

TERMS OF REFERENCE
TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT ORGANIZATION FORUM
(TSOF)

Background

The International Conference on Challenges Faced by Technical and Scientific Support Organizations (TSOs) in Enhancing Nuclear Safety and Security, which was held in Tokyo, Japan from 25 to 29 October 2010, concluded that “The IAEA should foster the establishment of a forum dedicated to nuclear safety infrastructure development issues related to scientific and technical support. Such a ‘TSO Forum’ would meet regularly in between the international TSO conferences, establish close working relations with the Regulatory Cooperation Forum (RCF), and operate in conjunction with established regional TSO cooperation structures as well as with the NEA/CSNI on science related issues...” The recent event at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station and the subsequent Ministerial Conference at the IAEA further highlighted the need of a TSO Forum.

Objectives and Scope

The objective of the TSO Forum (TSOF) is to encourage open dialogue and sharing of scientific and technical information among TSOs worldwide. It promotes coordination and collaboration among the TSOF Member States to contribute to the worldwide harmonization of practices.

This includes:

- a) Strengthen the role of TSOs and their global coordination and collaboration, including countries in the process of expanding or embarking on a nuclear programme;
- b) Promote coordination and collaboration among the TSOF Member States to foster scientific and technical capacity building including education and training;
- c) Share and mutually learn safety and security experience and communicate lessons learned including feedback on the use of IAEA Safety Standards and security publications.

Scope of TSOF:

TSOF activities are focused on the enhancement of nuclear and radiation safety and security and related infrastructure development. TSOs provide technical and scientific support to regulatory bodies or the industry and may advise governments in order to achieve the highest level of safety and security. The TSOF will not attempt to change or influence in any way existing or future arrangements (bi-lateral or otherwise) between and among Member States. TSOF is not meant to supersede the role of national TSOs. The TSOF does not have the authority to dictate disposition or application of resources from one Member State to another. That arrangement is between and among Member States.

Membership of the TSOF

The membership of the TSOF will be open to TSOs of all Member States of the IAEA.

Representatives from the European Commission, OECD/NEA and from established regional TSO structures may participate as observers.

Each participating Member State will assume its own costs.

Chairperson and Steering Committee

A Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson will be appointed by the forum for a two year period. The chairperson will also chair the Steering Committee.

A Steering Committee will be set up to provide advice on policies and strategies for the forum. In particular it will propose plans, monitor their implementation and evaluate the results of TSOE activities and feed them back to the forum for continuous improvement.

The Membership in the Steering Committee will be defined and reviewed by the TSOE every two years.

Working Methods

- a) TSOE activities should be guided by a collaborative approach stressing openness and transparency. All efforts will be made to avoid unnecessary duplication of support programmes available elsewhere.
- b) The forum will meet at least once per year. The Steering Committee will meet at least once every six months (either through videoconference or face-to-face).
- c) A Programme Plan will be implemented by the forum and continuously updated by the Secretariat to further meet the objectives of the TSOE.
- d) The results of TSOE activities will be evaluated and fed back to the forum for continuous improvement.
- e) Working groups to deal with specific tasks may be established by the forum.
- f) A website as part of the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Network (GNSSN) will be maintained to share information and promote work within the TSOE and the Steering Committee.
- g) TSOE members and observers and their representatives are not allowed to disclose any protected information without agreement of the owner.

Secretariat Support

Subject to the availability of resources the IAEA Secretariat will facilitate and support the activities of the TSOE and its Steering Committee, including by establishing and maintaining the TSOE-website.