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Accountability and Transparency – Essential Underpinnings of Quality Safeguards

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The fundamental purpose of IAEA safeguards is to maintain confidence in the international community of the compliance of States with their respective non-proliferation commitments. The safeguards system for ensuring this compliance produces the most important output, the IAEA's compliance findings.

Confidence in the findings of any compliance verification system requires some basic elements such as independence, accountability, transparency, and quality management systems. Quality management systems are an internal set of documents and procedures that, while clearly important, need to incorporate an external communication component in order to engender confidence as to how compliance is being managed and ensured.

This paper will explore the importance of these fundamentals to confidence in IAEA safeguards compliance conclusions, with a focus on the external communication elements of accountability and transparency. Accountability and transparency will be considered with different communication channels through which safeguards implementation matters are explained and reported and at different levels, facility, State, regional, and the IAEA. This will include communications by: the IAEA and State authorities to the general public; State authorities to peers in other national safeguards authorities (regional and beyond); and, the IAEA and State authorities to the international community as represented through the Board of Governors and General Conference. Examples will be presented of good practices in these areas to encourage greater accountability and transparency in the work of safeguards.

Country or International Organization

Australia

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