IAEA Budget and U.S. Contributions: In Brief

Updated April 2, 2021
The IAEA is a member of the U.N. Chief Executive Board, or returns the budget draft with recommendations to the board for resubmission.\(^4\)

The IAEA Statute requires the agency’s Board of Governors, with General Conference approval, to appoint the Director General, who serves for a four-year term and is the IAEA’s “chief

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1 The U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent on June 18, 1957 (T.I.A.S. 3873). The International Atomic Energy Statute was approved in P.L. 85-177, August 28, 1957 (22 U.S.C. 2021-2027).

2 The IAEA is a “related organization” of the United Nations. Its relationship is guided by an agreement signed by both parties in 1957 (INFCIRC/11) that states, “The Agency undertakes to conduct its activities in accordance with the Purpose and Principles of the United Nations Charter to promote peace and International co-operation, and in conformity with policies of the United Nations furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament and in conformity with any international agreements entered into pursuant to such policies.” The Director General of the IAEA is a member of the U.N. Chief Executive Board (CEB) that comprises the heads of U.N. and U.N.-related entities, and regularly participates in the meetings chaired by the U.N. Secretary General.

3 IAEA safeguards are designed “to provide credible assurance to the international community that nuclear material and other specified items are not diverted from peaceful nuclear uses.” (The Safeguards System of the International Atomic Energy Agency). The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) requires nonnuclear-weapon states parties to conclude comprehensive IAEA safeguards agreements. Such agreements apply safeguards “on all nuclear material in all nuclear activities in a State” (IAEA Safeguards Glossary 2001 Edition, International Nuclear Verification Series No. 3). The NPT defines a nuclear-weapon state as “one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device” prior to January 1, 1967. These states are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. All other countries are nonnuclear-weapon states.

4 For more information about the organization, structure, and programs of the IAEA, see https://www.iaea.org.
The United States is currently assessed at 22% of the U.N. regular budget, the highest of any of the U.N. member states. According to the IAEA General Conference, September 24, 2020, GC(64)/17/Rev.1. For more information, see the IAEA Technical Cooperation Program website, https://www.iaea.org/services/technical-cooperation-programme.

The TCF is an IAEA technical assistance program meant to help member states share and develop capacity in the peaceful use of nuclear science. The IAEA Board of Governors sets annual target amounts for each member state’s contribution to the TCF, based on the state’s assessed portion of the regular budget. The TCF provides assistance in seven areas: health and nutrition; food and agriculture; water and the environment; industrial applications/radiation technology; energy; nuclear knowledge development and management; and nuclear safety and security.

5 The Statute of the IAEA Article VII A and B.
7 The Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Article XIV: Finance, D. The U.N. General Assembly negotiates a scale of assessments for the regular budget every two years based on a country’s capacity to pay. The United States is currently assessed at 22% of the U.N. regular budget, the highest of any of the U.N. member states.
8 IAEA General Conference, Regular Budget Appropriations for 2021, GC(64)/RES/5.
9 “The Agency’s Budget Update for 2021,” IAEA, GC(64)/2.
10 For more information, see the IAEA Technical Cooperation Program website, https://www.iaea.org/services/technical-cooperation-programme.
In addition, member states make extrabudgetary voluntary contributions to the IAEA, which are meant to supplement the agency’s work. Such contributions may go to the Technical Cooperation Extrabudgetary Fund, the Extrabudgetary Program Fund, or the IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium (LEU) Fuel Bank In-kind contributions may include donation of equipment or personnel.

The extrabudgetary TCF funding supports technical cooperation projects. The Extrabudgetary Program Fund is used for specific IAEA projects. For example, 36 member states have contributed extrabudgetary monetary and in-kind support for a program called ReNuAL, which upgrades the IAEA Nuclear Applications Laboratories. The Extrabudgetary Program Fund also includes the Nuclear Security Fund and the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI) fund.

The Nuclear Security Fund (NSF) is an extrabudgetary voluntary fund that supports the IAEA’s activities to bolster member states’ nuclear security. Since 2009, a small portion of the Nuclear Security program’s operating costs is part of the general IAEA budget, but the majority of funds continue to be dependent on voluntary extrabudgetary contributions. At the February 2020 Nuclear Security Conference, member states announced $20 million in voluntary contributions to the Nuclear Security Fund.

The PUI fund is for high-priority safety, security, and health cooperation projects such as providing diagnostic equipment and training assistance to help respond to disease outbreaks. IAEA member states may also make voluntary contributions to support additional IAEA safeguards missions, such as monitoring Iranian implementation of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The IAEA created a separate extrabudgetary fund for the Low-Enriched Uranium (LEU) Fuel Bank. Member states and the U.S. nongovernmental organization the Nuclear Threat Initiative donated $150 million total in voluntary contributions to meet the costs of establishing the IAEA Fuel Bank and operating it for 20 years. The United States contributed $49 million to this project.

U.S. Contributions to IAEA

The United States is the largest financial contributor to the IAEA, providing an estimated $200 million annually in assessed and voluntary contributions. The share of U.S. assessed contributions is 25.3% of the regular IAEA budget.

Congress appropriates assessed U.S. contributions to the IAEA’s regular budget through the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO) account in annual Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) appropriations bills. Table 1 highlights U.S.

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17 Other top IAEA contributors and their 2021-assessed rates are China (11.6%), Japan (8.2%), Germany (5.9%), France (4.3%), United Kingdom (4.4%), Brazil (2.8%), Canada (2.6%), the Russian Federation (2.4%), and Spain (2%). IAEA General Conference Resolution, “Scale of assessment of member states' contributions towards the Regular Budget for 2021,” September 2020, GC(64)/RES/8.
assessed contributions to IAEA from FY2017 to FY2021; U.S. payments have ranged from $101.1 to $107.5 million.

**Table 1. U.S. Contributions to the IAEA’s Regular Budget Assessment, FY2017-FY2021 Request**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2017 actual</th>
<th>FY2018 actual</th>
<th>FY2019 actual</th>
<th>FY2020 estimate</th>
<th>FY2021 request</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101,095</td>
<td>108,338</td>
<td>104,262</td>
<td>104,490</td>
<td>107,562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Department of State Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ), Appendix 1, various years.

Assessed U.S. contributions to the IAEA may vary by year for a number of reasons, including agency budget modifications, changes to the U.S. assessment, and fluctuating exchange rates (IAEA assessment levels are calculated based on Euros instead of dollars). At times, the United States may be behind in its assessed payments due to the differences between the IAEA fiscal year (January 1-December 31) and the U.S. fiscal year (October 1-September 30).\(^\text{18}\)

In addition, Congress generally appropriates $15-$20 million annually for IAEA contributions within the budgets of the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Geological Survey; the most consistent amount within these other agencies is the approximately $10 million each year from Department of Energy funds.\(^\text{19}\)

Most U.S. voluntary contributions are provided from the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) account within annual SFOPS appropriations. As shown in Table 2, since FY2017, Congress has appropriated $94.8 million per year to IAEA through the NADR account.

**Table 2. U.S. Voluntary Contributions to IAEA, FY2017-FY2021 Request**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2017 actual</th>
<th>FY2018 actual</th>
<th>FY2019 actual</th>
<th>FY2020 estimated</th>
<th>FY2021 request</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Department of State CBJs, SFOPS appropriations acts and explanatory statements.

The United States primarily directs its voluntary (extrabudgetary) IAEA contributions to the TCF. According to the State Department, the United States has contributed over $240 million to that fund since 2010.\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^\text{18}\) U.S. payments may also be delayed due to partially deferred payments from the 1980s, which cause a portion of the U.S. IAEA assessment (70%) to be delayed by a year. For example, most calendar year 2019 U.S. IAEA assessments are paid with U.S. FY2020 funds.

\(^\text{19}\) For a description of these activities, see *U.S. Contributions to International Organizations, 2019*, Department of State, September 15, 2020, at https://www.state.gov/u-s-contributions-to-international-organizations/.

The Peaceful Use Initiative (PUI) Fund, which the IAEA established in 2010, is another major recipient of U.S. extrabudgetary funds. The United States announced at the 2010 NPT Review Conference that it would contribute $50 million over five years to PUI. In 2015, the United States renewed this pledge for another five years. In November 2020, the United States announced that it would provide an additional $50 million to the PUI Fund through 2024.\(^{21}\)

Section 307 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, requires the United States to withhold the U.S. proportionate share for certain IAEA programs or projects in Cuba. The United States is not required to withhold funds for programs or projects that provide for the discontinuation, dismantling, or safety inspection of nuclear facilities or related materials, or for the IAEA application of safeguards in Cuba. Section 307 does not require withholding of U.S. contributions with respect to programs for Iran.\(^ {22}\)

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\(^{21}\) Ibid. The United States has contributed $117 million in voluntary contributions to the PUI.

\(^{22}\) Email communications with Department of State officials, February 4, 2016.