



# Olga Narbutovich CHANGING PATTERNS OF GOVERNANCE IN RUSSIA'S CIVILIAN NUCLEAR SECTOR

A successor state to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation is grappling with its burdensome nuclear legacy. The tradeoff between technology driven modernization and sustainable future is the central governance dilemma facing the country.

## ATOMIC POWERED COMMUNISM



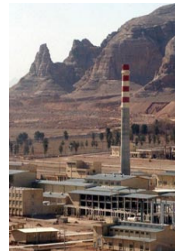
Russia's first atomic icebreaker LENIN

In the minds of Soviet leaders and laymen nuclear technologies became a ready answer for fast and large-scale postwar industrialization. They equally endorsed the superiority of the Soviet social, political and administrative order. The lure of breeder reactors, nuclear-powered icebreakers, submarines, airplanes, rocket ships, thermalization of cities, heating homes, and even producing flu vaccines with nuclear technologies was overwhelming. The considerations of high costs, radiation safety, waste management and environmental clean-up only struck the Soviet mind at the time of Chernobyl explosion in 1986.

## STAKES ARE HIGH IN ADVANCING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGIES TODAY

The strategic goals for the nuclear sector in modern Russia are threefold:

- Increasing the amount of nuclear energy for domestic consumption 4.5 times by 2050
- Storage and re-processing of foreign spent fuel
- Commercial strategy based on uranium sales and services of enrichment and nuclear reactor designing for China, India and Iran.



Major strategic links have been forged between Russia, China, Japan and Kazakhstan on co-operation in uranium mining and enrichment technologies. In July 2006 Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on joint development of the first international uranium enrichment center. Taken together the two have the world's largest uranium ore deposits and enrichment facilities.

## ANALYTIC APPROACH

The research addresses governance of nuclear resources from the perspective of the 'politics of life'. This approach acknowledges the complexity of the nuclear sector as an interface between ecological and socio-economic processes operating in parallel over space and time. Politics of life recognizes the limitations of current modes of political steering confined to nation states and international institutions and investigates the ways to extend governance decisions to new publics.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The study concentrates on two major research themes:

- It first analyses the current patterns of governance and decision-making in the nuclear sector in Russia addressing potential pitfalls and threats to security and sustainable development
- It then identifies how the emerging participatory practices in Europe can be applied in the Russian context in order to overcome traditional top-down state-run polices and the culture of secrecy. These have been associated with a precarious 'void of accountability' in life-political issues such as the nuclear.

Methodologically the study represents policy analysis. It will draw extensively on interviews with international experts on Russia and the nuclear sector.

## FOCUS ON PROBLEMATIC



- Nuclear sector fragmentation after the break-up of the Soviet system
- Growing nuclear regionalism
- Inadequate enforcement of nuclear safety regulations
- Lack of high skilled personnel in nuclear technology management

The nuclear technologies came to exist and were developed in a particular aesthetics of technological determinism, for which state-sponsored centrally planned economy was indispensable. Overcoming this culture is a major challenge today in reshaping the former Soviet governance patterns

## RESEARCHER



Olga Narbutovich was born in Minsk (Belarus) in 1976. She studied education, international development and European studies in Belarus, Poland and the US.

She previously worked on Chernobyl related projects in Belarus with international NGOs. Her most recent research was analyzing the relations of Russia with the European Union.