



## SALTO experts visit Doel Nuclear Power Plant

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The Doel 1 and 2 nuclear reactors remain on course for another 10 years' safe operation. As part of the Long Term Operations (LTO) project for Doel 1 and 2, the nuclear power plant has just welcomed 12 international experts for a Safety Aspects of Long Term Operations (SALTO) audit by the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This audit was requested by Belgium's FPS Home Affairs via the Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC). The results of this audit have now been published.

In November 2015, the Federal Government reached an agreement with ENGIE Electrabel to keep the Doel 1 and 2 reactors open for another 10 years, until 2025.

This Long Term Operation (LTO) plan is subject to certain conditions. In particular, ENGIE Electrabel must demonstrate that it has the technical and organisational capabilities to safely operate Doel 1 and 2 until 2025. As a result, the LTO project for Doel 1 and 2 involves a host of measures to ensure the safe operation of these reactors. The FANC is closely monitoring the management of the LTO project and the implementation of the relevant action plan.

In addition, the FANC can draw on the international experience of the IAEA in the form of a Safety Aspects of Long Term Operations (SALTO) audit.

This audit involves a group of international experts (from Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, Japan, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland), selected by the IAEA, assessing the whole of the Long Term Operation project by examining a few specific areas, such as human resources and knowledge management, ageing management for mechanical and electrical components, civil engineering, internal organisation, and change management at the facilities.

An expert mission was organised at Doel Nuclear Power Plant in February 2016 to prepare for this mission. An **expert mission** is an initial fact-finding mission producing recommendations, suggestions and areas for improvement which ENGIE Electrabel took into account in the continuing implementation of the LTO plan for Doel 1 and 2. This was also confirmed by the IAEA.

This mission in February 2016 already showed that the site had made a good start on rolling out the LTO project. The IAEA confirmed that the approach and the preparatory work were in line with the IAEA safety standards and with international practices.

The IAEA's general conclusion is a positive one, with the SALTO team evaluating the ongoing actions to be good and acknowledging a number of best practices.

- All aspects of the plant's LTO project were considered from various angles (ageing management, mechanical and electrical components, human resources, etc.), both in general and for individual initiatives.
- The plant has a good overview of areas that need to be analysed in the context of the LTO project.
- There are a range of initiatives to foster staff retention and ensure that no knowledge is lost when there is a change of personnel.

They also put forward a few areas for improvement:

- the plant must pursue long-term monitoring of all the systems, structures and components required by means of ageing management throughout the LTO project;
- it must continue to ensure the consistency and completeness of databases on structures and components throughout the LTO project;
- the plant must further review existing ageing management for architectural structures as planned and make adjustments as needed.

A follow-up mission is provisionally planned for March 2019. This mission is intended to evaluate the measures ENGIE Electrabel has taken to meet the recommendations and suggestions made by the IAEA during the SALTO mission.

The FANC is carefully monitoring the implementation of these measures and will publish the full report on its website as soon as this becomes available.

More information about SALTO missions: <https://www.iaea.org/services/review-missions/safety-aspects-of-long-term-operation-salto>

FANC article (in French): <http://fanc.fgov.be/fr/news/het-iaea-controleert-de-langetermijnuitbating-van-de-kernreactoren-doel-1-en-2/871.aspx>