



International Atomic Energy Agency

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS GENERAL CONFERENCE

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## MANAGEMENT REFORM

In January 1998, at a specially organized *Senior Management Conference*, the Director General launched a wide ranging internal management reform process. This initiative generated a number of lines for change:

- A focus on the corporate concept of a 'single Agency';
- The fostering of a new Secretariat culture involving enhanced team work among staff members, information exchange among all levels, and renewed encouragement of excellence in performance;
- A restructuring of internal management processes to foster greater inter-Departmental co-ordination and to fix decision making at the most appropriate levels;
- A revision of personnel practices, particularly to streamline recruitment and strengthen training;
- A review of the official documentation provided to Member States to ensure results-oriented presentation of the programme and budget and concise reporting of achievements.

In parallel with these changes, the Director General initiated an external review by convening a *Senior Expert Group* to assess priorities and future directions of the Agency's programmes. The Group is expected to present its recommendations in October this year.

Although the follow-up action plan drafted on the basis of the Senior Management Conference was approved only in February, there have been sufficient developments since that time to warrant this first report summarizing actions that have been taken to date.

## POLICY AND CO-ORDINATION

The Agency has in the past produced a periodic Board of Governors information document that forecast the direction of the Agency's policy and activities for the medium term. Now, in order to further enhance policy formulation and development, a revised approach has been adopted to preparing what will be known as the *Medium Term Strategy*. This document, to be prepared in co-ordination with Member States and on the basis of the proposals received from the Senior Expert Group and the results of reviews conducted under the *Programme Performance Assessment System* (PPAS), will chart the direction of the Agency over the next five years. It will lay out the Agency's

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overall objectives and goals. In addition, it will present the programme focus and priorities, taking into account the Agency's internal and external environment as well as the challenges facing the organization, new trends in the nuclear field, and resource constraints.

Recently revised decision making mechanisms will enhance implementation of the Agency's work programme. In particular, the regular meetings of the Director General with senior managers (DGMs) have been supplemented by the establishment of a *Programme Co-ordination Committee* (PCC) at the Deputy Director General level. The Committee is charged with ensuring co-ordination of the Agency's programmatic activities and their consistency with the overall strategy and objectives. To reinforce this role, an Office of Programme Support and Evaluation has been established through redeployment of staff resources.

The work of the PCC has already led to improved communication between and among Departments. The Committee deals with questions that require prior deliberation before presentation to the DGM as well as issues that can be decided without referral to the DGM. It has, among other things, already guided the implementation of a unified plan for the Scientific Forums held in conjunction with the regular sessions of the General Conference. The forum this year, for example, will be organized around the single theme of water — consistent with the United Nations 'International Year of the Ocean' — and will incorporate contributions from several Departments.

Against the background of the ever accelerating advances in information management and information technology, an *Office of Information Management* has been created using existing resources. This development will centralize policy so as to prevent duplication, and rationalize information processing and documentation flow and dissemination, both within and outside the Secretariat.

## THE AGENCY'S PROGRAMME

The programme and budget setting process has been adjusted to place greater emphasis on expected results rather than just financial details and to facilitate the evaluation of performance. Given the Agency's increasing reliance on extrabudgetary funds the financial performance reports that are now regularly distributed to managers as part of the move towards increased transparency will include details of the extrabudgetary component. Additionally, the processes for raising and ensuring effective use of such funds have been scrutinized with a view towards improving consistency. An analysis of a scheme for fully biennial programming has been prepared and considered by the DGM, and a report will soon be submitted to Member States for discussion.

The PPAS is being refined through the establishment of a statement of policy and procedures applicable to all Agency activities. One immediate benefit will be to facilitate follow-up by the PCC of recommendations resulting from PPAS studies.

## PROCEDURES AND PERSONNEL

Current procedures and processes for the preparation by the Secretariat of reports on its activities have been reviewed and clarified. The result will be more concise reporting on programme and financial performance in a reduced number of documents, with the attendant benefit of lowered printing costs.

Following the Senior Management Conference, the Director General initiated a plan to ensure that decision making authority is delegated to the appropriate level, thereby giving managers greater responsibility. Delegations of authority relating to staff administration, benefits and entitlements, and other aspects of human resource management have been approved. An accompanying system of checks is being implemented.

The procedures for the clearance of various types of documents have been streamlined. In particular, improvements have been made in relation to external communications and the preparation of Governing Body documents and publications. Procedures have been made more transparent and responsibilities have been more clearly defined.

Existing procedures used in the appointment of staff have been analysed and steps have been taken to accelerate the process, without jeopardizing the requirement for excellence in the candidates selected. Moreover, the *Human Resource Advisory Group* (HRAG), the internal committee which oversees personnel requirements, has been restructured to include increased representation from the scientific and technical Departments. And, a more interactive process to periodically review staff requirements will now be followed in conjunction with the programme and budget review process. These latter measures will help to ensure that human resources are optimally matched to programme requirements.

A policy framework for an improved, integrated training programme has been developed. The emphasis is on a comprehensive training curriculum for all staff with managerial functions that develops and maintains Agency-wide standards of management within a framework of common policies and procedures. Extrabudgetary funds have been provided for the design and development of the curriculum.

A number of changes were introduced in 1998 to the Secretariat's process for evaluation of staff performance — the *Work Performance and Planning Review* (WPPR) system. Among other things, the grading scale was revised, flexibility was introduced in the levels of review required and specific procedures involved were clarified.

## CONCLUSION

The Director General's initiatives are intended to reinforce the framework for formulating and administering Agency programmes. The combination of internal management reform and external review is designed to bring about changes that will ensure that the Agency is clear on its priorities, fully co-ordinated in its activities and efficient in the delivery of its programmes.

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