



PRESS RELEASE

Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response in ASEAN: Technical Support for Decision Making

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Although having no nuclear power plants on their territory ASEAN countries could, in case of an incident at a radiological facility or nuclear accident in other countries, be affected by resulting radiological release. This raises the importance of an appropriate emergency preparedness and response (EP&R) arrangement for ASEAN countries. Recognising that there is not much EP&R expertise available, the European Commission actively supported the development of the Regional EP&R Strategy. The Strategy identified a lack of tools to enable comprehensive decision making in emergencies as the highest priority needs.

Responding to the priority needs, the EC has now launched a project worth EURO 1 million, where a modern Decision Support System (DSS) will be installed in 6 to 10 ASEAN countries, and customised for local conditions. The countries are given the choice in implementing either JRODOS or ARGOS DSS, both being used in many countries throughout the EU and elsewhere in the world. The project also aims at enhancing general EP&R arrangements, providing EP&R training including On-the-job training in emergency centres in the EU as well as the assessment of the status of preparedness through dedicated table top exercises. Dedicated training will be provided for the administration and operation of the DSS, enabling ASEAN countries to support their decisions for any eventually needed countermeasures during emergency. With this the protection of the population in case of radiological releases will be greatly enhanced.

This project will be implemented via a contract with a Consortium comprising ENCO of Austria, KIT of Germany, SCK CEN of Belgium and PSC Argo of Denmark, and in close cooperation with nuclear regulators in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam as well as Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. National actors will be deeply involved in all aspects of its implementation and in particular in the customisation of the DSS. In such a way, the ownership as well as sustainability of the results of the project will be assured.

Background

Following the Chernobyl accident in 1986, the EU launched a nuclear safety programme under TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States) which, between 1991 and 2006, allocated some €1.3 billion to nuclear safety and security projects. From 2007 to 2013, the EU expanded its nuclear safety assistance to third countries under the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) with a total budget allocation of €524 million. In June 2014, the strategy for the implementation of Phase 2 of the INSC (2014 – 2020) was agreed, committing an extra €225 million for nuclear safety projects. Cooperation with ASEAN countries began in 2012, with dedicated projects being implemented in Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. A feasibility study which has led to the development of a strategy and action plan for the development of EP&R in ASEAN was implemented by the EC's Joint Research Centre in the period 2015-2016.

With the rapid development of nuclear power in countries including China, South Korea and India and remaining use in Japan, but also extended uses of radiation and nuclear technologies throughout South East Asia, ASEAN countries need to enhance protection measures in case of radiological releases. Extensive EP&R experience in the EU, including in particular the regional cooperation that has been achieved in the EU, serves as a leading example to ASEAN countries.

Cooperation between the EU and ASEAN will assure that best international practice and standards are being implemented. European DSS tools, JRODOS and ARGOS are recognised as premier products internationally.

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