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1 Supervisory and safety culture at SFOE

1.1 Concentration of supervision and safety

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) has concentrated its **supervisory and safety tasks in different specialized areas within the Supervision and Safety division (ASI)**. According to the rules of procedure, the ASI division is responsible for all of the Office's tasks in the areas of risk management and safety supervision.

1.2 Broad range of tasks

The individual specialized areas are managed in the **different sections** of the ASI division. The focus of the tasks, the specific objectives in terms of impact and the working processes vary greatly between the individual sections. In simplified form, the main priorities of the sections can be presented with the following labels:

- _ dams → supervision of technical safety and compliance
- _ pipelines → supervision of compliance and technical safety by the Federal Pipelines Inspectorate (FPI)
- _ safeguards → nuclear non-proliferation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- _ heavy current → DETEC-mandated supervision of the Swiss Federal Inspectorate for Heavy Current Installations (ESTI)
- _ risk management of funds → political auditing
- _ an administratively-affiliated secretariat of the Federal Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) → NSC as an independent second opinion, inter alia, in addition to the position of the Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (ENSI)

1.3 Commonality in diversity

In addition to these **differences**, the specialized areas also differ in the way in which external organizations are integrated into the supervisory and safety processes and in the scope of each area's experience. In terms of content, a stronger focus can sometimes be noted on conventional supervision or rather on safety issues per se, which are based on a **common vision** – that of an **appropriate and responsible level of safety**.

1.4 Culture determines the direction

The SFOE and the ASI division have some leeway and flexibility in actually performing these multiple tasks. Exactly how the SFOE behaves and how it conducts its work processes ultimately depends to a large extent on **supervisory and safety culture**. This culture indicates the "rough direction" in which the organization is to move forward and the values that guide it. But in doing so, it must abide by the Federal Administration's Code of Conduct and the SFOE's overarching mission statement.



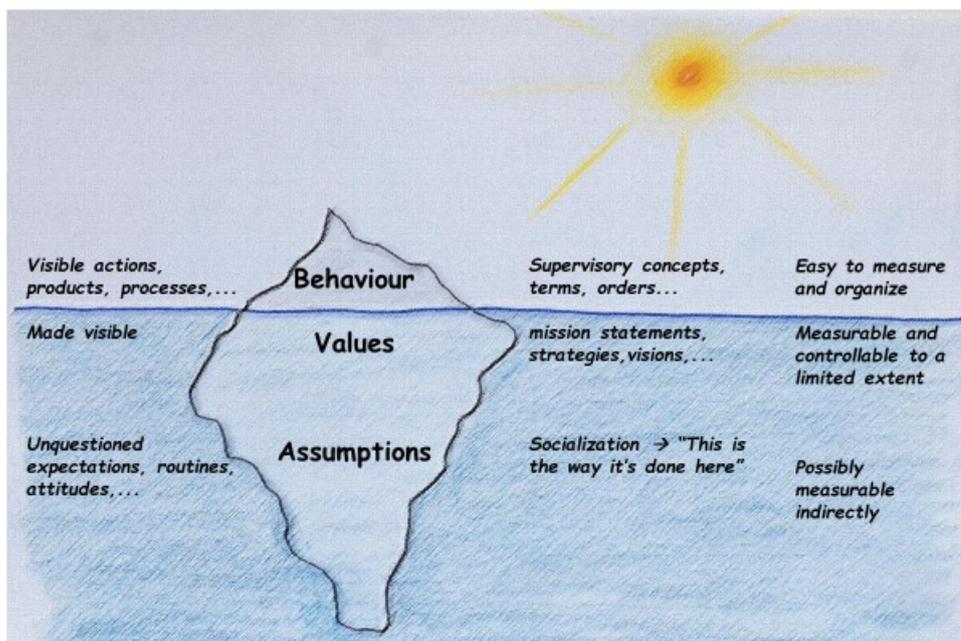
1.5 Three levels of organizational cultures

Supervisory cultures, like organizational cultures in general, **can neither be prescribed nor implemented mechanistically**. Instead, according to Edgar Schein (2004), a culture can be described at **three different** relevant levels:

- _ behaviour and products
- _ values and standards
- _ underlying assumptions

1.6 Cultural values are often hidden

All levels need to be considered for an analysis of the existing situation or for a strategy to determine where the organization would like to go. **Values and attitudes** that are often not explicitly defined or recorded thus play a **central role** here. As in an iceberg, the dominant cultural values are largely hidden beneath the surface and are underlying (based on the ENSI supervisory culture 2015).



1.7 Three dimensions of analysis

The visible processes and procedures are to a large extent driven by such underlying values. They can be analysed by means of the following **three dimensions**:

- _ characteristics and understanding of our tasks
- _ the relationship with the actors supervised
- _ the supervisory and safety processes



2 Aims and addressees of the principles

2.1 Codifying and establishing principles for everybody

Precisely because of the wide range of tasks described above, there is a broad-based intention **to be guided by a uniform safety and supervisory culture**. The existing leeway is to be used here within the framework of the formal tasks. The culture in question is not always explicitly stated or recognizable. The corresponding values and assumptions must be **codified** here and **made visible** in the form of **principles**. By applying these principles, the following overarching **goals and benefits** are pursued:

- _ to make a **uniform concept of values** comprehensible in the SFOE's supervision work and thus to enable reflection per se (level of values);
- _ to give the SFOE employees - and in particular those in the ASI division - **guidance** on how to influence internal and external **actions** in a targeted and active manner (behavioural level);
- _ to create a basis for the organizational **further development** of the SFOE and in particular of the ASI division, so as to use the cultural organizational factors in staff-related decisions as well (cf. level of assumptions).

2.2 Different addressees

The principles applicable to the SFOE's supervisory and safety culture are aimed at different addressees with specific objectives:

1. **internally**, they are intended a) to provide the SFOE's staff - and in particular the ASI division – with guidance on how to manage leeway and tense situations in everyday life and b) to serve as management principles for the senior management;
2. they are aimed at **partner organizations** in supervision (in particular FPI/ESTI) so as to facilitate uniformity of the supervisory culture in the overall system;
3. they are aimed at **outside actors**, in particular those that are supervised, but also at the public, in order to encourage transparency and assessability¹

2.3 Commitment from the management

The SFOE management

- _ undertakes to endorse this **supervisory culture as one of its management principles** and to give appropriate support to those working in supervision, and
- _ will exert its **influence** to ensure that the supervisory culture is also **applied** in practice by partner organizations in supervision

¹ It goes without saying that there may be differences between the perception and the objectives of operators and the public, and these differences will not be examined further here.



3 Principles

The following principles of supervisory and safety culture are a summary of our values. These principles provide transparency and guidance and give concrete form to the SFOE’s mission statement.

Characteristics and understanding of our tasks:

- We perform independent and comprehensive supervision that focuses on the safety of the overall system. In order to optimize the system and enhance safety, we identify risks and potential for improvement.
- We work in the public interest and on our own responsibility, encourage transparency and seek proportionate solutions in order to achieve our goals in interactions with the actors supervised.

Relationship with actors supervised:

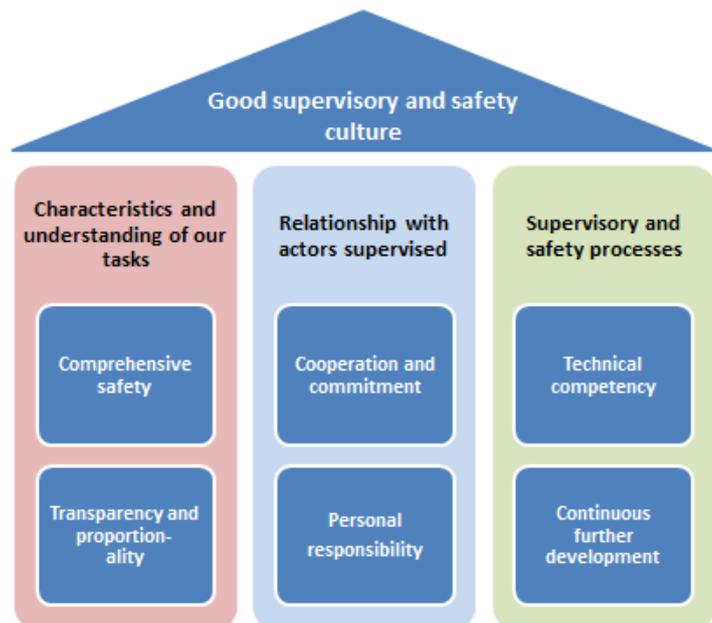
- We aim for a trust-based, cooperative and targeted supervisory activity, in which clear, specific rules apply, non-compliance with which will be appropriately sanctioned by us.
- Through our supervision, we help the actors supervised to shoulder their personal responsibility. We encourage and expect a transparent, mutual flow of information.

Supervisory and safety processes:

- We are competent interlocutors for the supervised entities and rely on the technical competency of our employees in all disciplines.
- We are aware that the environment and technologies are constantly evolving. That is why we periodically question our supervisory and safety culture and take advantage of the opportunities for further development.

3.1 Principles support the structure of our culture

The principles developed in the AKAS project can be summarized in three pillars (dimensions) that support the SFOE’s supervisory and safety culture².



² In the present project, topics similar to those of ENSI Safety Culture (2015) were covered. The following diagram is based on those documents.