

News : Ghana signs memorandum on nuclear cooperation with the US

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The **United States** and **Ghana** signed a memorandum of understanding concerning civilian **nuclear** cooperation on July 13 which "improves our cooperation on energy security and strengthens our diplomatic and economic relationship," the **US** State Department said in a statement that day.

Nuclear cooperation MOUs are "diplomatic mechanisms that strengthen and expand strategic ties between the **United States** and a partner country by providing a framework for cooperation on civil **nuclear** issues and for engagement between experts from government, industry, **national laboratories** , and academic institutions," the department said.

Ghana is the first non-**European** nation to sign a **nuclear** cooperation MOU with the **US** . The **US** government has signed previous NCMOUs with Central and **Eastern European** countries, including **Bulgaria** , **Romania** , **Poland** and **Slovenia** .

The **US** and **Ghana** have long cooperated in the fields of security, energy and commerce, the State Department noted. "Cooperation in **nuclear energy** , science and technology can lead to significant contributions to clean energy, agricultural improvements, clean water, advanced medical treatments, and more," the department added.

Ghana has operated its **nuclear** research reactor — GHARR-1 — for 27 years, and has said it plans to add **nuclear energy** to its **electricity** generation mix.

In 2018, the **Ghanaian** government approved **Nuclear Power Ghana** to oversee the construction and operation of its first **nuclear power** plant, according to Benjamin J.B. Nyarko, director general of the **Ghana** Atomic Energy Commission.

The **International Atomic Energy Agency** concluded in 2019 that **Ghana** has made progress in developing a national infrastructure for **nuclear energy** .

"**Ghana** has completed the studies needed to for the government to be able to make a knowledgeable commitment to a **nuclear power** program," the **IAEA** said in a statement following the review.

A **nuclear** cooperation MOU is a less formal instrument than a 123 agreement to consider the potential development of a **nuclear power** program and build strategic ties with the **US** , Christopher **Ford** , assistant secretary of the State Department's bureau of international security and nonproliferation, said in remarks at an event at the Hudson Institute Feb. 26, 2019. While 123 agreements, named for the section of the Atomic Energy Act in which the requirements are outlined, are required to permit exports connected to construction of a **nuclear power** plant, the **US** can use MOUs to assist countries in building their infrastructure and adopt best practices in **nuclear** safety, security and nonproliferation, **Ford** added.

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