

WENRA statement on SMR and AMR development

More and more countries are supporting the development of SMRs and AMRs to address their decarbonized energy needs in the context of climate change, with a strong expectation from stakeholders on the national licensing processes to be completed expeditiously.

The business models of these reactors require that they are produced in a large number of copies with a generic design licensable in several countries without significant changes. As a consequence, regulatory bodies are encouraged by vendors, licensees and some governments to reinforce harmonisation of their regulatory requirements, streamline their licensing processes and favor mutual recognition of safety reviews performed by their counterparts to ease the national licensing process of these designs.

Recognising the expectations of stakeholders, WENRA highlights the key role of industry to:

- ensure that their reactor designs are sufficiently mature so that the design substantiations submitted to national regulators are complete, enabling efficient application of the regulatory assessment process;
- provide timely design submissions to national regulatory bodies to aid regulatory collaboration;
- proactively gain a comprehensive understanding of national legal and regulatory frameworks.

WENRA considers that the above mentioned expectations can be met, while preserving the principle of national responsibility for safety, through:

- early engagement with vendors and wider stakeholders to provide clarification on regulatory expectations and facilitate efficient regulatory processes;
- collaborating on the joint assessments of SMR and AMR designs where appropriate;
- developing processes to benefit from the regulatory assessments previously completed by other national regulatory bodies.

Such processes shall enable each national regulator to gain an understanding of the acceptability of the safety case of the plant and, when applicable, of the validity of the assessment already performed by its counterparts. In particular, assessment of the site specific aspects of the designs will remain the responsibility of the national regulatory body.

WENRA members confirm their readiness to foster mutual collaboration on safety assessment of reactor designs along these lines. To this aim, they encourage their respective government to provide regulatory bodies with a mandate, if needed, and sufficient resources.