



**Riksrevisjonen**  
Office of the Auditor General of Norway

## **The Office of the Auditor General's investigation into radiation safety and protection of the environment against pollution from radioactive sources in North-Western Russia**

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### **Summary**

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#### **Background and goals of the investigation**

During the period from 1995 to 2009, the Storting allocated more than NOK 1.4 billion to work on nuclear safety in North-Western Russia. The overriding goal for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' nuclear safety collaboration with Russia is to reduce the risk of accidents and pollution from nuclear installations in North-Western Russia, and prevent radioactive, fissile material falling into the wrong hands.

The purpose of the Office of the Auditor General's investigation has been to assess the Norwegian authorities' work on protecting the population and environment against radiation and pollution from radioactive sources in North-Western Russia. The investigation has been conducted as a parallel audit with the Russian Audit Chamber.

#### **Method**

Interviews were conducted with both the Norwegian and Russian authorities. Some of the interviews were conducted jointly with the Russian Audit Chamber. The managers of projects included in the investigation, representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) were also interviewed. In addition, case documentation relating to five selected projects in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' project portfolio for 2005-2007 was analysed. A comprehensive document analysis has been carried out for all the lines of inquiry in the investigation.

#### **Results**

The investigation shows that measures financed by Norwegian funds have largely been implemented as planned. These are measures intended to increase safety at Kola nuclear power plant, the scrapping of obsolete nuclear-powered submarines, the removal of radioactive batteries from lighthouses along the coast of the Kola Peninsula and

the removal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste from the abandoned naval base in Andreyev Bay.

A number of important challenges remain, however. Work has yet to begin in Andreyev Bay on removing the spent nuclear fuel that is stored there under very unsatisfactory conditions. The scrapping of the nuclear-powered submarines has necessitated long-term and final storage of large amounts of radioactive waste and the handling of other environmentally harmful waste. The long-term storage capacity and how other environmentally harmful waste is to be handled are issues that have yet to be clarified.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not established sufficient control to ensure that allocated funds are used efficiently and in line with the Storting's intentions. Among other things, no systematic assessments have been conducted of the risk of corruption or irregularities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing little to follow up financial management of the project as it progresses over and above the project supervisors' inspections and result-based milestone payments.

The investigation shows that the Norwegian authorities do not have sufficient information about the level of radioactivity in areas near central radioactive sources, such as the ocean and fjord area outside Andreyev Bay. Nor are regular samples taken from important sources. As regards notification of nuclear accidents, the Norwegian and Russian authorities have not reached agreement on which types of incidents are to be notified nor on the threshold level for notification. In the Office of the Auditor General's opinion, reliable information about radioactive pollution and a notification system for incidents at nuclear plants in Norway's neighbouring areas are crucial to maintaining satisfactory nuclear emergency preparedness.

### **Ministry/ministries**

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- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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