the long-term) these capabilities require a systematic and consistent approach, government and competent authorities' commitment and certain infrastructure. This is also comprehensively reflected in IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 30-G "Sustaining a Nuclear Security Regime."

Based on member states requests for IAEA support in developing, implementing, and sustaining an effective national nuclear security regime and drawing from the experience of certain states, the IAEA developed a concept for the establishment and operation of a national Nuclear Security Support Centre (NSSC) as a means to strengthen the sustainability of nuclear security in a state. The concept was captured in the IAEA TECDOC 1734, "Establishing a National Nuclear Security Support Centre." As interest in the NSSC concept increased, the IAEA established the International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network) in 2012 to facilitate sharing of information and resources and to promote coordination and collaboration among states with an NSSC or those having an interest in developing a centre.

The NSSC Network grew rapidly in its first few years, from 20 Member States in 2012 to 49 Member States by 2015. The growth in membership also reflected a wide range of NSSCs with diverse organizational structures, affiliations, objectives, and a variety of operational practices and approaches. However, after a few years of operation, the NSSC Network Members and the IAEA identified certain gaps and areas for improvement. In particular, the NSSC Network still had minimal understanding of NSSC needs and resources, insufficient data gathering and information management tools, a need for more strategic direction and agreed priorities within the Network, and a lack of detailed guidance and information on best practices for NSSCs.

This paper will outline the key actions that the NSSC Network has taken since 2016 in order to make it more effective. Significant achievements in that regard include: holding the NSSC Network Annual Meeting in Pakistan (2016), Japan (2018), and China (2019); developing a new NSSC Network database, events calendar, and semi-annual Newsletter; revising IAEA TECDOC 1734 to serve as enhanced guidance for States on establishment and operation of an NSSC; optimizing the schedule and content of Network meetings; developing a new long-term strategy for the Network; and revising and adopting a new Terms of Reference.

Implementing these key steps has helped grow the NSSC Network further to 61 Member States, and has enabled the IAEA and others to provide support for Members that is more structured, systematic, effective and efficient. The NSSC Network experience could therefore be a useful reference for other frameworks or initiatives for cooperation in nuclear security. Learning from the thoughtful approach to programme development within the NSSC Network could help other similar frameworks to avoid mistakes and achieve more consistent implementation of their objectives.

State

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Gender

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