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The European Union technical cooperation project strengthens nuclear safety and radiation protection regulatory capacity at the National Nuclear Regulator (NNR)

The safe and effective regulation of nuclear facilities requires a highly skilled and technically competent regulatory authority. Building and maintaining technical capacity is therefore essential to ensure that the NNR can uphold robust safety standards, protect people and the environment, and maintain public trust in its regulatory oversight activities. The NNR is a forward-thinking regulator and through its Centre for Nuclear Safety and Security (CNSS) invests in capacity building initiatives aimed at developing current and future generation nuclear professionals.

The European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships on behalf of the European Union, launched a project of the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation with the National Nuclear Regulator (NNR).

As part of the ongoing regulatory capacity building partnership between the the European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships and the NNR's (CNSS) of South Africa, a series of technical workshops, a study tour and several online/ in-person engagements were successfully implemented to strengthen technical expertise and promote the exchange of best practices between international experts and the local stakeholders.

Some of the key achievements noted by the NNR include:

- Completion of the component "Ageing Management" of nuclear facilities
- Participation in the ENSREG TPR 2 process on fire hazards
- Participation in a series of training workshops on ageing management, fire hazards, safety assessment and use of safety assessment codes, emergency preparedness response, development of regulatory documents and NORM
- Participation in a study tour on Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Implementation of a Fellowship programme on Safety Assessment Software Codes.

Through the various initiatives under this European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation project, NNR participants expressed an increased level of confidence in the knowledge gained and welcomed the hands-on exercises that complemented the theoretical discussions. This knowledge strengthened the NNR regulatory competence for conducting reviews and assessments

"This project exemplifies the power of collaboration and the critical role of knowledge-sharing for strengthening regulatory competencies with the aim of advancing regulatory oversight in alignment with international safety standards. The skills gained and partnerships formed will continue to generate value for the NNR in years to come," said Dr Nhleko, Director CNS. Building on the momentum of this successful initiative, the project has since been extended to July 2026 in response to the additional needs expressed by the NNR.

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Enquiries: Gino Moonsamy – 082 535 5365

Manager Communications and Stakeholder Relations

About the National Nuclear Regulator

The National Nuclear Regulator is a public entity which is established and governed in terms of Section 3 of the National Nuclear Regulator Act, (Act No 47 of 1999). The fundamental objective of the NNR is to provide for the protection of persons, property and the environment against nuclear damage through the establishment of safety standards and regulatory practices suited for South Africa. To this end, the NNR provides oversight and assurance that activities related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in South Africa are carried out in a safe and secure manner and in accordance with international principles and best practices.