

## **AERB becomes member of Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP)**

Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has joined the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP), launched in 2006 by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the French Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN) with the purpose of co-operation on safety reviews of designs of nuclear reactors.

AERB has become the eleventh full member of the organization. Currently, other MDEP full members include the national regulatory bodies of Canada, China, Finland, France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

In this connection, please find below the NEA Press Release issued on April 4, 2012:

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### **INDIAN NUCLEAR REGULATORY BODY (AERB) JOINS THE MULTINATIONAL DESIGN EVALUATION PROGRAMME (MDEP)**

On 4 April 2012, India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) became the first new member in the MDEP since its inception in 2006.

Mr. André-Claude Lacoste, MDEP Policy Group Chair and Chairman of the French Nuclear Safety Authority (*Autorité de sûreté nucléaire*, ASN), noted that the Policy Group's decision was based on careful consideration of information provided by the AERB concerning its role and duties as well as India's nuclear regulatory framework. He confirmed that it meets the criteria for full membership in the MDEP.

Mr. Luis E. Echávarri, Director-General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), which acts as the Technical Secretariat for the MDEP, welcomed the contribution that the AERB would be making to the convergence of nuclear safety practices among regulators in member and non-member countries alike. India has 20 operational nuclear power reactors totalling 4 780 MWe, and 6 under construction totalling 4 600 MWe. Further expansion of the nuclear fleet is planned in the decades to come.

It is expected that the AERB will take an active part in the MDEP, notably in the Codes and Standards Working Group (CSWG), the Digital Instrumentation and Control Working Group (DICWG), the Vendor Inspection Co-operation Working Group (VICWG) and, eventually, one of the specific reactor design working groups. As a full member, it will contribute to the Programme's strategic decisions in the MDEP Steering Technical Committee and the MDEP Policy Group.

#### **Background information**

The Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) was launched in 2006 by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the French Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN) with the aim of developing innovative approaches to leverage the resources and knowledge of national regulatory authorities reviewing new reactor designs. The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) acts as the Technical Secretariat for the MDEP. The International Atomic Energy Agency participates in many of the MDEP activities, including the harmonisation efforts.

As of 4 April 2012, MDEP membership includes national regulatory authorities from Canada, China, Finland, France, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. The MDEP pools the resources of these 11 nuclear regulatory authorities for the purpose of 1) co-operating on safety reviews of designs of nuclear reactors that are under construction and undergoing licensing in several countries, and 2) exploring opportunities and potential for harmonisation of regulatory requirements and practices. It also produces reports and guidance documents that are shared internationally beyond the MDEP membership (see related links below).

The MDEP is a unique forum with growing influence on new nuclear reactor projects.