

Enhancing Nuclear Knowledge Management for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Challenges, Strategies, and Lessons from International Case Studies

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Abstract: Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) is fundamental for the sustainability and progression of nuclear programs in the world. In Nigeria, effective NKM is fundamental for ensuring knowledge retention, workforce development, and innovation in nuclear research, safety, and security. This study examines the current state of NKM in Nigeria, highlighting key strategies such as knowledge capture, storage, and retrieval mechanisms. The study also explores workforce development, the role of digital tools in knowledge management, and the influence of organizational culture in fostering a knowledge-sharing environment. A comparative analysis with international nuclear programs from the USA, France, Russia, and China reveals best practices in NKM implementation. Findings indicate that Nigeria faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited technical expertise, regulatory constraints, and insufficient funding, which hinder effective knowledge management. Despite these challenges, existing initiatives by Nigerian nuclear institutions demonstrate the potential for improvement. The study recommends the adoption of digital repositories, artificial intelligence for knowledge retrieval, and structured training programs to enhance NKM. Strengthening institutional frameworks, fostering collaboration between academia and industry, and increasing government support will be vital in positioning Nigeria's nuclear sector for long-term sustainability and global competitiveness.

Keywords: Nuclear Knowledge Management, Workforce Development, Digitalization, Nigeria's Nuclear Sector, Knowledge Retention

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1.0 Introduction

Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) is a critical discipline within the nuclear sector that ensures the effective creation, retention, sharing, and application of nuclear knowledge. Given the complexity and high-risk nature of nuclear science and technology, effective knowledge management is essential for sustaining safety, innovation, regulatory compliance, and workforce competency (International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], 2020). Nuclear knowledge exists in multiple forms, including explicit knowledge such as documented research, policies, and technical manuals, as well as tacit knowledge embedded in the expertise of experienced professionals. The ability to systematically manage this knowledge is fundamental to maintaining operational excellence and advancing nuclear programs worldwide (OECD-NEA, 2019).

The importance of NKM in the nuclear industry cannot be overstated. Effective knowledge management enhances nuclear safety, supports the continuity of operations, and mitigates risks associated with knowledge loss due to workforce attrition, retirements, and technological advancements (IAEA, 2021). Many nuclear organizations have encountered

challenges in preserving critical knowledge when experienced professionals retire, leading to knowledge gaps and operational inefficiencies. Moreover, in a sector where compliance with international safety and security standards is paramount, the ability to store, retrieve, and update knowledge systematically is vital for regulatory adherence and incident prevention (Rey & Ródenas, 2018). Furthermore, the dynamic nature of nuclear research and technology necessitates continuous knowledge exchange among industry stakeholders to drive innovation and policy development.

Despite the growing importance of nuclear knowledge management globally, limited studies have examined the specific strategies, challenges, and implementation frameworks within Nigeria's nuclear sector. A key issue facing Nigeria's nuclear energy program is the shortage of nuclear professionals, an aging workforce, and a declining interest in nuclear careers among the younger generation (Suleiman, 2023). These challenges pose significant risks to knowledge retention and continuity in Nigeria's nuclear industry. While international best practices for NKM have been widely studied, there is a lack of research focusing on how Nigeria can adapt these practices to its unique institutional, infrastructural, and human resource limitations. Furthermore, previous studies have not adequately explored how digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and international collaboration can be leveraged to strengthen Nigeria's nuclear knowledge management framework. Addressing these gaps is crucial for ensuring knowledge sustainability and fostering the growth of Nigeria's nuclear sector.

Nigeria's nuclear sector is supported by six university-based nuclear research centers:

- (i) Center for Energy Research and Training (CERT), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria – Established in 1978

- (ii) Center for Energy Research and Development (CERD), Obafemi Awolowo University – Established in 1978
- (iii) Nuclear Technology Center (NTC), University of Abuja – Established in 1995
- (iv) Center for Nuclear Energy Research and Training, University of Maiduguri – Established in 2011
- (v) Center for Nuclear Energy Studies, University of Port Harcourt – Established in 2011
- (vi) Center for Nuclear Energy Studies, Federal University of Technology, Owerri – Established in 2011

Additionally, Nigeria has key nuclear facilities under the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC), including:

- (vii) Nigeria Research Reactor-1 and Ancillary Facilities (CERT)
- (viii) Tandem Accelerator and Ancillary Facilities (CERD)
- (ix) Gamma Irradiation Facility (NTC)
- (x) Radioactive Waste Management Facility for Temporary Storage of Disused Sealed Radioactive Sources (DSRS) (CERT)
- (xi) Modern Electro-Mechanical Workshops (CERD, CERT, NTC)
- (xii) Health Physics and Dosimetry Laboratory (CERT)
- (xiii) Nuclear Instrumentation Laboratories (CERT, CERD, NTC)
- (xiv) Various Nuclear Science and Engineering Laboratories under development
- (xv) Liquid Nitrogen Plant (CERD, CERT, NTC)
- (xvi) Various Facilities for Atomic and Nuclear Spectroscopy
- (xvii) Nuclear Safety and Security Laboratories

Despite the presence of these research centers and facilities, Nigeria's nuclear knowledge management remains underdeveloped due to



infrastructural deficits, inadequate digitalization, and limited technical expertise. Addressing these gaps is critical for strengthening Nigeria's nuclear workforce and sustaining nuclear knowledge.

This review aims to critically analyze and evaluate the current state of nuclear knowledge management in Nigeria, identifying key challenges, best practices, and potential strategies for improvement. By examining international case studies and Nigeria's nuclear landscape, this study seeks to provide actionable recommendations for strengthening NKM frameworks in Nigeria, ensuring knowledge sustainability, and enhancing the country's nuclear development efforts. Specifically, this review will assess the effectiveness of knowledge retention mechanisms, human resource development programs, and digital tools in addressing workforce-related challenges in the Nigerian nuclear sector.

2.0 Theoretical Framework of Nuclear Knowledge Management

Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) is a systematic approach to acquiring, storing, sharing, and applying knowledge in the nuclear industry (Li *et al.*, 2022). Given the complexity and risk associated with nuclear technology, NKM ensures operational safety, regulatory compliance, and workforce sustainability. This section explores key concepts, the knowledge lifecycle, challenges in knowledge retention and transfer, and the role of international organizations in NKM.

2.1 Definition and Key Concepts of Nuclear Knowledge Management

NKM is defined as "an integrated, systematic approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing an enterprise's information assets" (IAEA, 2020). These assets include structured data such as documents and databases, as well as unstructured data like expertise, skills, and experiences. Explicit knowledge refers to codified information stored in repositories such as technical

manuals, regulatory documents, and nuclear databases, which are managed through digital libraries and document management systems. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, is embedded in the expertise of individuals and is often gained through experience, making it difficult to codify. This type of knowledge includes problem-solving skills, troubleshooting techniques, and operational insights, which are best preserved through mentorship programs and knowledge-sharing workshops. Knowledge capture involves systematically collecting, organizing, and preserving both explicit and tacit knowledge to prevent loss and ensure future availability. Effective knowledge capture strategies include conducting interviews with experienced personnel, documenting best practices, and creating knowledge repositories. Knowledge transfer refers to mechanisms used to share knowledge between individuals, teams, or institutions through training programs, mentorship, and collaborative projects. The IAEA promotes knowledge transfer through workshops, seminars, and expert missions to facilitate the exchange of best practices among member states. Knowledge sustainability ensures that critical knowledge is retained and remains accessible despite workforce turnover, technological advancements, or organizational changes. Implementing robust knowledge management systems, including succession planning and knowledge retention strategies, is essential for achieving knowledge sustainability in the nuclear industry. Table 1 presents a comparison of explicit and tacit knowledge in the nuclear industry.

2.2 Knowledge Lifecycle in the Nuclear Industry

The **Nuclear Knowledge Lifecycle** consists of five major components as shown in Fig. 1 and describe below with examples provided in Table 1.

Knowledge Creation – This is the generation of new knowledge through research, innovation, and operational experiences. It involves experimental



studies, theoretical advancements, and lessons learned from nuclear plant operations.

Knowledge Capture – This stage focuses on systematically collecting and documenting explicit and tacit knowledge. Methods include writing standard operating procedures, regulatory guidelines, case studies, and recording expert insights.

Knowledge Storage and Retrieval – Knowledge is systematically stored in databases, digital repositories, and institutional libraries to ensure long-term accessibility. Proper indexing and digitalization enhance retrieval efficiency.

Table 1: Explicit vs. Tacit Knowledge in Nuclear Knowledge Management

Knowledge Type	Definition	Examples	Management Strategies
Explicit Knowledge	Formal, structured knowledge stored in repositories	Technical manuals, regulatory documents, nuclear databases	Digital libraries, document management systems
Tacit Knowledge	Personal, experience-based knowledge difficult to codify	Problem-solving skills, troubleshooting techniques, operational insights	Mentorship programs, knowledge-sharing workshops

(Source: IAEA, 2020; OECD-NEA, 2019)

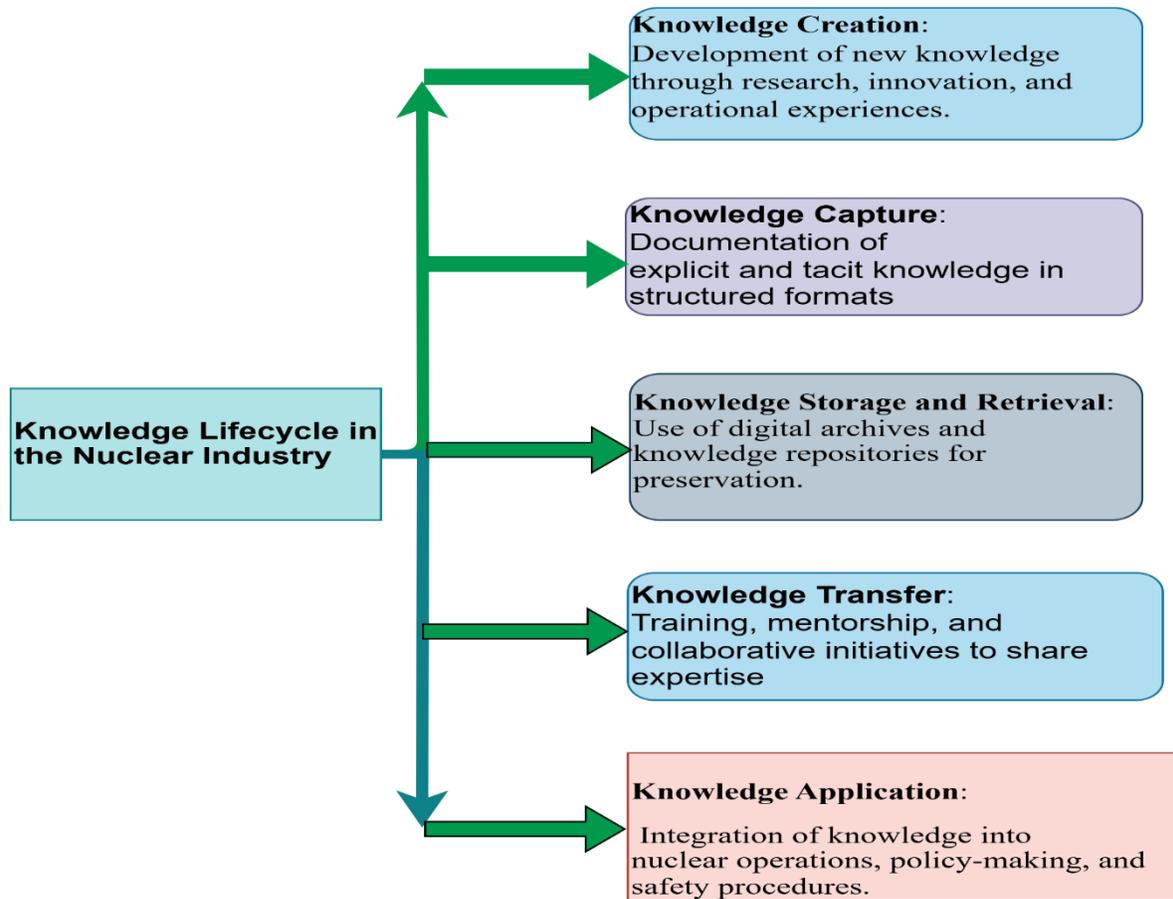


Fig. 1: Key components of the nuclear knowledge lifecycle



Knowledge Transfer – Knowledge is disseminated to stakeholders through training programs, conferences, mentorship, and expert networks. This ensures that expertise is passed down to new generations of professionals.

Knowledge Application – Finally, acquired

knowledge is integrated into nuclear operations, policymaking, reactor management, and safety protocols to enhance efficiency and regulatory compliance.

Table 2 summarizes the nuclear knowledge lifecycle and associated methods

Table 2: Stages of the Nuclear Knowledge Lifecycle

Stage	Description	Examples of Methods
Knowledge Creation	Generation of new knowledge from research and experience	Experimental research, operational reports, industry best practices
Knowledge Capture	Collecting and organizing knowledge for future use	Standard operating procedures, regulatory guidelines, case studies
Knowledge Storage	Systematic retention of knowledge in databases	Digital archives, knowledge repositories, institutional libraries
Knowledge Transfer	Dissemination of knowledge to stakeholders	Training programs, conferences, knowledge networks
Knowledge Application	Practical implementation of knowledge	Safety protocols, policy frameworks, reactor operations

(Source: IAEA, 2021; OECD-NEA, 2019)

2.3 Challenges in Nuclear Knowledge Retention and Transfer

Despite efforts in NKM, several challenges hinder knowledge retention and transfer in the nuclear industry:

Workforce Aging: A significant proportion of nuclear professionals are approaching retirement, leading to knowledge loss (IAEA, 2020).

Declining Interest in Nuclear Careers: Fewer young professionals are entering the nuclear workforce (Suleiman, 2023).

Security and Confidentiality Concerns: Nuclear knowledge is sensitive and subject to strict regulations (OECD-NEA, 2019).

Lack of Digitalization: Many nuclear organizations still rely on paper-based records, making knowledge retrieval difficult (IAEA, 2021).

Table 3 highlights key challenges in nuclear knowledge retention and proposes potential solutions. One significant issue is workforce aging, which results in the loss of expertise as experienced professionals retire. To mitigate this, mentorship programs and knowledge

transfer initiatives can facilitate the seamless transition of knowledge from senior experts to younger professionals. Another challenge is the declining interest in nuclear careers, with fewer young professionals entering the industry. To address this, nuclear education programs and career incentives can be introduced to attract and retain talent in the field.

Security issues also pose a challenge, as strict regulations and confidentiality measures limit the sharing of nuclear knowledge. Implementing secure digital repositories and classified knowledge-sharing protocols can help balance security requirements with the need for effective knowledge management. Additionally, the lack of digitalization within some nuclear organizations makes knowledge storage and retrieval inefficient. Investing in nuclear knowledge management software can modernize these processes, ensuring that critical information remains accessible and well-preserved. These solutions collectively contribute to maintaining and strengthening nuclear knowledge management systems.



Table 3: Challenges and Solutions in Nuclear Knowledge Retention

Challenge	Description	Potential Solutions
Workforce Aging	Loss of expertise due to retirements	Mentorship programs, knowledge transfer initiatives
Declining Interest	Fewer young professionals in nuclear careers	Nuclear education programs, career incentives
Security Issues	Restrictions on sharing nuclear knowledge	Secure digital repositories, classified knowledge-sharing protocols
Lack of Digitalization	Difficulty in storing and retrieving knowledge	Investment in nuclear knowledge management software

(Source: IAEA, 2021; Suleiman, 2023)

2.4 The Role of International Organizations in Nuclear Knowledge Management

Table 4 highlights key contributions of these organizations. International organizations play a crucial role in shaping nuclear knowledge management strategies. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) develops guidelines, facilitates training, and provides knowledge-sharing platforms (IAEA, 2020). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Nuclear Energy Agency (OECD-NEA) promotes collaboration between

nuclear organizations worldwide (OECD-NEA, 2019). The World Nuclear Association (WNA) contributes through research, policy recommendations, and the dissemination of industry best practices (WNA, 2021). Other notable organizations include the European Nuclear Education Network (ENEN), which focuses on nuclear education and academic collaboration, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), which supports research and workforce development in the nuclear sector.

Table 4: Contributions of International Organizations to NKM

Organization	Key Contributions
IAEA	Training programs, nuclear knowledge portals, regulatory frameworks
OECD-NEA	Research collaboration, policy recommendations, workforce development
WNA	Industry best practices, nuclear education initiatives, technology transfer
ENEN	Academic collaboration, nuclear education, student exchange programs
U.S. DOE	Research funding, nuclear workforce training, technological innovation

(Source: IAEA, 2020; OECD-NEA, 2019; WNA, 2021)

3.0 Strategies for Effective Nuclear Knowledge Management

Effective Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) is essential for ensuring the sustainability, safety, and innovation of the nuclear industry. A well-structured NKM

strategy facilitates the retention, transfer, and application of both explicit and tacit

knowledge. Key strategies include advanced knowledge capture mechanisms, human resource development initiatives, digital transformation through AI and big data, and



fostering a knowledge-driven organizational culture.

3.1 Knowledge Capture, Storage, and Retrieval Mechanisms

Knowledge capture, storage, and retrieval are fundamental processes in NKM. Capturing knowledge involves identifying critical nuclear knowledge, documenting expert insights, and developing repositories to prevent information loss. Traditional methods such as manuals, technical reports, and regulatory documents remain valuable, but digital knowledge bases, video documentation, and interactive databases have become increasingly important (IAEA, 2021).

Storage mechanisms ensure the long-term preservation of nuclear knowledge, particularly considering the industry's long lifecycle. Digital repositories, cloud-based knowledge management systems, and secure archives help store structured and unstructured knowledge efficiently. Proper indexing and metadata tagging improve retrieval efficiency, ensuring that critical knowledge remains accessible to stakeholders (OECD-NEA, 2019).

Retrieval mechanisms focus on quick and efficient access to knowledge. Searchable databases, AI-powered knowledge retrieval systems, and machine-learning algorithms enhance data accessibility and reduce information silos. Properly designed retrieval systems contribute to operational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and safety management in nuclear organizations (Suleiman, 2023).

3.2 Human Resource Development and Training Programs

Developing a skilled workforce is central to effective NKM. With an aging nuclear workforce and a decline in young professionals entering the field, human resource development initiatives are crucial for knowledge transfer and sustainability. Structured mentorship programs, internship opportunities, and expert succession planning

help mitigate knowledge gaps due to retirements (IAEA, 2022).

Training programs range from traditional classroom instruction to hands-on laboratory work and simulations. Nuclear organizations increasingly adopt e-learning platforms, virtual reality (VR) training, and remote learning modules to enhance accessibility and efficiency. International collaborations, such as those facilitated by the IAEA and OECD-NEA, play a key role in workforce development by providing standardized training curricula and exchange programs for nuclear professionals (OECD-NEA, 2021).

3.3 Use of Digital Tools, AI, and Big Data in NKM

Digital transformation plays a pivotal role in modern NKM strategies. Artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics enhance knowledge discovery, automate data processing, and improve predictive capabilities in nuclear operations. AI-driven decision support systems assist in identifying patterns in historical nuclear data, improving safety protocols, and optimizing reactor performance (IAEA, 2020). Big data enables real-time monitoring of nuclear processes, predictive maintenance of nuclear reactors, and enhanced risk assessments. Machine learning algorithms can analyze vast amounts of operational data, detecting anomalies and improving reliability in nuclear facilities. Blockchain technology is also being explored for secure knowledge sharing and authentication of nuclear documents, ensuring data integrity (Suleiman, 2023).

Cloud-based platforms facilitate real-time collaboration among nuclear professionals worldwide, supporting secure data access and enhancing international cooperation. Digital twins—virtual replicas of nuclear facilities—allow for advanced simulations, scenario planning, and safety training without physical risks (OECD-NEA, 2021).



3.4 Organizational Culture and Leadership in NKM

An organization's culture significantly influences the effectiveness of NKM. A knowledge-sharing culture promotes collaboration, continuous learning, and open communication within nuclear institutions. Leadership commitment to knowledge management is essential for establishing policies, funding knowledge retention initiatives, and fostering a proactive learning environment (IAEA, 2022).

Leaders in nuclear organizations must prioritize NKM by integrating it into corporate strategies, appointing dedicated knowledge officers, and incentivizing knowledge-sharing practices. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-generational mentorship programs ensures knowledge continuity.

Additionally, ethical considerations, security policies, and regulatory compliance must be

integrated into organizational knowledge strategies. Ensuring a balance between knowledge openness and information security is crucial in the nuclear industry due to sensitive and classified information concerns (OECD-NEA, 2019).

The strategies for effective nuclear knowledge management, as presented in Table 5, highlight various approaches that ensure knowledge is efficiently captured, stored, retrieved, and utilized within the nuclear sector. These strategies focus on key areas such as knowledge capture, storage, retrieval, workforce development, the use of digital tools, and fostering a knowledge-sharing organizational culture. The alignment of these strategies with the principles outlined in Sections 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4 demonstrates a structured approach to managing nuclear knowledge effectively.

Table 5: Strategies for Effective Nuclear Knowledge Management

Strategy	Key Focus Areas	Implementation Methods
Knowledge Capture	Documentation of explicit and tacit knowledge	Digital archives, expert interviews, video logs
Knowledge Storage	Long-term preservation of critical knowledge	Cloud databases, secure repositories, metadata tagging
Knowledge Retrieval	Quick access to stored knowledge	AI-powered search, data indexing, machine learning
Human Resource Development	Workforce training and skill enhancement	E-learning, mentorship programs, VR training
Digital Tools in NKM	AI, big data, blockchain in nuclear knowledge	Predictive analytics, decision support systems
Organizational Culture	Leadership commitment and knowledge-sharing culture	Policy development, incentive programs, interdisciplinary collaboration

Knowledge capture involves systematically documenting explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be easily recorded in the form of reports, manuals, and databases, while tacit knowledge, embedded in the expertise of professionals, requires interviews

and video logs to be effectively transferred. Knowledge storage ensures the long-term preservation of critical knowledge using cloud databases, secure repositories, and metadata tagging, guaranteeing accessibility while maintaining security. Knowledge retrieval,



which is essential for operational efficiency, is enhanced by AI-powered search engines, data indexing, and machine learning, allowing quick access to stored knowledge and reducing inefficiencies.

Developing a highly skilled workforce is essential to sustaining nuclear knowledge over time. Workforce training and skill enhancement programs, including e-learning, mentorship programs, and virtual reality training, provide structured mechanisms for transferring knowledge to younger professionals. These training methods ensure that knowledge is not lost due to retirements or declining interest in nuclear careers. The role of leadership and organizational culture in

nuclear knowledge management is also critical. Leadership commitment fosters a knowledge-sharing culture through policy development, incentive programs, and interdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring that knowledge is continuously developed, retained, and applied. The different options available for nuclear knowledge management strategies vary in terms of their advantages and challenges. Table 6 presents a comparison of these strategies, outlining their key benefits and potential obstacles. Effective knowledge management requires a balance between technological advancements, workforce development, and strong organizational commitment.

Table 6: Comparison of Strategies for Effective Nuclear Knowledge Management

Strategy	Advantages	Challenges
Knowledge Capture	Prevents loss of expertise, ensures structured transfer	Time-intensive, requires expert participation
Knowledge Storage	Long-term accessibility and security of knowledge	Needs high cybersecurity measures, expensive cloud storage
Knowledge Retrieval	Enhances efficiency, supports quick decision-making	Requires AI implementation and ongoing system updates
Human Resource Development	Improves workforce competence and knowledge sustainability	Requires investment in training infrastructure
Digital Tools in NKM	Automates processes, improves decision-making	Implementation costs, training workforce in AI usage
Organizational Culture	Encourages collaboration and knowledge sharing	Requires cultural change and leadership commitment

This comparison demonstrates that while each strategy offers unique benefits, they also come with specific challenges that must be managed effectively. Knowledge retrieval depends on efficient knowledge capture and storage, while human resource development benefits from strong leadership and a culture of knowledge-sharing. A well-integrated nuclear knowledge management strategy must incorporate technological innovation, workforce investment, and leadership commitment to ensure sustainability and efficiency in managing nuclear knowledge.

4.0 Applications of Nuclear Knowledge Management in Nigeria

Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) plays a crucial role in advancing Nigeria's nuclear sector, ensuring that nuclear knowledge is effectively captured, preserved, and transferred to sustain nuclear safety, workforce development, research, and regulatory compliance. As Nigeria continues to develop its nuclear infrastructure for energy, medicine, agriculture, and industrial applications, a strong NKM framework is essential for long-term sustainability.



4.1 NKM in Nuclear Safety and Security

Nuclear safety and security rely heavily on effective knowledge management to ensure the proper handling of nuclear materials, adherence to best practices, and compliance with international safety standards. In Nigeria, NKM is crucial in supporting institutions such as the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) and the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) in monitoring and safeguarding nuclear materials against theft, sabotage, or accidents.

Knowledge capture in nuclear safety includes detailed documentation of operational protocols, radiation protection measures, and emergency response plans. Secure databases and digital repositories store safety records, while retrieval mechanisms allow for quick access to safety guidelines and incident reports. Training programs and simulations based on historical data and case studies ensure that nuclear professionals remain equipped to handle emergencies effectively (International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], 2021).

Additionally, the implementation of digital tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics enhances nuclear security by detecting threats, analyzing radiation patterns, and predicting potential risks. These technologies assist in real-time monitoring of nuclear facilities and contribute to strengthening Nigeria's nuclear security framework (Adegbite *et al.*, 2022).

4.2 NKM in Workforce Development and Succession Planning

Nigeria's nuclear sector faces challenges related to workforce aging and the retention of skilled personnel. Effective NKM ensures the continuous development of human capital by systematically transferring expertise from experienced professionals to the next generation. Workforce development strategies in Nigeria involve structured training programs, mentorship initiatives, and academic collaborations between universities and nuclear research institutes.



Succession planning is a critical component of NKM, preventing the loss of expertise when experienced personnel retire. The use of digital platforms, such as e-learning modules and virtual training simulations, enhances knowledge dissemination and accessibility. Furthermore, knowledge repositories containing research papers, regulatory frameworks, and operational procedures help younger professionals gain practical insights into nuclear science and engineering (Olanrewaju & Bello, 2020).

To strengthen workforce development, Nigerian institutions such as the Centre for Energy Research and Training (CERT) at Ahmadu Bello University and the National Institute for Radiation Protection and Research (NIRPR) have established capacity-building programs focusing on nuclear safety, radiation protection, and nuclear energy applications (Okonkwo *et al.*, 2021).

4.3 Role of NKM in Nuclear Research and Innovation

Nuclear Knowledge Management supports research and innovation in Nigeria by ensuring that scientific knowledge is properly documented, stored, and accessible for future advancements. Nuclear research institutions rely on effective NKM strategies to archive experimental data, computational models, and findings related to nuclear materials, radiation therapy, and nuclear power applications.

In Nigeria, nuclear research is applied in diverse fields, including medicine, agriculture, and environmental management. For example, research on nuclear medicine and radiopharmaceuticals for cancer treatment depends on comprehensive knowledge databases containing clinical trial data, safety protocols, and case studies. Similarly, agricultural applications such as food irradiation and pest control require precise knowledge transfer to ensure compliance with international guidelines (Umar *et al.*, 2022).

The adoption of digital tools such as AI and big data in research also enhances Nigeria's



nuclear innovation landscape. AI-powered algorithms assist in the optimization of nuclear reactions, predictive modeling, and the automation of complex calculations in reactor physics and radiation shielding studies. Moreover, blockchain technology is emerging as a tool for securing intellectual property rights and ensuring data integrity in nuclear research (Adebayo & Ibrahim, 2023).

4.4 Policy and Regulatory Frameworks Supporting NKM in Nigeria

A well-defined policy and regulatory framework is essential for the successful implementation of NKM in Nigeria. The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) plays a pivotal role in formulating regulations that govern nuclear knowledge management, ensuring compliance with international safety and security standards.

Nigeria's nuclear policies align with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) guidelines on nuclear safety, knowledge preservation, and workforce development. The National Energy Policy and the Nuclear Power Roadmap emphasize the need for structured knowledge management to support the country's peaceful nuclear energy ambitions. These policies advocate for digital knowledge repositories, research collaborations, and structured training programs for nuclear professionals (IAEA, 2020).

The Nigerian Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) also enforces policies that promote nuclear education and research by establishing partnerships with universities and technical institutes. Policies such as the National Policy on Science and Technology further highlight the integration of NKM in technological advancements and national development goals. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, and the need for specialized training remain significant barriers to effective NKM implementation (Eze & Akpan, 2021).

5.0 Nigerian Case Study: Overview of Nigeria's Nuclear Sector



Nigeria's nuclear sector is developing rapidly, driven by the need for energy diversification, industrial growth, and scientific advancements. The sector is overseen by key institutions, including the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC), the Centre for Energy Research and Training (CERT), and the Nigeria Research Reactor-1 (NIRR-1). These institutions play critical roles in promoting nuclear research, energy generation, and applications in medicine, industry, and agriculture.

5.1 Overview of Nigeria's Nuclear Sector

The Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) was established in 1976 to coordinate and promote nuclear technology for peaceful applications. The commission is responsible for setting national policies on nuclear energy, overseeing research programs, and ensuring compliance with international nuclear standards (IAEA, 2020). Under NAEC, Nigeria has developed research centers that focus on nuclear science applications, such as radiation protection, energy generation, and nuclear safety.

One of Nigeria's most prominent nuclear facilities is the Centre for Energy Research and Training (CERT), located at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. CERT houses the Nigeria Research Reactor-1 (NIRR-1), a miniature neutron source reactor used for research, training, and material analysis. NIRR-1 has been instrumental in developing Nigeria's capacity in neutron activation analysis, radiopharmaceutical production, and nuclear instrumentation (Adewuyi & Yusuf, 2021).

In addition to CERT, Nigeria has several nuclear research institutions, including the Shehu Umar Centre for Nuclear Energy Studies (SUCNES) at the University of Maiduguri and the National Institute for Radiation Protection and Research (NIRPR) in Ibadan. These institutions focus on radiation safety, nuclear medicine, and environmental monitoring (Ogunbiyi, 2022).



5.2 Knowledge Management Practices in Nigeria's Nuclear Industry

Nigeria's nuclear industry recognizes the importance of Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) in sustaining expertise, ensuring regulatory compliance, and fostering innovation. Knowledge management practices in the sector include:

Digitalization and Data Storage: Nigerian nuclear institutions have adopted digital repositories for storing research data, technical reports, and operational records. The use of cloud storage and secure databases ensures long-term knowledge preservation (Eze & Akpan, 2021).

Training and Capacity Building: Continuous learning is promoted through training programs, mentorship, and collaborations with international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). These initiatives help to address the challenge of aging workforce expertise in nuclear sciences (Adebayo & Ibrahim, 2023).

Collaborative Research and Knowledge Sharing: Nigerian nuclear researchers participate in international scientific collaborations, workshops, and conferences to exchange knowledge with experts worldwide. This enhances the country's nuclear research capabilities and ensures adherence to global best practices (IAEA, 2021).

Regulatory Compliance and Safety Standards: The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) enforces knowledge management policies by requiring institutions to document and update safety protocols, risk assessments, and operational guidelines to prevent knowledge loss (Okonkwo *et al.*, 2021).

5.3 Best Practices and Initiatives in Nigerian Nuclear Research Institutions

Several best practices have emerged in Nigeria's nuclear research institutions to enhance knowledge retention and application:

Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data: AI-powered analytics and machine learning models are being utilized for predictive maintenance, radiation monitoring, and nuclear security. These technologies improve decision-making and enhance nuclear facility operations (Adegbite *et al.*, 2022).

Public Awareness and Stakeholder Engagement: Institutions such as NAEC and CERT engage in public education campaigns, outreach programs, and university partnerships to promote awareness of nuclear technology's benefits and safety measures (Olanrewaju & Bello, 2020).

Nuclear Safety and Security Culture: Nigerian institutions emphasize a strong safety culture through continuous training, policy development, and adherence to international nuclear security protocols. This approach aligns with IAEA recommendations for best practices in nuclear safety management (IAEA, 2020).

Succession Planning and Workforce Development: To address the aging workforce challenge, Nigerian nuclear institutions implement structured succession planning programs that involve knowledge transfer from experienced professionals to young scientists through structured mentorship and graduate training programs (Umar *et al.*, 2022).

International Partnerships: Nigeria collaborates with the IAEA, African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON), and foreign research institutions to strengthen nuclear education, training, and research programs. These partnerships provide access to advanced technologies, expert guidance, and funding opportunities for nuclear research projects (Eze & Akpan, 2021).

6.0 Challenges and Barriers to Nuclear Knowledge Management in Nigeria

Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) is essential for the sustainability and advancement of Nigeria's nuclear sector. Despite progress in research and institutional



capacity building, significant challenges hinder the effective management, preservation, and utilization of nuclear knowledge. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited technical expertise, policy constraints, funding issues, and gaps in NKM implementation. Addressing these barriers is critical to ensuring the long-term growth of Nigeria's nuclear industry and compliance with international nuclear safety and security standards.

6.1 Lack of Infrastructure and Digitalization

One of the primary barriers to effective NKM in Nigeria is the inadequate infrastructure for knowledge storage, retrieval, and dissemination. Many nuclear institutions in Nigeria still rely on manual documentation and outdated storage systems, making it difficult to preserve and access critical knowledge efficiently (Eze & Akpan, 2021). The lack of well-structured digital repositories, cloud-based databases, and AI-powered knowledge management systems limits the ability to archive and retrieve essential nuclear research data.

Furthermore, power supply instability and limited access to high-speed internet hinder digitalization efforts in research institutions and regulatory agencies. The integration of digital tools, such as blockchain for secure data storage and AI for predictive analytics, remains underdeveloped due to infrastructure limitations (Adebayo & Ibrahim, 2023). Without modernization, the risk of knowledge loss due to retirements, staff turnover, or system failures remains high.

6.2 Limited Technical Expertise and Brain Drain

Nigeria faces a shortage of highly skilled nuclear professionals, leading to difficulties in knowledge transfer and succession planning. Many experienced professionals in the sector are nearing retirement, and there are insufficient trained personnel to replace them (Adebisi *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, brain

drain, where skilled nuclear scientists and engineers migrate to developed countries in search of better opportunities, exacerbates the knowledge gap (Okonkwo *et al.*, 2021).

The lack of structured mentorship programs, limited access to advanced nuclear training facilities, and inadequate industry-academia collaborations further restrict workforce development (Ogunbiyi, 2022). While some institutions, such as the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) and the Centre for Energy Research and Training (CERT), have workforce development programs, these efforts are not sufficient to meet the sector's growing demand for nuclear experts (IAEA, 2021).

6.3 Regulatory and Policy Constraints

Effective NKM requires strong regulatory and policy support, but Nigeria's nuclear sector faces bureaucratic inefficiencies and outdated policies that limit progress. The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) is responsible for overseeing nuclear safety, security, and research activities, yet gaps in policy implementation hinder knowledge management efforts (Umar *et al.*, 2022).

Reported cases of regulatory challenges in Nigeria are reviewed and listed below.

- (i) Slow policy adaptation to technological advancements: Regulations governing nuclear knowledge storage and sharing do not adequately address emerging technologies such as AI, big data, and cybersecurity in nuclear research (Adegbite *et al.*, 2022).
- (ii) Limited coordination among government agencies and research institutions: Knowledge sharing between NAEC, CERT, and other nuclear bodies is often fragmented due to overlapping mandates and poor inter-agency communication (Olanrewaju & Bello, 2020).
- (iii) Insufficient enforcement of nuclear safety knowledge retention: Many nuclear facilities do not fully comply



with IAEA's recommendations on systematic knowledge documentation and preservation, leading to risks of knowledge erosion over time (IAEA, 2020).

To improve NKM, Nigeria needs comprehensive policy reforms, clearer regulatory frameworks, and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration to streamline knowledge management processes.

6.4 Funding and Institutional Support

A major obstacle to effective NKM in Nigeria is the lack of adequate funding for nuclear research, training, and infrastructure development. Government funding for nuclear projects has been inconsistent, affecting the development of digital repositories, training programs, and research collaborations (Adebayo & Ibrahim, 2023).

Limited investment in nuclear research and development (R&D): Compared to other scientific fields, nuclear research receives relatively low financial support from government agencies and private sector stakeholders (Eze & Akpan, 2021).

Inadequate institutional support for knowledge retention: Many nuclear institutions struggle to maintain updated research archives, employ full-time knowledge managers, and implement best practices in knowledge preservation due to financial constraints (Okonkwo *et al.*, 2021).

Dependence on international funding: Nigeria relies on foreign grants and IAEA-sponsored training programs, which are often short-term and may not fully address long-term knowledge management needs (Ogunbiyi, 2022).

To address these funding gaps, the government must increase budgetary allocations for nuclear R&D, incentivize private sector participation, and explore innovative financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure development.

6.5 Challenges and Gaps in NKM Implementation

Despite efforts to develop a robust knowledge management framework, Nigeria still faces significant gaps in NKM implementation. These gaps include:

Inconsistent knowledge retention strategies: Different institutions use varying methods for capturing and storing nuclear knowledge, leading to inconsistencies in how information is documented and accessed (IAEA, 2021).

Lack of centralized knowledge management systems: There is no unified digital platform for nuclear knowledge sharing across different institutions, making it difficult to integrate research findings and technical expertise (Adebiyi *et al.*, 2022).

Limited awareness and training on knowledge management best practices: Many nuclear professionals lack formal training in NKM methodologies, leading to inefficiencies in knowledge storage and retrieval (Umar *et al.*, 2022).

Cybersecurity risks and data protection challenges: Digital transformation in NKM requires robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive nuclear data from unauthorized access or cyber threats (Adegbite *et al.*, 2022).

To bridge these gaps, Nigeria needs to standardize knowledge management practices, establish a national nuclear knowledge portal, and enhance cybersecurity protocols in digital NKM systems.

7.0 Case Studies in Nuclear Knowledge Management (International)

Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) plays a vital role in ensuring the sustainability, safety, and innovation of nuclear programs worldwide. Various countries with established nuclear industries—such as the United States, France, Russia, and China—have developed sophisticated NKM frameworks to maintain institutional knowledge, enhance workforce development, and ensure regulatory



compliance. This section explores case studies from these countries, highlighting key lessons that Nigeria can adopt to strengthen its nuclear knowledge management practices.

7.1 Case Study: United States – Knowledge Management in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

The United States has one of the most advanced NKM frameworks, primarily managed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Department of Energy (DOE). The NRC focuses on knowledge preservation through:

Digitized Knowledge Repositories: The NRC maintains an extensive Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), which archives regulatory documents, safety reports, and research findings for public and internal use (NRC, 2022).

Workforce Development Programs: The Nuclear Energy University Program (NEUP) and partnerships with universities help sustain a pipeline of skilled professionals (DOE, 2021).

Succession Planning: Structured knowledge transfer programs ensure that retiring experts pass on their expertise to younger generations through mentorship and structured documentation.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Establish a national digital repository for nuclear research and regulatory knowledge.
- Strengthen partnerships with universities and research institutions for workforce training.
- Implement structured mentorship programs for knowledge transfer.

7.2 Case Study: France

The Role of EDF and IRSN in Nuclear Knowledge Management
France, a global leader in nuclear energy, has institutionalized NKM through Électricité de France (EDF) and the Institute for Radiological

Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN). Their approach includes:

Centralized Knowledge Management System: EDF operates a Nuclear Training Centre, integrating online knowledge platforms, technical libraries, and real-time operational data sharing (EDF, 2021).

Simulation-Based Training: Use of nuclear simulators for training reactor operators and emergency response teams (IRSN, 2022).

International Collaboration: Partnerships with IAEA, World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO), and other global bodies to share best practices.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Develop a **national nuclear training center** with digital platforms for real-time data sharing.
- Introduce **simulation-based training** for workforce skill development.
- Strengthen **international collaborations** for knowledge exchange.

7.3 Case Study: Russia -Rosatom's Knowledge Retention Strategy

Russia's state-owned Rosatom has a well-structured NKM system supporting its extensive nuclear power program. Key initiatives include:

Knowledge Digitalization: Rosatom's Knowledge Management Portal provides employees with access to technical reports, safety procedures, and case studies (Rosatom, 2021).

Expert Networks & Communities of Practice: Experienced engineers contribute to technical discussion forums and best practice databases to retain institutional knowledge.

Competency-Based Workforce Development: A structured nuclear career development framework ensures a continuous supply of trained personnel.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Create **an** online knowledge-sharing portal for nuclear professionals.



- Establish technical forums and expert networks to enhance knowledge retention.
- Develop a competency-based workforce training framework.

7.4 Case Study: China – Knowledge Management in the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC)

China's **rapid expansion of nuclear power** is supported by a strong NKM framework, managed by the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). Their key strategies include:

Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Knowledge Management: CNNC integrates **AI-driven predictive analytics** to optimize nuclear plant operations and enhance safety measures (CNNC, 2022).

Digital Twins for Reactor Training: Digital twin technology is used to create virtual replicas of nuclear reactors for operator training and performance assessment (Li *et al.*, 2022).

Government-Industry Collaboration: CNNC works closely with government agencies to align nuclear knowledge management with national energy policies.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Utilize AI and big data analytics in nuclear knowledge management.
- Invest in digital twin technology for reactor training.
- Enhance government-industry collaboration in NKM.

7.5 Comparative Analysis of International NKM Practices

Table 7 presents a comparative analysis of international nuclear knowledge management (NKM) practices in countries with well-established nuclear programs, including the USA, France, Russia, and China. The table highlights key aspects such as knowledge capture, storage mechanisms, workforce development, and the use of digital tools in

nuclear knowledge management. Each country has adopted tailored strategies to ensure knowledge continuity, technological advancement, and safety in nuclear operations. The USA emphasizes a structured approach to NKM through the use of advanced digital archives, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered knowledge retrieval systems, and comprehensive workforce training programs, including university partnerships and mentorship initiatives. France integrates a strong policy and regulatory framework into its NKM strategy, supported by secure cloud-based knowledge repositories and systematic succession planning to address workforce aging.

Russia's NKM model focuses on a centralized knowledge-sharing system, incorporating extensive research collaboration and knowledge transfer between state-owned nuclear institutions and industry stakeholders. Additionally, Russia employs digital platforms and blockchain technology to enhance the security and reliability of nuclear knowledge storage.

China has adopted an innovation-driven approach by leveraging big data analytics, AI, and machine learning to optimize knowledge retrieval and decision-making in the nuclear sector. Its workforce development strategy includes targeted technical training programs, nuclear education incentives, and extensive collaboration with global nuclear organizations.

By analyzing these international case studies, Nigeria can draw valuable lessons to strengthen its own NKM framework. Implementing advanced digitalization, enhancing workforce training, fostering industry-academic partnerships, and developing comprehensive regulatory policies are essential steps in improving Nigeria's nuclear knowledge management system.



Table 7: Comparative Analysis of International Nuclear Knowledge Management Practices and Lessons for Nigeria

Country	Key NKM Strategies	Potential Applications for Nigeria
USA	Digital knowledge repositories, university partnerships, structured mentorship	Establish a national digital repository, strengthen university partnerships, implement mentorship programs
France	Centralized training centers, nuclear simulators, international collaboration	Develop a nuclear training center, introduce simulation-based training, enhance international cooperation
Russia	Online knowledge portals, expert networks, competency-based workforce development	Create an online knowledge-sharing platform, set up expert networks, implement competency-based training
China	AI and big data in knowledge management, digital twin technology, government-industry collaboration	Adopt AI and big data in NKM, invest in digital twin technology, strengthen policy alignment with industry

8.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study highlight the critical role of nuclear knowledge management (NKM) in ensuring the sustainability and advancement of Nigeria’s nuclear sector. Effective NKM strategies, including knowledge capture, storage, and retrieval, are essential for preserving explicit and tacit knowledge within the industry. International case studies from countries such as the USA, France, Russia, and China demonstrate the significance of structured knowledge management systems, advanced digital tools, and comprehensive workforce development programs in maintaining a robust and efficient nuclear industry. The analysis further reveals that Nigeria faces several challenges in implementing an effective NKM framework, including inadequate infrastructure, limited technical expertise, regulatory constraints, and insufficient funding. Despite these challenges, initiatives by institutions such as the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) and the Centre for Energy Research and Training (CERT) indicate a growing recognition of the need for structured knowledge management practices.

In conclusion, Nigeria’s nuclear sector must prioritize the development and implementation

of a comprehensive NKM framework to facilitate knowledge retention, workforce sustainability, and technological advancement. Lessons from international nuclear programs emphasize the importance of digitalization, structured training programs, and strong regulatory support in achieving an effective NKM system. Addressing challenges such as brain drain, inadequate institutional support, and limited investment in knowledge infrastructure is essential for enhancing Nigeria’s nuclear capabilities.

Future directions for NKM in Nigeria should focus on expanding digital knowledge repositories, integrating artificial intelligence for efficient knowledge retrieval, and strengthening collaboration between academia, industry, and regulatory bodies. Investments in workforce development programs, including mentorship initiatives and international training collaborations, will help bridge the technical expertise gap. Additionally, the government should formulate and enforce policies that support knowledge-sharing culture, ensure regulatory compliance, and provide financial incentives for nuclear research and innovation. By adopting these strategies, Nigeria can build a resilient and competitive nuclear sector capable of



contributing to national development and global scientific progress.

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