Advisory Commission on Safety Standards (ACSS)
First Meeting
18-20 March 1996
IAEA Headquarters, Vienna

Draft Report of the Meeting

I. Introduction

The meeting was opened by Mr. Morris Rosen, Acting Deputy Director-General, Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety. The agenda for the first meeting of ACSS was approved. Presentations on activities of the Department of Nuclear Safety were given by Mr. G. Webb (A/Director of Division of Radiation and Waste Safety), Mr. F. Niehaus (A/Director of Division of Nuclear Installation Safety), and Ms. Carnino (Head, Safety Co-ordination Section). Mr. F. Williams (Office of Internal Audit and Evaluation Support) presented the Agency`s Programme performance Assessment System (PPAS) and the role of ACSS in the assessment of Safety Standards of the Agency.

After the discussion of terms of reference of the Commission, the reports of the four topical Committees (RASSAC, WASSAC, TRANSSAC, and NUSSAC) were presented by the Co-ordinators of each of the areas, Messrs. Mason, Raynal, Rawl and Campbell respectively.

II. Commitments and Decisions

An outline of the commitments and decisions made by the Commission on various items of the Agenda is outlined below:

1. Terms of Reference and working procedures

The Commission`s views on its term of reference and its working procedures are given in Annex I.

2. Promulgation of Revised Transport Standards to the June Session of the Board

The Commission was informed that the Secretariat intends to submit the Revised Safety Series No.6 Regulation for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material to the June Session of the Board of Governors for Approval. The Commission agreed on the following statement. "The Commission finds the proposed submission contrary to the process set out in GOV/INF/772 and reinforced in its own terms of reference. The Commission regrets the intention of the Secretariat and expects that, in future, Safety Fundamentals and Standards are submitted to the Board of Governors for approval only after they have been endorsed by the Commission".

The Commission decided on a procedure that could lead to the endorsement of the standard before its submission to the Board of Governors for approval. The Secretariat should send a copy of the standard to the members of the Commission with a covering note, with appropriate level of detail, indicating areas where it has not been easy to reach consensus, by 12 April 1996 at the latest. The members are requested to send their comments and views on the document and the covering note to Dr. Bishop by 1 June. It was stressed that this should not be seen as a

new opportunity to raise national issues in relation to the standard. Dr. Bishop will review the comments made and prepare a formal statement for the Board of Governors in accordance with the procedures outlined in Annex I. The result of Dr. Bishop`s review of the comments will be sent to the Agency by 15 June 1996.

3. Future Programme of Work

The Commission took note of reports of the four topical Committees.

The Committees are requested to review the list of documents to be developed, in the light of the decisions made by the Commission in this report, and set priorities for the development of the documents within their topical areas. Annex I gives an outline of the ACSS working procedures and Annex II provides basic principles to be used in the prioritization of planned documents. Annex I and II are revised version of the drafts discussed during the meeting. The two Annexes are expected to be discussed in the next ACSS meeting based on the comments received from the members.

The Secretariat is requested to prepare a report on the overall plan for the development of standards on the basis of the recommendations of the Committees and the content of Annex I. Any deviations on priorities or other recommendations of the Committees should be fully explained in the Secretariat`s report. It is expected that the overall plan prepared by the Secretariat be developed into a data base to facilitate the work of the Commission and the Committees, for easy identification of gaps within the programme and adjustment to the programme as appropriate.

The Commission will review the meeting reports of the Committees and the overall plan prepared by the Secretariat in its next meeting.

4. Topics of Common Interest

The following topics are considered to be of general interest to the four Committees and the Commission and, as such, they should be published within a `general safety` category reflecting their applicability to all topical areas considered in the programme. The development of documents in these areas should be under the supervision of the Safety Co-ordination Section to ensure appropriate level of participation by the four Committees.

Governmental Organization: The Secretariat, on the basis of recommendations of the Committees, should prepare the list of documents to be developed under this topic. NUSSAC will have the lead for the development of a single Standard on the topic and related Guides covering large installations and nuclear facilities, RASSAC will have the lead for preparation of Guides dealing with industrial, medical, and other radiation sources. Strong participation by other Committees in the preparation of these documents is recommended.

Quality Assurance: The development of a Safety Standard and 14 Safety Guides for large installations and nuclear facilities have been completed and are planned for publication in 1996. Because of availability of other international standards on the topic, and concerns raised during the preparation of these documents, the Commission will consider the topic in the future.

Emergency Preparedness: The Secretariat, on the basis of recommendations of the Committees, should prepare the list of documents to be developed under this topic. RASSAC

will have the lead for the development of documents. The number of documents to be developed under this topic should be kept to a minimum.

Glossary of Terms: The Secretariat is requested to collate the relevant glossaries developed by the Agency and perform an internal review of the unified list. The list should then be submitted to the Committees, and subsequently to the Commission for review. In the meantime, the unified list can be used as a working document.

5. Topics of Interest to more than one Committee

The topics presented in the following are of interest to more than one Committee. The list has been prepared taking into account guidance sought by Committees in their report to the Commission. Contribution to the development of a topic is not exclusive to those listed in the last column.

Topic of Interest	Leading Committee	Participating Committees
- exemption levels	RASSAC	WASSAC/TRANSSAC
- very low level waste management (clearance levels)	WASSAC	RASSAC
- waste storage at reactor site	WASSAC	NUSSAC/RASSAC
- spent fuel storage and handling		
interim storage	NUSSAC	WASSAC
disposal	WASSAC	
- decommissioning/dismantling	WASSAC	NUSSAC
- discharge control	RASSAC	WASSAC/NUSSAC
- environmental restoration	WASSAC	RASSAC

Note: RASSAC will have the lead for preparation of documents on environmental monitoring and occupational protection.

6. Procedural and other Considerations

The Commission agreed that Fundamentals and Standards should be sent to all Member States for their comments. However, for Guides and Practices the Committees should decide on the appropriate list of Member States, if any, to be consulted for each specific document. A record of the Member States consulted, for each document, should be kept by the Secretariat.

7. Peer Discussions Groups

It was agreed to expand the scope of peer discussion groups to cover topical areas other than those related to nuclear safety. The following topics were suggested for consideration in the future:

- dismantling and decommissioning of nuclear facilities(1996-97);
- safety aspects of plant life extension (possibly in 1997-98).

8. Senior Regulators Meeting

The Commission was informed that the senior regulators meeting, traditionally held during the IAEA General Conference, is planned for 18-19 September. The following topics were suggested for consideration, additional topics should be sent to the Secretariat by end of May 1996:

- national approaches to spent fuel storage and disposal (including technological aspects of spent fuel elements);
- safety of medical applications (diagnostic and therapeutic including human factors);

9. Programme Performance Assessment System (PPAS)

There was general agreement in performing an evaluation of the Agency`s safety standards programme, in the light of the presentation of Mr. Williams. An evaluation review worksheet (standard format for such evaluations) has been prepared in consultation with the Office of Internal Audit and Evaluation Support and is attached as Annex III, for review and comment by the members of the Commission. Comments are expected to reach the Secretariat by 15 June 1996. The Commission is requested to perform the evaluation in its next meeting and prepare a report on its findings and recommendation by 16 December 1996.

10. Date and Agenda of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Commission is planned for 2-4 December 1996.

The agenda for the next meeting should include consideration of general safety topics; safety culture, probabilistic safety assessment, human factors, and training, and their treatment within the Safety Series. The Secretariat should prepare and submit background papers on these topics well in advance of the meeting.

The PPAS on safety standards programme will be included as an item of agenda for the December meeting. Annex III, revised on the basis of comments received from the members of the Commission, will serve as background paper for consideration of this topic.

DRAFT

ANNEX I

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON SAFETY STANDARDS WORKING PROCEDURE

1. The ACSS is a standing body of senior government officials which has a special overview role with regard to the Agency's Safety Standards and provides advice to the Director General on the overall safety standards-related programme. Its role does not include the promotion of nuclear power nor do members commit their governments to adopt any of the safety standards documents. Members of the ACSS are government officials, nominated by their governments, they are therefore obliged to respect their own national policies. The Agency, however, expects members to be impartial, as far as is possible, and to give advice based on their

extensive knowledge and experience.

2. There are four functions of the ACSS set out in the terms of reference, each one is expanded and interpreted below.

Provide guidance on the approach and strategy for establishing the Agency's safety standards

3. The ACSS will develop a clear statement of the objectives for the Agency's overall safety standards programme. The ACSS will review these objectives periodically in the light of changing priorities and requirements.

4. Details of the budget allocated to achieve the programme will be presented to ACSS so that members are aware of the constraints in the current financial period and can recommend changes to the allocation for future years. The timing of these actions is important if changes are to be achieved. To enable members to judge the effectiveness of the use of resources the Agency will need to provide details of the cost, both to the Agency and to member states, of the various elements of the programme.

5. Taking into account the objectives and budget, the ACSS will advise on the overall strategy of the programme with the aim of ensuring the appropriate balance between the various elements. Advice on the strategy will be developed mainly through consideration of proposals presented to the ACSS by the four Advisory Committees.

6. The proposals presented to the ACSS should be in a consistent format to allow comparison and should include:

- a list of the documents on which work is proposed, be it a new document, revision or reorganisation of existing documents;
- an explanation of how the work fits into the overall strategy;
- a clear priority for each item of work;
- a programme of work giving expected dates of monitoring points and for completion;
- an explanation of how the allocated resources will be used to achieve the programme;
- any cooperation with other ACs.

7. Once the overall strategy is agreed the ACSS will monitor progress through regular reports from the ACs. If necessary, the ACSS will advise the ACs to adjust their programme and priorities to fit in with the wider strategy.

8. The ACSS will be given the opportunity to review the ACs proposals for each document and to propose changes if appropriate. The proposals should include:

- the terms of reference,
- objective,
- scope and
- content (chapter headings etc.)

9. Good communication between the ACSS and the ACs is essential. This will mainly

be through the chairmen who will be invited to attend the relevant parts of the ACSS meetings.

10. Where issues do not clearly fall into the scope of one of the ACs the ACSS will consider setting up a multi-disciplinary Advisory Group with the most appropriate AC taking the lead.

Resolve outstanding issues referred to it by ACs

11. These issues are likely to be of two sorts:

Programme Disputes about which AC should be responsible for a particular area of work, the allocation of resources to one topic rather than another, the timing of the work or its relative priority. The aim should be for the ACSS to achieve consensus on the issue but if it is not possible the advice provided by the ACSS should reflect in full significant minority views.

Technical Disputes about the wording or technical content of a particular document will be resolved through discussion within ACSS and with the AC concerned. The credibility of the Agency's safety standards documents depends on a consensus being achieved amongst the countries involved in developing the standard. It will, therefore, occasionally be necessary to represent minority views in a document to allow it to be published. If a consensus is not achieved the letter forwarding the document to the Board of Governors for their approval should explain the dissenting views.

[Note: The ACSS is an advisory body, not a formal management group, and therefore it must work through consensus rather than through a formal voting procedure which would be inappropriate. However, in the output from the ACSS, dissenting views need to be fairly explained to allow the Board of Governors or the Director General to judge the significance of advice].

Endorse the texts of Fundamentals and Standards

12. Fundamentals The ACSS will have direct responsibility for the preparation of a Fundamentals document combining the elements and scope of the existing three documents in this series. At an appropriate time the ACSS will set up an Advisory Group to prepare the draft which will be submitted for the approval of ACSS.

13. Standards Standards documents will normally be presented for endorsement at a meeting of the ACSS so that the ACSS can deal with the important points of principle in a formal way. The ACSS will ensure that:

- the objective has been met
- the document remains within the prescribed scope
- all topics within the scope have been adequately covered
- controversial issues have been dealt with properly
- there has been sufficient consultation

14. It is not intended that ACSS should normally become involved in the detailed wording of the standards documents although it is not prevented from doing so.

15. In endorsing a document for submission to the Board of Governors, the ACSS should prepare a formal statement covering

- the need for the document;
- the procedure followed in its development;
- the Member States consulted;
- any major changes from previous documents;
- the resources used in producing the document; and
- any dissenting opinions at the ACSS.

16. Guides and Practices These will generally be presented by the AC to the ACSS who will note them and forward them to DG. If the ACSS wishes it may, exceptionally, review a Guide or Practice in the same way as a Standard. When presenting a Guide or Practice to the ACSS the AC should provide a draft covering letter to the DG containing the information listed in the paragraph above.

17. In the early life of the ACSS it will be required to endorse documents which were in preparation before it was able to influence the scope or content. These will be presented to the ACSS as above but they have to be dealt with on a case by case basis. However they should conform with the overall strategy, once it is developed.

Provide general advice and guidance

18. This function is not restricted to the standards documents, the terms of reference list the following:

- safety standards issues
- relevant regulatory issues
- safety standards activities and related programmes
- promotion of the worldwide application of the standards.

19. The scope of this function will include the programmes of missions and services provided by the Agency which use the standards as their basis or are of a regulatory nature. An unavoidable part of this function will be a review of the Agency's safety policy, relative priorities and resource allocation to these areas.

Meetings

The ACSS will normally meet once a year, however additional meetings might be necessary at first to ensure that the new system becomes effective as soon as possible. Papers and documents which require endorsement or comment by the ACSS will be available at least one month before the meeting.

ANNEX II

BASIC PRINCIPLES TO BE USED IN THE PRIORITIZATION OF DOCUMENTS

1. Rationality

Upper tier documents should be given the highest priority for preparation or revision. The general order of priority should be:

a) Fundamentals
b) Standards
c) Guides
d) Practices

2. Completeness

Each series of documents should be complete to the extent that upward and downward referencing between the four tiers can be made. Practices should not, however, duplicate similar sets of complementary documents prepared by other international organisations, such as the OECD, ICRP and WHO.

3. Effectiveness in terms of Improving Safety

Those documents which are judged to have the greatest potential for improving safety should be developed or revised first.

4. Maturity

Those documents which are based on well-established scientific and engineering principles should be developed or revised first. Those based on developing technologies should either be deferred or developed at the Safety Practices level only.

5. Utilitarianism

Priority should be given to those documents which provide the most benefit for the largest number of member states.

6. Maximizing Cooperation between Advisory Committees

In those cases where a choice has to be made between the preparation of documents of equal priority, that document which involves two or more Advisory Committees should be selected.

Annex III

EVALUATION REVIEW WORKSHEET

BASIC INFORMATION
Evaluation Title: Safety Standards
Department/Division: NS/Safety Co-ordination Section
Programme/Sub-Programme: K, Co-ordination of Safety Activities/Safety Policies and Standards
Person Responsible: A. Karbassioun

SUBJECT AREA

1. Historical Context: Development of safety standards is covered as part of activities of six Agency Programmes (A, B, H, I, J, and K) And are within the programme and budget of Departments of NS and NE.
a. Length of Activity: Development of safety standards is a statutory obligation of the Agency. The first Agency safety standards (on safe transport of radioactive materials) was published in 1961. Over the years a number of other safety standards covering various topics have been published by the Agency, notable among these are the Basic Safety Standards for Radiation Protection and the Nuclear Safety Standards (NUSS) programme.
b. Amount of funds expended to date: It is difficult to provide realistic numbers on funding devoted to the development of Standards.
c. Current funding level: (see item b above).
d. Previous evaluations, audit, reviews, etc.: A peer review of the IAEA programme on safety related activities (including safety standards) was performed by an Advisory Group in July 1995.

2. Future Plans:
a. Where is it going? To complete by the year 2000 development of all standards considered to be of high priority.
b. Does it have specific objectives? Yes, to develop, in accordance with the process outlined in GOV/INF/772, a set of harmonized safety standards in the different safety-related areas in which the Agency is involved.
c. Number of years to be continued? The activity is an statutory function of the Agency, therefore it is continuous.
d. Future funding levels? Priorities to be set by the Committees and approved by the Commission for the development of safety standards will be reflected in the 1997-98 programme and as much as possible in 1996 financial plan. Depending on the recommendations of the Commission there may be a need for a modest increase.

3. Rationale for Selection: The Advisory Group of July 1995, recommended a technical evaluation assessing the safety programmes. The Secretariat views the nuclear safety programme as one of the Agency's top priorities.

4. Source of Interest/Concern:
a. Member states: The interest shown by the Board of Governors is indicative of the Member States interest in the development of standards.
b. Senior Management: The interest of Senior Management is demonstrated by issuance of GOV/INF/772. The standards are also required by the Agency for its own operations.

EVALUATION APPROACH

1. Evaluation Objective: To review the current Safety Standards programme including the review and approval process, identify standards requiring revision, additional topics to be covered by the standards and set priorities for development of specific standards.

2. Type of evaluation: The review will be an evaluation of effectiveness and relevance. It will focus on both the programme and the process for development of standards recommending future direction, priorities and structure of Safety programme. The effectiveness of the activity can be judged with the level of use made of the standards by the Member States and the Agency in its own operations. However, resource allocations for development of standards has to be considered as part of the overall Agency`s safety programme.

3. Scope and coverage: The complete safety standards programme. Safety standards relating to handling of plutonium fuel cycle facilities, spent fuel storage and handling, and quality assurance are outside the programme and budget of NS.

4. Issues expect to answer: The evaluation is expected to deal with issues in relation to the Agency`s Safety Series publication, including the overall structure, related policy and procedural aspects, usefulness and impact of standards as a product, resources, and future consideration for these and similar activities.

5. Methodology (including data requirements): Preparation will be done by the Secretariat, with input from the work of the Advisory Committees. The Commission will discuss the issues as outlined in this evaluation proposal in its December 1996 meeting.

6. Participation(external and/or internal): The standing Advisory Commission on Safety Standards (ACSS) is composed of senior regulators from Member States with its present term covering period of 1996-1999. One Scientific Secretary and four Co-ordinators for nuclear, radiation, waste and transport safety have been appointed internally.

7. Number of persons, days or weeks required: 15 person days of external expertise (ACSS) and 10 person days of staff. No direct costs are involved.

8. Schedule/timeline: The evaluation should be completed by middle of December 1996, with submission of a written report .