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**MEASURING, ASSESSING AND COMMUNICATING
REGULATORY EFFECTIVENESS (MACRE 2003)****An International Perspective on the Work Performed by Nuclear Regulatory Authorities**

Under the aegis of the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), heads of OECD member country nuclear regulatory authorities met on 17-18 June 2003 with high-level government officials and executives from the nuclear industry to exchange perspectives on measuring, assessing and communicating nuclear regulatory effectiveness.

The main conclusion of the forum is that regulatory performance indicators are both good and useful in improving a regulator's effectiveness and efficiency, but there are a number of areas that deserve attention. For example, incorrect analysis of these indicators could lead to inaccurate decision making, and misinterpretation can lead to misunderstandings by the stakeholders.

More importantly, the information provided through the use of indicators is only part of the overall picture in improving regulatory effectiveness. The inclusion of many other variables is required to accurately measure, assess and communicate regulatory effectiveness.

Ensuring that nuclear installations are operated and maintained in such a way that their impact on public health and safety is as low as reasonably practicable has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of nuclear regulation. In the past, nuclear incidents provided the main impetus for regulatory change. Today, economic factors, deregulation, technological advancements, government oversight and the general requirements for openness and accountability are leading regulatory bodies to review their effectiveness. In addition, seeking to enhance the present level of nuclear safety by continuously improving the effectiveness of regulatory bodies is seen as one of the ways to strengthen public confidence in the regulatory systems.

The underlying starting point for this forum was a set of performance indicators recently developed to measure a regulator's performance in five key areas: competence; promoting safety; continuous improvement; internal processes; and stakeholder confidence. The results of a one-year pilot project undertaken by ten NEA member countries provided the basis for the discussions. A main objective of the forum discussions was to seek verification and validation of the selected measures. Participants debated the appropriateness of the indicators chosen, whether others could be applied and what are the most essential measures of a regulator's effectiveness and efficiency.

Additional conclusions reached at the forum are given in the Annex.

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Annex

**ADDITIONAL CONCLUSIONS REACHED
AT THE MACRE 2003 FORUM**

- A good regulator brings “added value” to nuclear power plant operators. While this “added value” cannot be measured directly, a comparison with government-owned nuclear facilities, which in the past were exempted from an independent regulatory overview, indicates major differences in safety performance.
- In order to improve regulatory effectiveness, good tools are required to assess current performance and to identify areas for further improvement.
- Performance indicators are useful: “If you measure it, it will get better.”
- Indicators do not measure the actual quality of the work.
- External qualitative assessments of a regulator's performance are useful. It is generally accepted that regulatory oversight improves the performance of operators; similarly, external assessment improves performance of regulators and is commendable.
- There is a need to improve regulators' competence. Besides technical competence, other important qualities are decision-making, management and communication skills.
- There is strong consensus on the importance of public confidence in ensuring regulatory effectiveness.

The outcome of the forum has provided stimulus for NEA member countries to continue their work in this area. The results will be documented in a short report to be released later this year.