



Work Programme 2024

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

In line with the Euratom Treaty and its own Statutes, the mission of the Supply Agency of the European Atomic Energy Community ('ESA') is to maintain regular and equitable supply of nuclear materials (ores, source material and special fissile material) for all users in the Community.

ESA's strategic objective is the security of supply of nuclear materials, particularly nuclear fuel, for power and non-power uses, by means of the common supply policy.

In line with ESA's strategic objective, the following specific medium-term objectives have been defined:

Specific policy objectives

1. ensure continuous supply of nuclear materials for users in the Community in the short and medium term;
2. facilitate the future supply of nuclear materials, nuclear fuel cycle services and fuel and encourage the diversification and emergence of reliable alternative sources;
3. facilitate the continued and equitable supply of medical radioisotopes;
4. provide the Community with expertise, information and advice on the nuclear materials and services market;

Specific supporting objectives

5. pursue contacts with EU and international authorities, international organisations, utilities, industry and nuclear organisations to further the objectives of ESA;
6. further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ESA's organisation and operations.

This work programme sets out the main activities to be pursued in 2024.

The strategic priority, general and specific objectives, and activities have been linked to ensure that all actions contribute to the achievement of these objectives and to the achievement of the high-level priorities. It takes due account of the priorities, policies and objectives set out by the Commission.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Activity I. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

ESA's main task is to ensure regular and equal access to supplies of nuclear materials for all users in the Community. To this end, it uses its right of option on nuclear materials produced in the Community Member States and its exclusive right to conclude contracts for the supply of nuclear materials, coming from inside or outside the Community and it keeps track of transactions related to services in the nuclear fuel cycle.

To facilitate the operations of the common market for the nuclear materials and fuels, ESA will:

1. assess and conclude, as appropriate, nuclear material supply contracts, pursuant to Article 52 of the Euratom Treaty, in line with the common supply policy;
2. review and acknowledge notifications of transactions involving small quantities, pursuant to Article 74 of the Euratom Treaty;
3. review and acknowledge notifications of transactions relating to the provision of services in the nuclear fuel cycle, pursuant to Article 75 of the Euratom Treaty, in line with the common supply policy.

When exercising these tasks, ESA will:

- pay particular attention to transactions that would appear vulnerable to geopolitical risks, notably because of the place of origin of supplies;
- assist utilities in managing issues related to supply of nuclear fuel, including transport;
- provide information and support to stakeholders on contract issues related to the nuclear common supply policy;
- support the European Commission's nuclear materials accountancy, on request, in verifying contract data contained in prior notifications of movements of nuclear materials.

Activity II. FACILITATING FUTURE SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR FUEL

ESA takes responsibility for the common supply policy with a view to ensuring the security of supply in the short-, medium- and long-term. Through appropriate diversification, in line with the REPowerEU Communication and relevant political decisions, it aims to prevent excessive dependence of Community users on any single external supplier, service provider or design and to facilitate existence, where and when possible, of European supply production capacities in the interest of the EU's strategic autonomy, in particular as regards fuel design and supply. ESA actions support and complement, as appropriate, the EU policy framework and objectives related to energy security and security of supply in the nuclear sector.

To facilitate future supply, ESA will:

1. use its prerogatives under the Euratom Treaty to facilitate diversification of nuclear materials, nuclear fuel cycle services supply (conversion, enrichment, and fuel fabrication) and fuel design in the medium and long term, as stressed and detailed in ESA's recommendations of its annual report 2021;
2. facilitate emergence of alternative sources of nuclear materials, nuclear fuel cycle services and fuel design where such sources are presently not available, in particular for VVER reactors;
3. Explore the potential development of the Small Modular Reactors (SMR) / Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR) technology to identify the indicative time scale and scope of its deployment, as well as its implication on future demand for nuclear materials and related services.

When exercising these tasks, ESA will stay in close communication with the European Commission services and the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees/working groups.

Activity III. FACILITATING THE CONTINUED AND EQUITABLE SUPPLY OF MEDICAL RADIOISOTOPES

In order to enhance the security of supply of Molybdenum-99/Technetium-99m and possibly other radioisotopes that are indispensable for nuclear medicine procedures, the Supply Agency has been entrusted with the monitoring role for the supply chain of medical radioisotopes in the EU. ESA, jointly with the industry association Nuclear Medicine Europe (NMEU), chairs the European Observatory on the Supply of Medical Radioisotopes.

ESA will also contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan of the European Commission's SAMIRA initiative (Strategic Agenda for Medical Ionising Radiation Applications of nuclear and radiation technology).

ESA will:

1. lead and coordinate the activities of the European Observatory on the Supply of Medical Radioisotopes;
2. undertake measures that facilitate supply of high-enriched uranium (HEU) until full conversion of the reactors and processes using it¹;
3. explore, assess, and propose ways to ensure future supply of high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU) for production of medical radioisotopes and as fuel for research reactors¹, based on the conclusions of the last working group report dedicated to the safety of supply of HALEU, as published by ESA in July 2022;

¹ as provided for in the SAMIRA Action Plan

4. explore ways of monitoring and forecasting the supply of a wide range of radioisotopes¹.

To exercise these tasks, ESA will also:

- monitor the needs for HEU and HALEU for the production of medical radioisotopes and for fuelling research reactors;
- encourage (particularly in the context of the Euratom Research and Training programme) projects to secure fuel supply for research reactors and the production of medical radioisotopes.

Activity IV. PROVISION OF EXPERTISE, INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON THE NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND SERVICES MARKET

Entrusted with the role of the Nuclear Fuel Market Observatory, ESA will continue to monitor the nuclear fuel and services market and relevant research and innovation activities to identify trends likely to affect the EU's security of supply. It will continue to produce analyses and reports.

The Agency needs to retain its position as a reliable and well-respected source of high-quality and neutral analyses of the Euratom nuclear fuel cycle market.

To deliver on its market monitoring responsibilities, ESA will:

1. monitor and analyse market conditions and technological developments which are likely to have an impact on the nuclear fuel market, including by the annual survey;
2. publish the market analysis as part of its Annual Report;
3. publish and disseminate information, including through yearly natural uranium price indices, reports, studies, newsletters, timely updates on ESA's website and through the meetings of the Advisory Committee, Council's Atomic Questions Working Party and other.

ESA will also support the activities of the Advisory Committee's subcommittees/working groups.

Activity V. COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

To efficiently carry out its tasks and contribute to security of supply, ESA will actively pursue its relations with EU and Euratom institutions and agencies, Member State authorities, operators, the research community and industry, and international players.

To further its objectives, ESA will:

1. provide, its expertise and information on the nuclear market and contribute to any measures, which the Commission may wish to adopt and/or to propose to the legislator, aiming, under the current geopolitical circumstances, to consolidate security of supply for nuclear materials and services in the interest of European users;

2. cooperate with the European Commission services, in particular in order to:
 - a. provide them with factual market information to take informed decisions as well as policy or legislative actions,
 - b. contribute to Commission's actions in international landscape aiming at facilitating future supply,
 - c. mitigate risks related to transport and other issues related to the geopolitical situation,
 - d. facilitate or ensure future supply of high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU) and related services for production of medical radioisotopes and as fuel for research reactors,
 - e. contribute to the security of supply of a wide range of radioisotopes, in particular through supply monitoring and forecasting,
 - f. facilitate industry dialogue to address medical radioisotopes issues and concerns,
 - g. contribute to monitoring the implementation of the Euratom cooperation agreements with non-EU countries as regards trade in nuclear materials,
 - h. contribute, on request, for matters within its purview, to the assessment of international agreements communicated to the Commission under Article 103 of the Treaty;
3. proactively liaise with the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees/working groups in order to monitor the situation for risk factors and trends that could put at risk security of supply of nuclear materials and related services ;
4. liaise with the operators and other concerned parties to encourage and facilitate diversification and other measures aimed at security of supply of nuclear materials and related services;
5. engage with medical radioisotopes supply chain stakeholders (industry, research and user organisations) in and outside the EU in order to:
 - a. explore ways of monitoring and forecasting the supply of a wide range of radioisotopes¹,
 - b. facilitate the continued supply of medical radioisotopes,
 - c. assess the needs and secure the supply of HALEU;
6. in cooperation with the Euratom Member States concerned, coordinate the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the US Department of Energy - National Nuclear Security Administration, in order to facilitate supply of HEU and to advance towards the minimisation of HEU.

ESA will also maintain regular contact with:

- international nuclear organisations such as the IAEA and the OECD NEA;
- other international players on the nuclear fuel market, including through membership of the World Nuclear Association, the World Nuclear Fuel Market and the European Nuclear Society.

Activity VI. MAKING ESA'S INTERNAL ORGANISATION AND OPERATIONS MORE EFFECTIVE

ESA will continuously review its procedures to further improve the management of the contracts it receives and the operations of its Nuclear Market Observatory. Given ESA's limited resources, it is of paramount importance to ensure that ESA remains effective and efficient.

To this end, ESA will focus its attention on:

1. ensuring compliance and effective internal control;
2. ensuring sound financial management;
3. ensuring competent, engaged and effectively utilised workforce,
4. keeping its work practices under review and updating them where appropriate;
5. the progressive implementation of ESA's document management and security policy;
6. the progressive implementation of the IT system supporting the work of ESA (NOEMI - Nuclear Observatory and ESA Management of Information).
