

JNRC steps up efforts as nuclear programme gains steam

AMMAN - The Jordan Nuclear Regulatory Commission (JNRC) is ramping up regulation procedures in order to keep pace with the Kingdom's peaceful nuclear power programme as it approaches several milestones.

The commission is enacting a five-year strategy in order to perform its watchdog role to ensure safety and proper licensing of various nuclear activities in the country, according to JNRC Director Jamal Sharaf.

In the next few months, the commission is set to license the operation of the country's first nuclear facility, the recently constructed sub-critical assembly at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), he said.

During a press meeting last Thursday, Sharaf said the commission is also setting licensing standards and reviewing studies for the site of the Kingdom's first nuclear research reactor to be established at JUST.

Currently being constructed by a South Korean consortium, the five megawatt research reactor is expected to be completed in 2015.

In order to set safety standards in place ahead of the establishment of the country's first uranium mine in the central region, the JNRC is currently drafting regulations for the extraction and transportation of uranium, he added.

The JNRC, in cooperation with Worley Parsons and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is also drawing up guidelines for the decommissioning of nuclear facilities, management of spent fuel and an emergency response system, ahead of the construction of the Kingdom's first nuclear reactor.

In addition, the commission is set to enter a training agreement with South Korea, under which 20 JNRC staff members will receive hands-on experience in safety standards and inspections, according to Sharaf.

Also as part of its strategy, JNRC cadres are currently measuring natural radiation levels across the country, a two-year project that aims to provide the commission with baseline data prior to the commencement of uranium mining and the establishment of the nuclear research reactor.