The NDA group
Draft Strategy

Integrated Impact Assessment Report
Non Technical Summary
July 2025

IIA - Non-Technical Summary

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of Strategy (2021) has been reviewed and updated to align with Strategy (2026), to be published by the end of March 2026. The four strategic themes of Site Decommissioning and Remediation, Spent Fuel, Nuclear Materials and Integrated Waste Management have remained the same, and the Critical Enabler of Transport has also been included in the assessment. Credible options for each of the strategic themes have been revised and reassessed in line with updates to Strategy (2026) in Volumes 1 and 2 of the IIA. Baseline data and the legislative context review have been updated in Volume 3.

Significant changes have been made to the NDA group since the previous Strategy (2021) and associated IIA were produced, as we have moved to the One NDA group model. The NDA group now comprises the NDA, Sellafield, Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS), NRS Dounreay, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) and Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS). The updated IIA has taken these changes into account. Legislative and policy updates, for example, the 'UK policy framework for managing radioactive substances and nuclear decommissioning' published in 2024, have directed the Strategy (2026) update.

The IIA comprises a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA). The methodology of the IIA has not changed from the 2021 iteration, although the topics for the environmental, health and socio-economic assessments have been refined. Sustainability is now regarded as an overarching subject/principle and is hardwired into the assessment rather than assessed as a singular topic. For the purposes of the assessment, the potential significant impacts of Strategy 5 have been assessed through generic activities involved in implementing the preferred strategic options. These are: Land – either an increase or decrease in land utilised by NDA for mission progress; Construction; Operation and Maintenance; and Transport – either an increase or decrease in transport of NDA assets or liabilities.

Land
The assessment demonstrated that an increase in land used for mission progress and new facilities may lead to various potential positive and negative environmental, health and socio-economic impacts. Examples include potentially reduced biodiversity and water resources and, particularly, potential impacts on the economy. Increased land use may be required for credible options for the safe stewardship of the NDA estate, the consolidation and interim storage of spent fuel, decommissioning, the continued safe storage of nuclear fuels, and integrated waste management.

A decrease in land used offers potential positive environmental impacts such as increased biodiversity and water resources, as well as potential positive and negative health and socio-economic impacts. Credible options for site decommissioning and remediation may potentially allow for a reduction in land use.

Construction
The assessment indicated that construction activities, such as the construction of facilities or infrastructure, or the construction of mitigation infrastructure for remediation purposes, may lead to various potential positive and negative environmental, health and socio-economic impacts. Potential significant negative environmental impacts include increased materials usage and waste and impacts on water resources and quality. Potential positive impacts focus particularly on diversity and employment. Construction was assessed as being a requirement of credible options across every strategic theme, though not for the Operational Estate Use topic or the credible options for deferred dismantling.

Operation and Maintenance
The assessment demonstrated that operation and maintenance of existing or new buildings and facilities could lead to potential negative environmental and health impacts, such as reduced air quality and an increase in noise and vibration. However, these activities may lead to potentially significant positive socio-economic impacts, particularly in relation to diversity and the economy. Operation and Maintenance was

assessed as being a requirement of credible options of every topic across every strategic theme, the only exceptions being the credible options to divest NDA land freehold, remove hazards completely for site end-states and declare all fuels as waste today.

Transport

It is noted that a change in transport requirements associated with the location and number of new facilities could offset some of the significant impacts of Strategy (2026) through reduced construction, and operation and maintenance activities. The increased use of rail transportation is a desirable and preferred option to reduce the impacts associated with the distribution of materials such as construction products and soil from our sites.

The assessment concluded that an increase in transport may potentially lead to negative environmental, health and socio-economic impacts, such as reduced air quality and increased risk of respiratory disease. However, there is also the potential for positive socio-economic impacts, such as an increase in local and national assets, and employment. Increased transport was assessed as being a requirement across Integrated Waste Management and site end states.

A decrease in transport may lead to positive impacts across several environmental and health topics. Examples of these are potentially improved air quality and increased life expectancy. A decrease in transport can also lead to potentially positive and negative socio-economic impacts, particularly on the economy and population. A decrease in transport was assessed as being potentially likely as a result of the credible options for the consolidation of spent fuel and the on-site or in-situ disposal of waste.

Cumulative Effects

An assessment of the cumulative effects of strategic themes concluded that the two strategic themes with the highest probability for cumulative effects are Site Decommissioning and Remediation and Integrated Waste Management. It is recognised that the Spent Fuels and Nuclear Materials themes may also interact at certain sites. The timing of the anticipated transfer of the Defence Nuclear Organisation's nuclear liabilities, the new nuclear build programme and advanced nuclear technologies relative to the implementation of Strategy (2026) is uncertain. Consequently, this makes it difficult to accurately predict potential cumulative effects.

Mitigation

In line with the requirements of an SEA, potential measures have been identified to mitigate adverse effects and enhance positive effects that may result from implementing Strategy (2026). We are required to comply with a wide range of legislation and codes of practice applied at international, European, national and local government level, such as the Environmental Permitting Regulations and Planning Regulations. In addition to external regulations, our activity is governed internally in accordance with our strategies, plans, programmes and frameworks, such as the NDA Business Plan and the NDA group Socio-Economic Grant Funding Programme.

A new framework of monitoring has been proposed, recognising that we, the NDA, and government bodies collate information, such as mission reporting and the sustainability review, in addition to relevant Environment Agency data regarding water resources and pollution releases.

Conclusions

There are several general conclusions that can be drawn from the IIA of Strategy (2026). The most significant impacts were in relation to the acquisition of land for the construction, operation and maintenance of new facilities. The adverse impacts of construction can be mitigated by reusing existing facilities and by complying with already existing legislation and best practice. The implementation of a number of the preferred options may put pressure on the existing nuclear skills base. This pressure will be increased if or when aligned with any future demand from the UK's new nuclear build programme. Health risks associated with options are linked to environmental and socio-economic changes. There is considerable uncertainty regarding how options will be implemented at a future time and at site level by Site Licence Companies. The results of this assessment should therefore be viewed as being indicative of potential trends.