



Office for  
Nuclear Regulation

# ONR Strategy

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# **ONR Strategy**

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# **Our Strategy – ONR Together**

## **Foreword**

### **Our role as the UK’s independent nuclear regulator**

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is the United Kingdom’s independent statutory regulator for nuclear safety, civil nuclear security, safeguards and conventional health and safety on licensed sites. Through our independent decision making and oversight, we provide confidence that nuclear activities across Great Britain meet the standards expected by Parliament and the public, ensuring people and the environment are protected. Our responsibilities span the full lifecycle of nuclear operations from the existing reactor fleet and fuel cycle facilities, through waste management and decommissioning, to defence and other licensed and authorised sites. We also regulate the safe transport of civil nuclear and radioactive materials, oversee the protection of sensitive nuclear

information and account for civil nuclear materials in line with the UK's international safeguards obligations. As new reactor designs, small modular reactors (SMRs), and advanced nuclear technologies (ANTs) emerge, we play an essential role in enabling innovation to progress safely and securely.

## **Looking ahead – the future we need to regulate**

The coming decades will be transformative for the UK civil and defence nuclear sectors. Nuclear is set to play a central role in driving economic growth, energy security and national defence. Major projects like Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C will reshape the energy landscape, alongside the development of SMRs, ANTs and the development of fuel manufacturing capability.

Major investment in the UK's nuclear defence portfolio will underpin the nation's Continuous At Sea Deterrent (CASD). Vital programmes of decommissioning and waste management across both civil and defence sectors will be accelerated to reduce legacy hazards. Innovation is set to flourish, with advanced reactor designs, new fuel

technologies, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications moving from concept to reality. The UK's leadership in nuclear regulation and its commitment to international partnerships will help shape global standards.

Skills and supply chains will be strengthened, supporting economic growth and ensuring the industry has the capability to deliver on its ambitions. The next twenty years will witness the UK nuclear sector not only underpin the nation's energy and national security, but also drive technological progress, sustainability, and prosperity for generations to come. This period will also see a fundamental shift in the technology of the UK's nuclear power plants, as the older civil reactors enter decommissioning, new reactors come online, and work continues on waste management such as the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

To support this transformation, the **Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce** has reviewed the UK's regulatory framework. It has explored how improvements could be made, with the aim of supporting energy security, national security, and economic growth in the UK, while maintaining safety standards. This work complements our own strategic direction and reinforces the importance of a modern, agile and productive regulator. Through our new strategy, ONR Together, we will deliver proportionate, enabling regulation that supports innovation and growth, while maintaining public confidence in safety and security.

## **Transforming to meet future demands**

The pace and scale of change across the nuclear sector demands a regulator that adapts with equal ambition. ONR is building on strong foundations to adopt innovative approaches, make timely decisions and evolve our ways of working to meet emerging demands. A thriving nuclear industry relies upon a credible, trusted regulator, and this strategy is our shared commitment to playing our part in building a safe, resilient, and innovative nuclear

sector. Our mission, ensuring safe nuclear for a secure and sustainable future, informs everything we do across our purposes and provides continued focus for our core regulatory activity.

Insights from the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce and the independent culture survey from the **Alliance Manchester Business School** have highlighted that while our regulatory foundations are strong, there are valuable opportunities to modernise our processes and our culture to deliver our vision to be a modern, agile and productive regulator enabling innovation and growth. Clear policies, strong planning, financial discipline and streamlined governance will ensure we remain focused on what matters most. We will build a culture where our values guide everyday decisions and where everyone is equipped and empowered to contribute their expertise.

We will embrace emerging technologies to inform and support our focus on targeted and timely regulation, supporting the sector's growth and innovation. Above all, our people are our greatest asset. We recognise the collective strength of our diverse workforce by embracing

different perspectives, encouraging innovation, and fostering an inclusive culture. We ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute their best. Their expertise across professions, dedication and ideas are central to our success and play a vital role in supporting the wider sector. By investing in our teams and encouraging new ways of thinking, we will accelerate regulatory decision-making, supporting economic growth without compromising safety and security.

Our strategy is a rolling strategy, meaning it is a living document that will evolve with us and the sector we regulate, allowing us to continually adapt. This ensures our long term direction remains stable while our priorities and actions can adapt to emerging opportunities, risks and technological developments. Our Corporate Plan puts our strategy into action by translating our mission and vision into specific, measurable deliverables.

ONR Together will take us from an organisation that effectively regulates a static nuclear industry to one with the culture and capability to efficiently and effectively regulate a broad and dynamic nuclear sector.

## **ONR Board**

## **Mission**

Ensuring safe nuclear for a secure and sustainable future.

## **Vision**

To be a modern, agile and productive regulator enabling innovation and growth.

## **Values**

Our values are unchanged from our previous strategy. They continue to be the principles that shape our culture, our decisions and our impact. They are as important as the outcomes we deliver, defining how we work together, how we engage with our stakeholders, and how we improve public trust.

They guide us through complexity and change, and underpin our success, ensuring we deliver our mission with integrity.

## **Accountable**

We deliver on our commitments. We take accountability for our actions, behaviours, and impact on others. We own our mistakes and learn from them, asking for, and offering help when needed.

## **Open-Minded**

We proactively seek new and innovative ways of working. We maximise all opportunities for improvement.

## **Fair**

We are inclusive and show respect, welcoming and valuing diverse perspectives. We share our views openly and constructively. We recognise good performance and behaviour and challenge exceptions.

## **Supportive**

We care for each other and our stakeholders, making a positive difference to wellbeing and performance. We listen, and work together to harness our collective skills, knowledge and experience.

# Strategic Aims

Our strategic aims set out how we will fulfil our mission and vision and are the long-term goals that set the overall direction for ONR. They are broad and ambitious, allowing for the development of more detailed objectives and plans to underpin them. They provide a bridge between the overarching strategy and the practical actions for delivery outlined in our corporate and business plans.

They are:

## Modern

Our culture encourages innovation, embraces modern technology and ways of working and welcomes challenge. We work collaboratively with our stakeholders to shape the future of the nuclear sector globally.

## Agile

Our strong workforce capability and flexible structure allow us to respond quickly and efficiently to changes and expansion in the industry. Streamlined guidance and processes support timely, proportionate decision-making and help industry understand and comply with our expectations.

## **Productive**

Strong governance and robust business fundamentals deliver transparent, and efficient operations, aligning resources and processes with our mission and values.

We drive value for money and understand the cost of our regulatory decision-making.

The strategic aims are broken down into objectives and directly actioned through the deliverables of our Corporate Plan.

## Modern

Our culture encourages innovation, embraces modern technology and ways of working, and welcomes challenge. We work collaboratively with our stakeholders to shape the future of the nuclear sector globally.

Our culture must enable our people to live all our values and embrace new ways of working. Their knowledge, expertise and attitude underpin all that we do. We promote a positive culture where staff are empowered to innovate, collaborate and respond to new challenges. We trust and show respect, learning from others and taking informed risks to drive improvements in safety and efficiency. We welcome challenge, diversity of thought and are open-minded to new ways of working. This approach attracts and retains talent and encourages professional growth, influencing positive outcomes, unlocking innovation and enabling growth.

We will reinforce the strength of our people by fully leveraging modern technology, including AI and data analysis, in both our operations and regulatory work. We

will seek novel ways of working to remain resilient, forward-thinking and at the forefront of regulatory excellence.

This will apply to all our regulatory activity throughout the nuclear lifecycle.

We will work collaboratively with domestic regulators to avoid duplication and provide effective and proportionate regulation of the whole lifecycle; from design and construction through operation, defueling, decommissioning, and waste management. We will support the use of new technology to ensure hazard and risk reduction of legacy plants through accelerated decommissioning. Demonstrating the industry can effectively manage the complete lifecycle of nuclear facilities through site clean-up and restoration, combined with the appropriate treatment and disposal of spent fuel and wastes, including via the GDF, is vital to maintaining public trust.

Recognising we are part of a wider system, we will work collaboratively with both domestic and global stakeholders to enhance our knowledge, influence global standards, align regulatory approaches where possible, and strengthen collective efforts to address emerging challenges. We will work with international counterparts to

establish how regulatory assessments can be recognised by all parties. This will reduce the burden on applicants, reducing the time and cost of gaining design acceptance for deployment.

Openness and transparency are vital to our success as a modern regulator and we will go further to become an exemplar of regulatory public engagement, enhancing public understanding and trust. We will proactively tackle misconceptions and preconceived views of our regulation, working more closely with host communities new to nuclear and with government to explain our role and our positive impact. We will influence and advocate at the highest levels for workable policies that advance a safe, secure and sustainable nuclear future for the UK.

## **Objectives**

We will:

- build a forward-looking organisational culture that empowers staff to live our values, work as one ONR, embrace innovation and deliver our mission
- ensure effective and proportionate oversight of the nuclear industry by applying a risk-informed,

evidence-based regulatory approach that maintains expected standards

- deploy modern technologies across ONR to support more efficient and effective regulation
- enable accelerated deployment of new nuclear reactors working with other domestic and international regulators, to mutually recognise each other's assessments with appropriate due diligence, retaining independent decision-making
- build and maintain international relationships that strengthen collaboration and advance shared goals and secure positions of influence to drive outcomes and shape the international agenda
- adopt a more proactive approach to stakeholder engagement, expanding our influence and reach, to learn from others, explain our work, enhance our reputation and address common misconceptions around our role
- work closely with government to support and influence policy development and the implementation of Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce recommendations

# Agile

Our strong workforce capability and flexible structure allows us to respond quickly and efficiently to changes and expansion in the industry. Streamlined guidance and processes support timely, proportionate decision-making and help industry understand and comply with our expectations

At the heart of our regulatory approach is a commitment to agility, allowing our oversight to remain risk-informed, proportionate, and trusted. Our people are the foundation of our success, and by fostering a highly capable workforce and recognising talent, we are preparing our organisation to respond effectively to modern technologies and evolving threats. Our structure is designed to be adaptable, so we are always ready to regulate, whatever the future holds for the nuclear industry.

We will be clear about what constitutes ‘good enough’, both within our organisation and in our interactions with stakeholders, championing solutions that will be fit for purpose and not seeking further improvements once requirements have been met. Our reactor design

assessment process will become more flexible and transparent, providing clarity and certainty for developers and technology vendors while applying the right level of engagement.

By applying a risk-informed, intelligence-led approach, we will embed proportionate regulation and will proactively address emerging challenges in the nuclear sector. We will be well-placed to anticipate and shape changes, using horizon scanning to identify risks and trends early so we will be prepared for future opportunities.

We will streamline and simplify our internal guidance, including technical assessment and inspection guides, to support proportionate regulatory decision-making and help industry partners understand and meet our expectations. Above all, we will be committed to ensuring our regulatory approach remains proportionate, risk-informed and value-driven, delivering timely decisions that will support national priorities and maintain public trust, keeping our regulation relevant and effective.

## Objectives

We will:

- have clear, forward-looking regulatory processes aligned with both national and global priorities in safety, security, clean energy and defence
- work closely with other regulators and government to deliver Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce recommendations including the lead regulator model, commission and simplification of the regulatory landscape
- establish an efficient, flexible operating model and structure that allows us to adapt to a changing industry
- retain, attract and train a highly capable workforce across all of our functions, which understands the latest technological and regulatory developments, makes robust, proportionate decisions, and ensures ONR is a well-run efficient organisation
- be outward looking and proactive in anticipating change, working with others to ensure we are ready to regulate whatever the future shape of the nuclear industry

# Productive

Strong governance and robust business fundamentals deliver transparent and efficient operations, aligning resources and processes with our mission and values.

We drive value for money and understand the cost of our regulatory decision-making.

By strengthening governance and streamlining business processes, we will foster a culture of continuous improvement and organisational learning. We will review ONR's business processes and documentation to remove unnecessary complexity and waste, and ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Knowledge management and organisational learning will be central to this aim and we will ensure the right information is available to the right people at the right time. This will reduce duplication, accelerate decision-making, and enable staff to learn from both past experience and future insights.

Robust business fundamentals will ensure decisions align with our mission and values, resources are used efficiently and the organisation remains forward-thinking. Together, these elements build stakeholder trust, reinforce

ONR's reputation and secure long-term sustainability. We are committed to strong, clear governance and business processes that support a highly productive ONR, demonstrating accountability and adherence to policy as part of fundamental good practice.

Our funding model will be revised to improve transparency and consistency and allow us to be able to reinvest funds to develop and ensure our regulation is fit for the future. We will focus on well-organised change programmes that support our strategic aims, make good use of resources and prevent staff overload, delivering the greatest benefit with the least risk. We will use careful budget planning and monitoring, so our investment matches our priorities and supports proportionate, cost-efficient regulation.

## **Objectives**

We will:

- establish clear, efficient and effective business processes removing unnecessary complexity and accelerating delivery
- redesign our charging approach to improve cost

certainty for dutyholders and support investment in ONR's capability and international engagement

- ensure all organisational change is prioritised, resourced, well-managed and strategically aligned
- embed knowledge management and organisational learning to drive continuous improvement, and share learning across ONR, retaining critical expertise
- decrease the administrative burden of regulation in line with our commitments in the **Regulation Action Plan** and related taskforce recommendations
- continue to work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the core Government Shared Services Programme to transform our processes and move to a shared services model for Finance, Human Resources and Procurement



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