MEASURES TAKEN BY TURKISH NUCLEAR REGULATOR NDK AGAINST THE GLOBAL PANDEMİC OF COVID-19

As it may be known, NDK, the Turkish Nuclear Regulatory Authority has been established recently, based on the experience of Turkish Atomic Energy Authority, the former organization that also performed regulatory duties. NDK regulates the safety, security and safeguards on the nuclear facilities and activities, as well as the use of radioactive materials and sources.

Currently, regulatory control of NDK spans over two research reactors, one NPP on construction, and considerable sum of radiation applications. The main response to global pandemic has been coordinated by the Ministry of Health, regularly updating the necessary measures to be taken by the governmental and private organizations to contain the spread of COVID-19. NDK implemented these measures for its own operations, ensuring continuity of necessary regulatory control over relevant facilities and activities. As of today, no cases were identified within the organization.

Two research reactors are not operated, being in the middle of upgrading activities, and do not created additional burden either to operators or to the NDK.

On the other hand, construction activities of Akkuyu NPP continues on site. Ongoing activities on two units of NPP requires considerable manpower. The supplier of the licensee took all measures imposed by the Ministry of Health to continue its activities. Despite the considerable number of the workers on site, few identified cases were contained before it leads to an outbreak by early detection and quarantine measures.

Inspection activities of NDK on the construction of Akkuyu NPP continued by the resident inspectors with appropriate protective gears. Additional inspections from the headquarters were also implemented to ensure the regulatory control over the activities. On the other hand, inspection of manufacturing activities that required international travel were needed to be reconsidered. The inspection plans were reviewed. The hold and witness points declared for the manufacturing activities were reorganized, using the graded approach, by requesting the inspection reports of the third party inspectors for auditing, as appropriate. Meanwhile, measures are taken to establish on-site inspection capabilities in main manufacturers. A contract with an international supplier with local capacity is about to be finalized for manufacturing activities that require presence of NDK inspectors.

Regarding the radiation applications, the inspection activities were focused on hospitals that were designated as main responders to pandemics. Any needs of inspection or authorization of such facilities were given the priority. Other applications that require inspection of NDK were put on hold, based on case by case considerations.