

## **RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE RCA – WHERE DOES THE BUCK STOP?**

Traditionally decision making in the RCA has been based on consensus agreement by the Member States. This process has worked well and been effective over the past 30 years. It has also ensured that there has been openness and transparency with all Member States able to participate as equal partners.

However over recent times, as the RCA Member States have taken on more responsibility for all aspects of their programme and the management and administration linkages have become more complex. We are now faced with situations where it is not immediately clear whether or how past agreements by the Member States to delegate tasks and responsibilities have provided all the authorities to facilitate appropriate actions being undertaken. The current text of the “Guidelines and Operating Rules for the RCA Programme” do not seem to cover points such as:

- What powers have the RCA Member States invested in the Chair(s) of the National RCA Representatives Meeting? What responsibilities and obligations do they have to discuss, inform and report to Member States on the RCA Programme outside of National Representative Meetings?
- What powers have been invested in the RCA Regional Office? What responsibilities does it have to discuss, inform and report to Member States?
- What powers have been invested in the IAEA RCA Office? What responsibilities does it have to discuss, inform and report to Member States before actions are undertaken? What are the delegations, obligations and responsibilities in respect of making changes in project design and implementation?
- What authority does the IAEA have in the organisation, management and decision making for RCA activities not funded by the IAEA?

For example if the RCA Coordinator requests an individual from an RCA Member State to have discussions with an International Agency on possible collaboration, is that individual representing the IAEA or the RCA? If it is the RCA, should the RCA National Representatives be involved or merely informed. To whom should the individual submit a report?

Similarly if the RCARO requests an individual from an RCA Member State to have discussions with an International Agency on possible collaboration, is that individual only representing the RCA or is the IAEA involved. Should the RCA National Representatives be involved or merely informed? To whom should the individual submit a report? What communication should take place between the RCARO and the RCA Coordinator?

Effective and efficient management of the RCA programme needs to be based on clear and transparent operating principles, guidelines and delegations. If the current arrangements are deficient then consideration should be given to their revision and updating.