

Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Capacity-Building Course on International Cooperation for Supporting Nuclear Nonproliferation and Security

EunBee PARK

*Korea Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control
ebpark@kinac.re.kr*

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1. Introduction

International cooperation is vital in nuclear nonproliferation and security, as proliferation and security challenges occur beyond borders. Therefore, concerted action by states through international regimes is imperative to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Despite the shared acknowledgment of this importance, international cooperation is often perceived as secondary to technical activities, lacking the same level of prestige.

Moreover, a divergence of perspectives exists on the competencies required for excellent performance in international cooperation. While many personnel in nonproliferation and security often identify their foreign language skills as a significant barrier to engaging in international cooperation, experts in international cooperation assert that negotiation, communication, and coordination skills are more crucial than foreign language proficiency.

Recognizing the significance of these challenges, the Korea Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control (KINAC) has undertaken the development of a training course, including the design of education materials and the implementation of pilot sessions, to enhance its personnel's understanding of international cooperation activities.

2. Course Design

The course design process involved a comprehensive analysis of the purpose, target audience, background knowledge, and the elements provided by existing KINAC courses. The course material was then developed based on the analysis, incorporating insights from a literature review, information gathered from external training courses on international cooperation capacity building, and fieldwork experience in international settings.

2.1. Analysis of the setting

Several preset conditions were identified to determine the necessary elements for the course.

2.1.1. Necessities and purposes.

The course aimed to achieve two primary objectives: a) enhance understanding of the functions of international cooperation work and b) provide practical rules and procedures for implementing international cooperation tasks. These objectives were derived from the observation that a significant portion of KINAC staff perceived international cooperation work as primarily assigned to those with English proficiency, and that many staff needed to gain understanding and experience in customs and procedures for interacting with foreign officials in an international relations setting.

2.1.2. Target audiences.

The target group was defined as the staff of KINAC, regardless of their position. However, the course level was differentiated, considering the background knowledge of the target audience. One course was designed for newly hired KINAC staff, while another was tailored for existing staff of all ranks and positions.

2.1.3. Deliverable contents.

Based on identified needs, purposes, and target audiences, the following deliverable contents were established: a) the general concept and function of international cooperation; b) the international nuclear nonproliferation and security regime; c) the Republic of Korea (ROK)'s along with the bilateral and multilateral relations for nuclear energy; d) KINAC's protocol for international cooperation; and e) the customary protocol for organizing and participating international meetings. The content was adjusted according to the level of the target audience.

2.2. Development of course material

Subsequently, the course materials were developed to provide practical information and procedures for engaging in international cooperation.

Table I: Contents in the Course for Building Capacity in International Cooperation

Category	Contents	Level	
		Introductory	Advanced
Introduction to International Cooperation	Purpose of international cooperation	√	√
	Bilateral and multilateral cooperation	√	√
	Implementation – Treaties between states	√	√
	Implementation – Arrangements and agreements between organizations	√	√
International Cooperation in Nuclear Nonproliferation and Security	International nuclear nonproliferation and security regime	√	√
	ROK's participation in international regime	√	√
	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its decision-making process	√	-
	ROK's bilateral relations status	√	√
	ROK-United States nuclear cooperation	√	√
	ROK-United Arab Emirates nuclear cooperation	√	√
KINAC's International Cooperation Protocol	Nuclear energy-related government bodies and their affiliated organizations	√	√
	KINAC's international cooperation	√	√
	KINAC's procedure for international cooperation	√	√
	KINAC's division of roles for international cooperation	√	√
Arranging International Meetings	Types of international meetings	-	√
	Procedures for arranging international meetings	√	√
	Checklist for international meetings	√	√
	Preparation of documents – Participants' profiles and nameplates	√	√
	Preparation of documents – Plan	-	√
	Preparation of documents – Talking points	-	√
	Documents from international meetings	-	√
	Preparation of overseas business trips	-	√
International Protocol	Principles of protocol	√	√
	Letter writing	-	√
	Luncheons and banquets	√	√
	Seating plan and table manners	√	√
	Exchange of gifts	√	√

As shown above, different content was developed for introductory and advanced-level courses. The elements have been drawn from various resources such as the International Cooperation Manual [1], the Guidebook to Government Protocols [2], and the Guidebook to Disarmament and Non-Proliferation [3]. The courses are delivered in a two-hour lecture format and provide flowcharts and images to facilitate the audience's understanding of the practical knowledge and methodology for carrying out international cooperation tasks.



Fig. 1. Education materials.

3. Pilot Courses for International Cooperation Capacity-Building

Three pilot courses on international cooperation capacity-building were conducted in July and August 2023. The first course for new KINAC staff took place on July 14, with four researchers and administrative staff in attendance. The second course was held on July 17, attended by 30 researchers and administrative staff, and included a question-and-answer session. The third course was held on August 7 in conjunction with the International Nuclear Nonproliferation and Security Academy's (INSA) Awareness-Raising Program for government officials from the Nuclear Safety and Security Commission (NSSC).

4. Analysis of the Survey

In the first two pilot courses for KINAC staff, a pre-lecture questionnaire and a post-lecture questionnaire were distributed to diagnose the audience's awareness level and evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The questionnaire featured multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering the respondents' perception of international cooperation, its necessity, KINAC's performance in international cooperation, and the respondents' self-assessment of their ability to execute such tasks.

Table II: Pre-lecture Questionnaire

Question	Type
1. What is international cooperation?	Short-answer
2. How important is international cooperation for nuclear nonproliferation and security?	Scale from 1 to 5
3. How well do you know about international cooperation in nuclear nonproliferation and security?	Scale from 1 to 5
4. Is KINAC performing its international cooperation mission well?	Scale from 1 to 5
5. How well do you know about KINAC's works for international cooperation?	Scale from 1 to 5
6. Have you ever been involved in works for international cooperation?	Multiple-choice
7. What are the pros and cons of working for international cooperation?	Short-answer
8. What is the most critical skill to perform the works for international cooperation well?	Short-answer
9. What would be most challenging for you if you had to work for international cooperation?	Short-answer

Table III: Post-lecture Questionnaire

Question	Type
1. Please rate the overall satisfactory level of the lecture.	Scale from 1 to 5
2. Please evaluate whether the lecture helped you understand the works for international cooperation.	Scale from 1 to 5
3. Please select the element you would like to learn more from the lecture.	Multiple-choice
4. Please write if you have anything you would like to learn beyond the contents of the lecture.	Short-answer

In total, 34 questionnaires were collected, revealing interesting insights, particularly from the pre-lecture questionnaire. Respondents were asked, "What is the most critical skill to perform the works for international cooperation well?" and "What would be most challenging for you if you had to work for international cooperation?". These questions aimed to

uncover perceptions of international cooperation work and identify barriers preventing engagement in such activities.

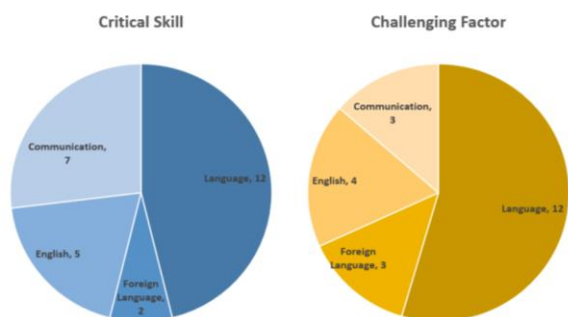


Fig. 2. Times of keywords mentioned in the responses.

Four keywords were consistently and frequently identified within the responses, with foreign language proficiency, and language and communication skills topping the list. Interestingly, respondents perceived these skills as essential, yet also identified them as significant barriers to performing international cooperation tasks.

Contrary to their beliefs, international cooperation demands a broader skillset, including project management, negotiation, cultural understanding, document writing, and computer literacy [4]. The survey revealed that many employees fear communicating in foreign languages, leading them to avoid engagement in such activities even though it is essential to perform their jobs.

5. Conclusion

The field of nuclear nonproliferation and security has evolved through a combination of political and technical confidence-building measures. Consequently, the responsibility for international cooperation is not limited to a few staff members but should be harmoniously integrated into almost every role within the nuclear nonproliferation and security organizations.

Therefore, such organizations need to raise awareness of such tasks and provide opportunities to support the capacity building of their staff in diverse skills required for international cooperation. This approach will empower each staff member, fostering confidence and encouraging them to take responsibility for specific aspects of their strengths within the process of international cooperation, irrespective of their language proficiency.

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