



International Atomic Energy Agency

REVIEW OF
THE AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES

Additional material to be incorporated in Annex A

The views and recommendations of Australia reproduced in the attachment hereto were received on 15 August 1967.

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A N N E X A

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Australia

"11 August 1967

"Technical assistance

"The key problem in determining the nature and direction of the Agency's technical assistance programme is the allocation of priorities both between individual requests and between fields of activity. Priority should be established to ensure that the Agency is conforming to its Statutory function of encouraging and assisting 'research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses' [1], and to ensure that maximum effectiveness and economic benefit are achieved from this expenditure.

"2. In reviewing the broader aspect of the Agency's past technical assistance activities, we find it necessary to emphasize, as we have in the past, the necessity of the Agency confining itself to activities of direct significance to the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to its development. In concrete terms, while we do not question the value of co-operation between the Agency and other organizations, (e. g. FAO, WHO), we emphasize that the Agency's role in co-operative ventures is in introducing the techniques of atomic energy to the fields covered by them. This is the unique task of the Agency and the task it is equipped to perform. It is an enormous task, embracing both research and development, and on different occasions it may seem more useful for the Agency to participate by providing assistance with research, by introducing new techniques and/or by donating equipment. A judgement among various ways of expanding the applications of atomic energy depends fundamentally upon this judgement of the compatibility of a particular proposal with the Agency's Statutory function. It is also the first step towards an economic use of the Agency's technical assistance resources.

"3. Concerning the allocation of priorities among individual requests for technical assistance, we question the appropriateness of the Agency's continuing to conform as strictly as in the past to the practice of other organizations in the United Nations family of providing equipment only as an adjunct to the provision of expert advice and assistance. The formal relationship between expert services and equipment should not always be insisted upon. In many cases equipment alone is required, as the country concerned is sufficiently well furnished with competent technical personnel but lacks equipment. We would emphasize the costliness of the association of experts with equipment - experts cost of the order of \$20 000 per man year.

"4. Our recommendation, then, is that technical assistance requests should be judged in the first instance against the basic criterion of relevance to atomic energy development. Each individual request should then be further judged in terms of its technical soundness, and where a request includes both an expert and equipment, it should be demonstrated that each is needed.

"5. In providing training for fellowship-holders, the Agency should utilize as far as possible courses given in established national institutions. The accumulated experience and established infrastructure of such institutions enables thorough and contemporary training to be provided, and often at a lower cost.

[1] Article III. A. 1.

"Research contracts

"6. Research contracts have the dual purpose of deepening knowledge of atomic science and extending its applications by providing research experience to individual scientists or scientific organizations. We doubt whether the first purpose is any longer very useful as the existence of extensive national programmes in the more industrialized countries often means that Agency contracts are given for work already being undertaken nationally. Accordingly, their value to the general membership of the Agency is slight. This is not the case when the value of research contracts in contributing to research experience and when the solution of special or regional problems is considered. This is the technical assistance effect of research contracts. They are capable of helping to develop the resources and train the personnel of less developed countries. Accordingly, the Agency's policy in granting research contracts should be to emphasize the support of work of a developmental nature in Member States, with appropriate priority.

"Centres

"7. The Agency's function in assisting the establishment of international training and research centres is essentially that of an initiator or catalyst. This role does not include a long-term Agency commitment, even to a successful centre. A long-term Agency commitment would result in the Agency's programme becoming increasingly inflexible and incapable of responding to contemporary needs. To ensure that the programme does not solidify into projects of limited or esoteric significance, the Agency should ensure that its financial commitment to such centres is limited to an initial period and ultimately to providing fellowships for less developed countries. The only circumstances in which this principle could be legitimately varied is when the work of the centre in question is clearly and significantly related to the fundamental objectives and role of the Agency itself.

"Agency laboratories

"8. The Agency's laboratories should not duplicate work being done at national laboratories, many of which are better equipped for their task. The Agency's laboratories should perform tasks where their international character make them appropriate to the Agency. For example, a most valuable activity undertaken by the Agency's laboratory is the programme of international intercomparison of calibrated radioactive samples. The Agency has a definite role in providing an international standards centre for radioactive materials.

"Conferences, study groups and symposia

"9. The programme of conferences, symposia and study groups has clearly benefited the participants, especially those drawn from less developed countries. In future planning and in the interests of achieving even greater effectiveness, the Agency should strictly ensure that the study matter of any meeting is properly the concern of the Agency. Any tendency to overlap into fields which can be seen to be the chief concern of other organizations (e.g. FAO, WHO) would disperse and weaken the Agency's effort. Furthermore, the early repetition of meetings on the same subject should be avoided. While a series of meetings on a particular subject is sometimes necessary, the need of such a series should be thoroughly demonstrated, otherwise other subjects of interest may be neglected or money may be absorbed in a way which is unjustified in terms of the Agency's overall interests.

"Organization and administration of the Secretariat

"10. We emphasize that the 'paramount consideration' in recruitment to the Secretariat is to secure staff of 'the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence, and integrity'. [2] The value of equitable geographical distribution is also manifest.

[2] Statute, Article VII.D.

"11. The need of technical competence and efficiency in the Secretariat suggests that in respect of most posts, including executive posts, experience in the operation of atomic energy centres should be a qualification of incumbents. We support the maintenance of a preponderance of short-term contracts. This ensures that staff remain technically informed and avoids the problem of officers becoming isolated from developments in their field of work. We recognize the necessity of long-term or career engagements for officers in the field of safeguards and inspection, and believe at this stage that the same will be found necessary in respect of staff engaged for the International Nuclear Information System [3]. More generally, we believe that the Agency's staff size should be well controlled and the establishment of the Secretariat should be subjected to periodic scrutiny to determine the need for maintaining a given establishment. We do not accept that all vacant positions should be automatically advertised.

"12. Another aspect of personnel selection is that of experts to serve on advisory bodies, for example, the ad hoc committee to examine the Agency's Laboratory at Seibersdorf, or the Scientific Council of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics. Our view of such bodies is that their value lies in their independence and disinterestedness, as well as in their competence. A stronger effort should be made in the future to ensure that they are composed of individuals who will judge the issues they are advising on from the standpoint of efficiency and relevance to the Agency's overall programme. It may be useful in the future for the Board to be given an opportunity to express its informal views on the composition of such bodies before they are appointed."

[3] See document GC(XI)/360. Annex III.

