



Office for
Nuclear Regulation

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT TO 2025



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1. Purpose

The regulation of nuclear safety, security, safeguards and the transport of radioactive material operates within a global context of international law, obligations, standards and guidance. Our effective engagement and influence on a worldwide platform are imperative to:

- influence the development of international standards and guidance for safety, security and safeguards that directly inform and are incorporated into the UK regulatory system to promote and sustain high standards;
- enhance our reputation as a world-leading regulator;
- collaborate and learn from others to inform our own development and continuous improvement; and
- support other countries to reach for the same high standards in safety, security and safeguards.

Our international engagements are wide-ranging from fulfilling legal, treaty and government obligations and directly influencing the development of standards; to supporting our strategic objectives, maintaining visibility, providing knowledge transfer and for professional development. Our international engagement includes support to the UK Government in demonstrating compliance with international conventions relating to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, ensuring continued inter-operability in radioactive and nuclear material transport, and working with international partners on regulatory matters, exchanging information, operating experience and research to promote good practice.

This Framework provides the strategic context to support our [Strategy 2020-25](#), defining the governance structure for agreed priority international engagements and criteria for participation in international engagements. The Framework is a 'living' document that is subject to regular review to reflect our changing priorities and the evolving international and political context.

2. Our Operating Environment

Our Mission is to protect society by securing safe nuclear operations. To do this effectively we need to ensure that we are suitably positioned, agile and able to meet the challenges as the global nuclear industry changes and evolves by considering factors that affect our operating environment and priorities. To enable this, we support a significant portfolio of international work with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) and other standard-setting bodies. This enables us to influence globally, learn from relevant international experience and good practice and maintain alignment with international obligations, standards and conventions. Our international work is kept under regular review to take account of factors that affect and impact on our operating environment.

2.1 COVID-19 (coronavirus)

The effects of the global pandemic continue to affect how we work domestically and internationally. While we ensure the continued effective regulation of nuclear safety, security and safeguards, we have taken account of the limitations on any future physical international engagement due to COVID-19 in the short to medium term. This Framework outlines how we will continue to advance nuclear standards and practice through our influence and advice and learning from others to inform and improve our regulation, working virtually to achieve our objectives. We will seek to capture the benefits of our new ways of working both domestically and internationally including our resilience and response for any future pandemics.

2.2 UK-EU Future Relationship Agreement

Following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), the UK secured a Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU and a separate stand-alone Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) for future civil nuclear cooperation with Euratom. The NCA formally confirms for the nuclear industry and international community, a constructive, cooperative UK-EU relationship as part of the global nuclear community on nuclear safeguards (non-proliferation), nuclear safety and security.

We formally became the safeguards regulator responsible for operating the UK State System of Accountancy for and Control (SSAC) of Nuclear Materials on 1 January 2021. We now provide the important non-proliferation safety assurances required by the international community, through agreements with the IAEA and with NCA partners in meeting the safeguards-related requirements of those agreements. The NCA ensures the UK's standing as a leading and responsible civil nuclear state is maintained and provides an effective system to facilitate the exchange of information and technical cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

While we will seek to gain traction and bring our influence to bear through direct involvement with the NEA and the Western European Nuclear Regulators Association (WENRA), engaging with the EU remains important. The NCA secures the ability for the UK to participate as a third country in established expert advisory groups in the field of nuclear safety including the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) and any other EU groups as may be agreed between the UK and EU.

2.3 UK Government Policy

The UK Government is committed to nuclear energy (civil and defence) and the **Nuclear Sector Deal** (NSD) seeks to promote positive aspects of an energy mix that features nuclear power and includes as key themes: goals on the cost reduction of new build in the UK and regulatory innovation. Our 'goal setting' regulatory regime offers flexibility to support innovation within the UK nuclear industry – shown through our work with

advanced nuclear technologies (ANTs) and influencing hazard and risk reduction at Sellafield. A key enabler is continuing to strengthen our role in multilateral international fora and bilateral partnerships so we can influence the safety and security of technological developments in the industry and in learning from others.

The UK Government's **Energy White Paper** (December 2020) builds on its **10 Point Plan for a Green Revolution** which commits to pursuing and investing in large scale new nuclear projects and ANTs. This includes intentions to open our Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process to small modular reactors (SMRs) and development of fusion technologies. They also reaffirm the Government's commitment to geological disposal. International collaboration on regulation across all these areas will therefore be an ongoing focus.

2.4 Regulatory Innovation

The UK Government's **White Paper on Regulation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution** sets out the need for regulation that supports innovation, while protecting citizens and the environment. As a regulator, we have an important role in minimising regulatory uncertainty and burden around innovation. Our ['Approach to Regulating Innovation'](#) sets out our intention to embrace innovation, new approaches and technologies in how and what we regulate, share best practice, and encourage dialogue by engaging widely to promote awareness and understanding. Underpinned by our enabling regulatory philosophy, we will ensure we remain effective and not become a barrier to innovation, while maintaining high standards of safety and security.

Through established links with the IAEA and nuclear regulators across the globe, we will continue to share ideas and approaches to identify best practices to help support innovation. A key example is on the development and harmonisation of codes and standards. Applying similar regulatory standards across multiple countries could enable deployment of innovation on a global scale, with minimal design change. Collaboration with international regulators will be a key focus of this work.

2.5 Cost of Regulation

As set out in our Strategy 2020-2025, we will be clear about the costs of our regulatory decisions and continue to examine and review the economic impact of our regulation. We will seek to better demonstrate that we are efficient in what we do, being clear on the outcomes we seek to achieve, how we will influence them and the resource required, with the goal of providing cost certainty to industry. We will also undertake international comparisons of factors such as regulatory costs and standards as applied in practice and explore opportunities to determine how our economic impact in specific types of regulation compares with international counterparts.

3. Our International Footprint

Our international footprint is extensive with multilateral international engagements across a range of forums and activities. This includes IAEA standards setting, missions and conventions it sponsors, NEA committees and working groups, and other organisations such as WENRA. We will seek to maintain and, where appropriate, strengthen our influence and forge strong multilateral and bilateral partnerships across national and international regulatory authorities and agencies.



3.1 Multilateral Engagement

We are highly respected internationally, both technically and regulatorily, and we will continue to build on our strong reputation to continuously improve our standards, regulatory effectiveness and to be a positive influence on the world stage. We use our reputation and credibility to influence the development of global nuclear safety standards, security guidance and important areas of international safeguards development. This includes the development of best practice standards and guidance. We will continue to undertake a wide range of work in a multilateral context, including:

- proactive engagement in the development of international standards and guidance, which influence relevant good practice and implementation in the UK - noting that the UK's goal-setting legal framework is unique internationally;
- promulgation of our own good standards of nuclear regulation, to enhance ONR's reputation and improving nuclear safety, security and safeguards globally;

- sharing experience and exchanging information collaboratively;
- generation of common positions and testing ideas in relatively risk-free contexts. For example in regulatory innovation, understanding design differences in GDA and their rationale;
- raising standards internationally and specifically with aspirant nations - noting that a nuclear accident or security event anywhere has political, social, economic and environmental repercussions globally.

3.2 IAEA and International Conventions

Working with key bodies including the IAEA, NEA, and other influential standard setting bodies including WENRA enables us to influence globally, learn from relevant international experience and good practice, maintain alignment with international obligations, standards and conventions and ensure their output meets the UK's needs by taking account of UK law, context and practice.

Our technically competent and regulatorily experienced staff engage and influence across a range of activities, shaping and informing the development of international standards and guidance and relevant good practice by sharing learning and expertise. We actively support the IAEA's Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) and International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) missions, which review regulatory policies and practices against IAEA safety standards and security guidance respectively. Participation in IAEA missions facilitates two-way learning: as well as contributing to international safety and security, our staff bring back experiences and insights which inform the effectiveness and efficiency of our own regulation.

The UK is a signatory to various international treaties and conventions which place legally binding obligations on the UK to demonstrate compliance. This includes the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Joint Convention on Safety of Spent Fuel and Safety of Radioactive Waste and Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Our participation in this significant and high-profile work, at the request of the UK Government, gives other Contracting Parties confidence that the UK is meeting its obligations; and we participate in a peer review process of other nations' submissions to do likewise.

On behalf of the UK, we are strongly represented in key IAEA committees and groups and actively contribute to and influence the development of international standards and guidance for safety, security and safeguards. The IAEA safety standards and security guidance underpin global nuclear safety and security. They provide a robust framework of fundamental principles, requirements and guidance developed through an open and transparent process for gathering, integrating and sharing knowledge and experience. These include:

- Commission on Safety Standards (CSS)
- Nuclear Safety Standards Committee (NUSSC)
- Waste Safety Standards Committee (WASSC)
- Radiation Safety Standards Committee (RASSC)

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee (EPRReSC)
- Transport Safety (TRANSSC) – sets international standards for inter-operability of radioactive and nuclear transport through the CSS
- Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC)
- Director General’s Advisory Group on Nuclear Security (AdSec)
- Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation (SAGSI)

As the UK’s domestic safeguards regulator, we will continue to participate in SAGSI to influence the development of international safeguards to improve effectiveness and efficiency without placing disproportionate demands on the UK and the nuclear industry.

Our regulatory input is a key part of the UK representation at the IAEA’s Annual General Conference (GC) which shapes key elements of the Agency’s priorities in its work on the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. This involves having a central role in contributing to effective international cooperation on nuclear safety, security, and safeguards; the Senior Regulators Conference (part of the IAEA GC); the International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) and other relevant thematic IAEA conferences.

We are prominent in our participation in international event reporting and sharing of operational experience, supporting on behalf of the UK and as a nuclear regulator engagement with the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES), Incident Reporting System (IRS), Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) and Fuel Incident Notification and Analysis System (FINAS).

As the civil nuclear security regulator, our engagement fulfils treaty obligations focussed on the protection of enrichment technology. We also undertake regulatory duties overseas to ensure compliance with UK civil nuclear regulations including:

- compliance inspections of overseas-based transport operators
- inspections of arrangements for the protection of UK sensitive nuclear information being held overseas; and
- interventions to enable the approval of cross border transport arrangements for nuclear material.

Our role as the UK safeguards regulator and operating the UK SSAC calls for substantial engagement with the IAEA to meet international obligations. This includes declarations and other reporting requirements under the UK’s safeguards agreements with the IAEA; facilitating IAEA activities to assess and verify those declarations; and servicing UK support for the continued development and strengthening of the IAEA’s global safeguards regime (for example the UK’s representation on SAGSI).

3.3 Western European Nuclear Regulations Association (WENRA)

We are a member of WENRA, an independent association of predominantly European national nuclear regulators recognised for developing harmonised approaches to nuclear

safety. WENRA's established network of senior nuclear safety regulators gives access to extensive experience in nuclear safety. As a WENRA member we have committed to implementing their Safety Reference Levels (SRLs) within the UK's national regulatory frameworks. Ongoing maintenance and development of the SRLs and harmonisation of safety approaches between countries are overseen by WENRA's Reactor Harmonisation Working Group (RHWG) and Working Group on Waste and Decommissioning (WGWD).

WENRA, as the strategic partner for nuclear safety to ENSREG, also provides technical support and a consistent independent view on European nuclear regulatory issues to work together to continuously improve nuclear safety in Europe. Recognising the importance of peer reviews in delivering continuous improvement to nuclear safety, the revised Nuclear Safety Directive introduced a European system of six-yearly topical peer reviews which WENRA facilitates on behalf of ENSREG.

3.4 European Nuclear Security Regulators Association (ENSRA)

ENSRA comprises European regulators in nuclear security and government nominated public advisory bodies to facilitate increased co-operation and information exchange on nuclear security regulatory matters. This includes the physical security of nuclear power plants and nuclear material and sharing best practice experience to maintain high standards. Our participation and contribution to the annual ENSRA plenary and selected workshops provides the opportunity to demonstrate our world-leading credentials, benchmark our approaches with other regulators, and to understand international expectations for nuclear security. Our engagement ensures that ENSRA views and publications reflect or take account of UK nuclear security regulatory practice. Recognising the need for greater alignment, the ENSRA-WENRA working group on cyber security allows for the exchange of regulatory and operational experience and develop working level guidance/recommendations on cyber security that align with IAEA recommendations.

3.5 Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA)

The NEA is a specialised agency under the framework of the OECD and is a leading international intergovernmental agency that facilitates cooperation between predominantly established nuclear regulators with advanced nuclear technology infrastructures. It seeks excellence by sharing practical problems of regulating the nuclear industry to address topical issues and lever their individual resources to conduct nuclear regulatory research in a resource-efficient manner. The NEA undertakes a broad work programme. This includes nuclear safety, law, economics and science across a range of technical steering committees and its membership composition means that consensus building is often simple and quick. This allows for projects to move forward faster and, in principle, support ONR in the development and refinement of assessment guidance and inspection practices.

The NEA has a strong relationship with the UK, and we continue to grow our influence, working collaboratively across the NEA spectrum. We contribute to the UK's annual NEA

subscription and provide key regulatory and policy input, specifically in the Committee for Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA) and the Committee for the Safety of Nuclear Installations (CSNI) and their working groups. We also support work on radiological protection and radioactive waste management. The NEA's strategic plan for 2023-2028 is being developed and we will play a key role in shaping and refocussing its high priority topics as part of its strategy.

Outputs from specific NEA standing committees and working groups provide demonstrable and proven value to our regulatory technical assessment and inspection guides. Following the UK's exit from the EU, we are working collaboratively with the UK Government to maximise and strengthen engagement with NEA and effectively co-ordinate in line with the UK objectives. This will provide an opportunity to rationalise our efforts across the NEA to ensure our work achieves a good balance of demonstrable value to our regulatory framework, influence the strategic direction, its research and identify developmental opportunities for inspectors to acquire valuable exposure to international developments and practices.

3.6 Small Modular Reactor Regulators' Forum

We actively participate in the Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Regulators' Forum which comprises international regulators that either perform or have interest in SMR-related regulatory assessments. It operates under the auspices of the IAEA and, as the only international regulatory forum which focuses on SMRs, its purpose is to identify, understand and address key regulatory challenges that as they emerge. The aim is to share SMR regulatory knowledge and experience to facilitate efficient, robust, and thorough regulatory decisions; encourage enhanced nuclear safety; and facilitate international cooperation among regulators performing SMR-related assessments.

As a direct result of the UK Government's Clean Growth Strategy and Nuclear Sector Deal, we have developed a programme of work to grow our capability in ANTs, focusing on Mature Technology - Small Modular Reactors (MT-SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs). We continue to enhance our engagement with international regulators to develop our capability, including the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), SMR Regulators' Forum, NEA's Working Group on the Safety of Advanced Reactors, IAEA activities on SMRs and leading research organisations – such as the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) and France's Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN).

3.7 World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS)

The WINS is a non-governmental membership organisation committed to building an international community of nuclear security professionals who are demonstrably competent and willing to work collaboratively to strengthen the security of nuclear and other radioactive materials. It works closely with the IAEA on security-related issues and our involvement ensures that the development of nuclear security guidance reflects UK regulatory practice.

3.8 European Safeguards Research and Development Association (ESARDA)

We are an active member of ESARDA, the Europe-wide body for collaborative development of safeguards implementation which provides a forum for continuing development of practicable safeguards arrangements. Its working groups bring together operators, national regulators and the international safeguards inspectorates. As the UK domestic safeguards regulator, our continued participation and contribution provides the opportunity to establish and influence key working groups and support the development of international safeguards best practice standards and guidance.

3.9 Bilateral Engagement

The global nature of the nuclear industry and the potential trans-boundary impact of any severe nuclear accident means we have a role to play in raising the bar internationally for public protection. In support of our core regulatory purposes, we work proactively with international regulatory bodies to co-ordinate positions and engagement, benchmark our respective approaches and exchange regulatory and technical information, experience and expertise on nuclear safety, security and safeguards. This includes our membership of the International Nuclear Regulators' Association (INRA), which brings together the heads of nine regulatory authorities with considerable experience regulating nuclear activities. Its purpose is to strengthen nuclear safety globally and help address some of the challenges faced in regulating the nuclear industry.

Formal bilateral agreements are in place between the UK and several other international bodies in the form of Nuclear Cooperation Agreements (NCAs). Following the UK's exit from the EU, the UK-Euratom NCA provides an effective mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information and technical cooperation in areas of mutual interest. It also secures our ability, as the regulator or on behalf of the UK, to participate in established expert advisory groups in the field of nuclear safety, including the ENSREG; and any other EU groups as may be agreed between the UK and Euratom.

Our bilateral cooperation is also governed and supported by strong, vibrant international partnerships through bi-lateral engagements, such as with Republic of Ireland and Norway, and where appropriate, through arrangements formalised in Information Exchange Arrangements (IEAs), as illustrated below. IEAs are agreed between us and partner bodies, supported by government and counterpart national ministries and are generally enacted through bilateral engagements at the IAEA GC. These agreements are not legally binding and do not preclude the need for any formal arrangements that may be needed, such as export control licences but rather they establish the parameters, pre-requisites and boundaries for information exchange.

We also have a role supporting government interactions with like-minded countries and those where the UK seeks to influence non-proliferation efforts, particularly those to whom UK aspires to sell nuclear expertise or to secure inward investment. As an independent regulator, our role in supporting such engagements is focussed on sharing regulatory approaches and experiences to further good standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. As a recognised world-leading regulator, we also commit to working with aspirant nuclear nations to support the development of high standards of safety, security and safeguards.



IRRS Countries ONR has provided experts for integrated regulatory review service (IRRS) Missions since 2014

Bangladesh, Belgium, China, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden

IEA Current Information Exchange Arrangements (IEA)

Argentina, Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, USA

IPPAS International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) Missions since 2014

Belgium, Canada, China, France, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates

4. Our Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives for international engagements are aligned to ONR's strategic themes. Each objective is supported by specific strategic priorities that underpin our international approach and reflect our operating environment.

4.1 Strategic Theme One: Influencing Proportionate Improvements

Objective 1 – To influence the development of international standards, guidance and relevant good practice to ensure they are consistent with UK regulatory objectives and support high levels of safety and security globally.

As set out above under 'Our international footprint', we support a significant portfolio of international work to influence standard and guidance setting globally to ensure the outputs take account of UK regulatory practice and meet the UK's needs. The strategic priorities to deliver this objective are:

Strategic Theme 1 Priorities

- a) We will actively participate in **IAEA safety and security committees**, and specific IAEA consultancies and technical meetings to influence the development of new standards and guidance that directly inform the UK's regulatory system.
- b) We will support the UK Government in fulfilling **obligations to international conventions** such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Joint Convention on Safety of Spent Fuel and Safety of Radioactive Waste and Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material through preparation of UK reports, peer review activities and participation at convention meetings.
- c) We will actively participate in **WENRA and its Working Groups** to maintain and develop up-to-date Safety Reference Levels (SRLs) and harmonisation of safety approaches between countries.
- d) We will strengthen our targeted engagement and influence across **NEA Committees and Technical Working Groups** that tangibly support frontline regulation or the development of standards and guidance to better influence best practice in line with UK objectives and future regulatory standards in decommissioning.
- e) We will continue to take a proactive and leading role, enhancing engagement with the SMR Regulators Forum, in **developing and harmonising international regulatory approaches to SMRs and emerging technological innovation**.
- f) We will deepen our technical collaboration with **priority international bilateral regulatory partners** (Canada, US, France, China and Japan) to influence harmonised international approaches to developing regulatory standards; and encourage continuous improvement and promote good practice for civil nuclear safety, security and safeguards.
- g) We will actively participate and contribute in key international fora including WINS, ICONS, ENSRA, SAGSI, ESARDA to support **civil nuclear security and safeguards regulation**.

4.2 Strategic Theme Two: Inspiring Stakeholder Confidence

Objective 2 – To promote international openness and transparency in nuclear regulation by actively sharing UK regulatory knowledge and experience and communicating in accessible ways to encourage public confidence.

We continue to build on our reputation as a world leading regulator and will better demonstrate our impact, learning and benefits to UK safety, security and safeguards of our international activities with stakeholders; and seek to respond positively to opportunities to develop, formalise and publicise collaboration with other regulators, bodies and agencies.

We will demonstrate our achievements and share our experiences, as well as learn from others, through participating in peer review. This will include securing key positions in leading and/or participating in IAEA missions and WENRA-ENSREG topical peer reviews. The IAEA's Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) conducts reviews of national regulators' policies and practices against IAEA standards and we provide experts to take the lead or participate in IRRS and IPPAS missions of other countries. This facilitates mutual learning and allows comparisons to be made between nations to improve safety and security. It also enables us to promote our regulatory philosophy, seeking to improve standards internationally, and benchmark our own standards by collaborating with and learning from other regulators.

We will augment this by using high profile speaking opportunities and by providing training and sharing information to build strong strategic partnerships. Our focus on openness and transparency through our international engagements and securing key positions, where appropriate, will ensure we play a leading role to enhance transparency and understanding of nuclear regulation. We will also improve accessibility of information to build greater trust with stakeholders including the public.

IAEA standards are developed through an open and transparent process for gathering, integrating and sharing knowledge and experience. We will consult stakeholders, including industry and the public on draft new/revised IAEA standards through effective external engagement and provide appropriate feedback to the respective IAEA committee.

UK law requires dutyholders to comply with very high standards of nuclear safety to protect the workforce and public from harm and to report nuclear incidents and events to ONR. We are prominent in our participation in international event reporting and sharing of operational experience. This shows how we effectively regulate nuclear sites and inspires stakeholder confidence, on behalf of the UK by publishing annual event reports of nuclear and radiological safety incidents and events. This supports our strong commitment to regulatory openness and transparency and to identify potential trends or further learning opportunities.

We will also engage internationally on emergency response communications to ensure we use the most effective ways to engage the public in an emergency situation and learn from others to refine and test our crisis communications plan and wider business continuity handling arrangements.

Strategic Theme 2 Priorities

- a) We will work with **UK Government and international partners** to identify key positions and opportunities to enhance our regulatory leadership and to maintain and, where appropriate, strengthen our international influence following the UK's exit from the EU.
- b) We will continue to take a leading role on the **NEA's Working Group for Public Communications** to increase transparency and build public trust by leading UK input on the characteristics of a trusted regulator to shape the development of guidance and to design effective training in risk communications.
- c) We will contribute to effective international cooperation on nuclear safety, security, and safeguards and further enhance our reputation as a world-class regulator by actively participating in the **IAEA General Conference** as key members of the UK delegation.
- d) We will support international **IRRS and IPPAS missions and Topical Peer Reviews** in a targeted manner, welcoming peer review and taking account of relative priorities and the UK Government's political, inward investment and external trade imperatives.
- e) We will build confidence in our regulatory approach by being an **exemplar of openness and transparency** through learning from others and participating in cross-boundary activities, including collaboration with international bilateral regulatory partners.
- f) We will participate in government and IAEA initiatives to **support aspirant nuclear nations** and improve non-proliferation effectiveness subject to internal governance and ONR's relative priorities.
- g) We will continue to engage internationally on **emergency response communications** as a regulator and with the UK Government to inform our domestic approach to the most appropriate ways to engage the public in an emergency situation.

4.3 Strategic Theme Three: Creating a Culture of Inclusion and Excellence

Objective 3 – To promote continuous professional development and organisational learning in ONR and other sovereign regulators by sharing expertise in nuclear and radioactive safety, security and safeguards regulation.

We support a significant portfolio of international work that enables us to influence globally, learn from relevant international good practice and maintain alignment with international obligations, standards and conventions. To do this we deploy professional, competent staff across our specialisms to international work. This includes guidance writing and to IRRS and IPPAS missions; provide targeted secondments to international bodies to share and develop regulatory expertise and influence higher standards of nuclear safety and security internationally.

Our international engagements create important opportunities to learn by offering broader or alternative perspectives, benchmarks for UK practice and opportunities to engage peer to peer and at senior levels. As well as actively contributing to facilitate improvements in safety, security and safeguards, this allows our staff to enhance their professional technical development and improve UK regulatory approaches and practices.

Our inclusive organisational culture seeks to build capability and resilience and embrace diversity. This ensures that the right competent and suitably qualified, experienced people are engaged in international groups and fora that place us at the forefront of knowledge, with the ability to influence domestically. It enables horizon scanning and organisational learning, for example, on leadership and management applied in our day-to-day regulation and in the provision of intelligence, insight and advice to our Senior Leadership Team and Board (for example, on regulatory planning assumptions, strategic planning and informing government policy).

Within our Regulatory Directorate, it can be used to inform guidance and standards, and the development of new regulatory capability in key priority areas such as emerging new technologies. Importantly, our membership of multilateral groups and fora ensures UK-wide access to data and other resources (e.g. licensees) as well as providing a means to seed expertise in academia and technical support contracts (TSCs) where appropriate.

This objective supports and influences those individuals deployed and their activity, with delivery achieved through international engagements identified under ST1 and ST2.

Strategic Theme 3 Priorities

- a) We will ensure Professional and Delivery Leads identify and provide **international opportunities** to talented staff to keep informed of developing standards and support professional development against individual requirements.
- b) We will support staff to undertake **specific technical training** where this tangibly supports delivery of frontline regulatory competence.
- c) We will identify opportunities for **reciprocal sharing of specialist resource** through secondments to/from international bodies and specific international bilateral partners where there is a demonstrable strategic imperative and in a manner that does not impact on our capability.
- d) We will identify and **field suitably competent and diverse staff** to provide intelligence for our horizon scan by using these opportunities to keep abreast of international developments.
- e) We will ensure **continued access to information and experimental data** through membership of multilateral groups and international research collaborations.

4.4 Strategic Theme Four: Modernising How We Work

Objective 4 – To draw from our reputation as a world class regulator by building on our strengths and by actively seeking opportunities to learn from other nations to improve our own performance.

Our position as a world leading regulator provides a wide range of opportunities to learn and improve through our international activities. This objective cuts across all our international engagements and creates opportunities for organisational development by upholding and building on our reputation and engendering trust with stakeholders domestically and globally. This ensures we are in a visible, strong position to influence international standards and guidance.

As captured under other strategic themes, we will continue to proactively participate in international and topical peer reviews in deploying suitably competent staff and in hosting such reviews and by the development of international standards and guidance. We will ensure that our regulatory knowledge and expertise is further enhanced, where appropriate, by buying-in overseas expertise and/or hosting overseas secondees. We will also draw on insight from other sovereign regulators to help us continually improve and refine our regulatory guidance, as we seek to enhance operational co-ordination, collaboration and integration across our purposes.

The OECD review of ‘International regulatory cooperation (IRC) in the UK’ recommended the development of a UK high-level strategy for international regulatory cooperation to provide overarching principles for international regulatory cooperation. The report recognised this framework as “innovative” and “a rare example of strategic thinking around IRC in a specific sector”. We will continue to contribute to such reviews to share our experience with domestic and international regulators to learn how to apply strategic approaches and thinking to international engagements.

Characterising regulatory effectiveness is a challenge facing all regulators. To show that we operate and regulate in a way that delivers effective outcomes for safety, security and safeguards, we have developed and refined our Organisational Effectiveness Indicator (OEI) Framework, informed by the NEA’s ten ‘Characteristics of an Effective Nuclear Regulator’. Our Tier one OEI aligned to this Framework is “to engage with UK and international stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of our regulation and to inform UK policy”. A set of international indicators will evidence the impact of our international activities and how we use our international expertise and share our learning to be a modern regulator delivering trusted outcomes and values.

Engaging internationally also broadens our understanding and learning of key regulatory issues. It provides access to research on common issues and technological developments, providing the opportunity to contribute to more efficient ways of working, harmonise regulatory approaches and support effective regulation. The benefits of this approach are:

- importing good overseas practices and ideas into ONR, which avoids costs of developing similar processes, repeating mistakes of others, engenders synergies with other organisations and encourages working to the same practices;
- avoids unnecessary divergence in regulatory requirements and processes for multi-national dutyholders;
- enhances our reputation as we can clearly demonstrate alignment with and active consideration of international best practice; and
- makes hosting international peer reviews more straightforward.

Delivery of this objective will be through the international activities and engagements set out under strategic themes one, two and three.

5. Governance

The Framework sets the strategic direction for our international engagement and will be underpinned by structured internal governance, annual international workplans and review mechanisms measuring its effectiveness. The Framework is a 'living' document subject to regular review to reflect our changing priorities and operating environment; and to take account of the evolving international and political scene.

5.1 International Steering Group (ISG)

Our internal International Steering Group (ISG) provides governance and corporate oversight of this strategic framework. Co-chaired by the Technical and Policy and Communications directors with representative technical and policy membership, the ISG sets the strategic direction of all our international engagements. These directors are accountable to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) including reporting regularly to on the Framework's effectiveness and continued alignment to our Strategy 2020-25.

Accountability and resourcing of international activities is the responsibility of the relevant director as set out in International Work Plans, completed as part of the planning round for any work that will contribute to this Framework (but is not part of the work needed by a Regulatory Division to deliver its regulatory programme (e.g. New Reactor GDA visits). These plans set out what will be achieved internationally, with a focus on outcomes and how activities align with the priorities set out in this Framework. The purpose of the ISG is to monitor and facilitate progress towards declared outcomes and provide a mechanism for corporate oversight and governance of the Framework to ensure alignment across our international activities.

5.2 International Engagement Category

For consistency and proportionality in terms of business justification, all international activities are allocated to an 'engagement category':

- **Category A** – SLT agreed priority international engagements that we **must** undertake to fulfil legal/treaty/HMG obligations on the UK and are essential to delivery of our core functions.
- **Category B** – SLT agreed priority international engagements that we **should** undertake that demonstrably support and align with our strategic priorities.
- **Category C** – Other elective international engagements that we **could** undertake to support other technical/regulatory drivers or learning and development.

5.3 Bilateral Cooperation

Bilateral partnerships with international regulatory bodies vary according to how each relationship aligns with our regulatory and organisational priorities with the broad characteristics defined below. All our tier one partnerships are supported by information exchange arrangements (IEAs), and these are considered on a case by case basis for tier two and tier three countries.

- Tier 1 Priority Partnerships - Directly support our core regulatory functions
- Tier 2 Partnerships - Reputational, stakeholder and national interest
- Tier 3 Partnerships - Ad-hoc bilateral interactions

5.4 Support to IAEA IRRS and IPPAS Missions

As part of the annual planning round, we will make recommendations as to which IAEA IRRS and IPPAS missions we propose to support from the IAEA published list; and which ONR representatives should attend, taking account of development needs, resourcing constraints, ability to provide appropriate qualified, experienced resource, and being open and fair to all.

5.5 Support to IAEA Consultancies and Working with Aspirant Nations

We provide support to IAEA consultancies (including associated technical meetings and workshops) with specific priority on the development of nuclear safety standards and nuclear security guidance series (including aspects of the IAEA's nuclear safeguard regime). We also seek to provide support for IAEA-led missions supporting aspiring nuclear nations.

We also receive a considerable number of ad hoc requests that are either technically or policy-driven (including consultancies, technical meetings, missions, training schools and workshop and other similar activities). As a proactive and responsible member of the international nuclear community we will plan to support some of these requests, where justified.

