

South Africa: SA Sends Trainees to China for Nuclear Plant Operations Training

TSHWANE, South Africa, April 20, 2015 (SANews) - Government is sending 50 trainees from the South African nuclear industry to China to take part in the nuclear power plant operations training, said the Department of Energy (DoE).

In a statement, the department said the trainees would be in China for a period of four months as part of the first phase.

Following the conclusion of the recent nuclear vendor parade workshops, and in parallel with work being done in preparation for the commencement of the procurement phase, the first 50 trainees will travel to China to take part in nuclear power plant operations training between April and August 2015.

"These trainees come from the major role players in the nuclear industry that continue to support the government in its ambitions to roll out the nuclear new build programme as per the country policy prescripts," said the department.

The training will take place at the Shanghai Jiao Tong and Tsinghua Universities following a skills development cooperation agreement signed in support of the country's nuclear new build programme between the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (Necsa) and State Nuclear Power Technology Company (SNPTC).

In addition, the training will be in the form of lectures as well as tours to some of China's nuclear facilities.

Trainees will receive lectures in nuclear safety regulatory system, nuclear power plant related subjects such as physical characteristics, nuclear island system equipment, codes and safety oversight, steam power conversion system, material science, conventional island system equipment, thermodynamics and basis of reactor thermal hydraulics and radiation protection, among others.

"This training opportunity marks the first phase of a scope that aims to cover capability and technology in areas of nuclear power plant engineering, procurement, manufacturing, construction, commissioning, operation and maintenance and project management. The second phase of this training will see South Africa sending 250 trainees to China to be trained at various levels."

This first phase is a trial phase. It will be followed by a much more intensive training programme that will cover on the job training at nuclear power plant construction sites, bachelor's degrees in all engineering, natural and social sciences, financial and project management programmes as well as post graduate courses and research collaboration between South Africa and the major developed countries.

The countries will include France, Russia, China, USA, South Korea and Japan.

South Africa's nuclear build programme is premised on the Nuclear Energy Policy of 2008; the Nuclear Energy Act 46 of 1999; and the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2010-30 adopted in 2011.

The policies are meant to add a total electricity capacity of 9 600 MW to the grid by 2030, with the first reactor unit connection made in 2023, well in time for the retirement of the aging coal fleet, in an effort to keep the lights on in a sustainable manner.

The country's National Development plans require that thorough investigations be done on various aspects of the nuclear power generation programme before a procurement decision is taken.

"As such, part of our recent pre-procurement work includes the conclusion of engagements with various vendor countries such as the United States of America, South Korea, Russia, Canada, France, Japan and China. These are the countries that have expressed interest in the roll out of South Africa's nuclear programme," said the department.

In addition, Inter-Governmental Framework Agreements (IGFA) were concluded with all vendor countries, except Canada and Japan, whose agreements are at an advanced stage of completion. All these countries took part in three nuclear vendor parade workshops, which started in October 2014 and concluded in March 2015. The nuclear vendor parade workshops entail vendor countries presenting their nuclear technology offerings.

"Government remains committed to ensure energy security for the country, through the roll out of the nuclear new build programme as an integral part of the energy mix. The nuclear new build programme will enable the country to create jobs, develop skills, create industries, and catapult the country into a knowledge economy," said the department. **(END)**