

# Introduction

This book addresses today's important questions about nuclear energy by providing an authoritative and factual introduction to the relevant issues. It is primarily intended for policy makers, but should also be useful to interested members of the public, industrial managers, academics and journalists.

Chapter 1 gives a brief overview. The rest of the book describes the fundamental issues important to a discussion of nuclear energy today. Chapters 2 and 3 provide an introduction to the basic sciences and technologies involved. Chapters 4 to 8 set out the facts and issues connected with radioactive waste management, nuclear safety, radiological protection, economics, and international law and non-proliferation. The ninth chapter assesses nuclear energy in the context of sustainable development. The last chapter looks to the future, and to the potential of new nuclear-based technologies.

The information throughout is necessarily brief but, at the end of each chapter, there is an annotated list that guides the reader to a fuller set of references at the end of the book that are appropriate for further study. Important principles and terms are normally briefly defined throughout the text with fuller definitions provided in the Glossary. Text in green indicates a definition can be found in the Glossary. If the term appears more than once in a chapter it will usually only be highlighted on its first usage.