

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AT THE IAEA – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Knowledge Management caters to the critical issues of organizational adaptation, survival and competence in face of increasingly discontinuous change of environment. Essentially, it embodies organizational processes that seek synergistic combination of data and information processing capacity of information technologies, and the creative and innovative capacity of human beings” (Malhotra 1997).

International organizations are coming to view knowledge as their most valuable and strategic resource, and bringing that knowledge to bear on problems and opportunities as their most important capability. It is being realised that to remain geared to the evolving needs of their Member States it is a must to explicitly manage all intellectual resources and capabilities of the organization. To this end, many international organizations have initiated a range of knowledge management projects and programs. The primary focus of these efforts has been on developing new applications of information technology to support the digital capture, storage, retrieval and distribution of an organization's documented knowledge but also capturing valuable tacit knowledge existing within peoples' heads, augmented or shared via interpersonal interaction and social relationships. Numerous technical and organizational initiatives have been aligned and integrated, providing a comprehensive infrastructure to support knowledge management processes. But while the appropriate infrastructure can enhance an organization's ability to create and exploit knowledge, it does not insure that the organization is making the best investment of its resources or that it is managing the right knowledge in the right way.

Against the background of these trends and the opportunities and challenges they present, the Agency has been active in establishing knowledge management as a crosscutting activity that includes both assisting Member States in managing their own nuclear knowledge assets but also in establishing a “one house” approach to knowledge management in the Secretariat.

The challenge for the Agency in the medium term is threefold:

- First to understand how the needs and interests of Member States are changing so as to be able to respond by focusing on the appropriate nuclear technologies and the necessary information, knowledge and skills, required for their efficient and safe implementation.
- Second to contribute to the objective assessment of the use of nuclear technologies and to assist Member States building capacity in the safe application of those technologies that have a comparative advantage;
- Last but not least to play a catalytic role in the international effort to maintain and increase knowledge, understanding and expertise in the nuclear field, particularly through the collection and dissemination of scientific information and the transfer of technology.

This paper deals with the main challenges and opportunities for implementing knowledge management at the IAEA and in particular;

What does the Agency wants to achieve through knowledge management or the next five-year time frame?

How knowledge management is expected to have enhanced the ability of the Member States to make full use of nuclear technologies for their economic and social development.

How knowledge management will strengthen the position of the Agency to be more widely recognized as the principal vehicle for the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology.