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PRESS RELEASE

IAEA IRRS mission finds 'India's regulator shows strong commitment and professionalism to ensure that nuclear and radiation safety is implemented in the country'.

Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) Mission of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to review India's regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety was conducted from 9 to 20 June 2022. The IRRS peer review mission took place at the request of the Government of India and was hosted by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), the regulatory body of India for nuclear and radiation safety. The 2015 mission covered regulatory activities in relation to Nuclear Power Plants, whereas the scope of present mission, along with the follow up of 2015 mission recommendations/suggestions, was extended to include the review of safety regulation of radiation sources facilities and activities also.

The IAEA coordinated IRRS extended follow up mission was led by Mr. Ramzi Jammal, Executive Vice-President and Chief Regulatory Officer of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). The ten member IRRS team comprised of senior regulatory experts from five IAEA Member States and the IAEA staff members. The IRRS team, reviewed India's progress against the recommendations and suggestions identified in the initial IRRS mission-2015 and safety regulation of radiation sources used in facilities and in activities in the country in the field of research, industry, medicine and agriculture.

While handing over the draft Report to Shri G. Nageswara Rao, Chairman, AERB on 20th June, 2022, the IRRS team led by Mr. Ramzi Jammal acknowledged that the AERB has acted on all the recommendations and suggestions made during the 2015 mission and thus significant improvements have been made in various areas and noted a number of achievements in the following areas:

- improved inspection programme, including enhanced training and strengthening the powers of inspectors;
- staff qualification and training programmes aimed at building and maintaining expertise necessary for discharging its responsibilities;
- process for regularly reviewing regulations and guides.

The IRRS team, of the earlier 13 recommendations and 21 suggestions closed the 11 recommendations and 20 suggestions and did not make any new finding in relation to the topics covered during the IRRS initial mission.

With respect to extended scope of mission the IRRS team identified a Good Practice in relation to the integration of regulatory processes within e-Licensing of Radiation Applications (e-LORA), an online platform used by the applicants, authorized parties and AERB. e-LORA platform has significantly improved in efficiently managing the information to be submitted by an applicant / authorized party, based on a graded approach. Further, the IRRS team recognized the systematic approach to integrate the approval of equipment with the need for a consent to an applicant prior to procuring a radiation source and the issuance of a consent to operate a facility or conduct an activity with radiation sources, as a Good Performance. With respect to radiation sources facilities and activities, the team concluded that AERB properly implements radiation safety requirements in India in accordance with IAEA safety standards. The IRRS team also identified few areas of improvement for which recommendations/suggestions were made in the following areas.

- ✓ The need for systematic manner in how safety assessments are included in the license application;
- ✓ Revision of the frequency of planned inspections and the duration of validity of regulatory consent in accordance with a graded approach;
- ✓ Development of National policy and strategy to define responsibilities in regaining control over orphan sources; and
- ✓ Revision of regulations and guides, where appropriate, to ensure consistency with the IAEA safety standards and clarification of the hierarchy of the regulatory documents.

Some of these recommendations / suggestions relate to formalising the practices into formal written down procedures and to strengthen internal management processes. AERB has noted these as an opportunity to further improve the regulatory framework. In overall the IRRS Team concluded that AERB showed a strong commitment and professionalism to ensure the implementation of nuclear and radiation safety in the Country.

Shri G. Nageswara Rao, Chairman, AERB thanked the IRRS Team and conveyed that India will continue to focus on the identified areas in line with international safety standards. He said that AERB's effort to strengthen the regulatory framework have been reflected in the draft mission report.

Sd/-

(A.U. Sonawane)