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HARPERS Project – Identification of priority needs and opportunities for promoting Circular Economy when managing materials and waste arising from nuclear decommissioning

The 3-years Euratom HARPERS (HARmonised PracticEs, Regulations and Standards in waste management and decommissioning) project aims to establish and clarify the benefits and added value of a more aligned and harmonised regulations and standards for prioritised topics related to decommissioning and radioactive waste management between EC Member States.

One of the technical themes included in the HARPERS project is focused on addressing the most important conditions and opportunities for promoting Circular Economy approaches when managing materials and waste arising from nuclear decommissioning across Europe.

The first year of the project was dedicated to the identification of the priority areas for Circular Economy considerations. A detailed list of topics (challenges/needs - related to harmonisation of practices, regulations and standards) has been developed and a series of workshops were organised to engage with external Stakeholders in order to further discuss and fine tune the identified priority areas.

During the workshops sustainability and waste minimization were indicated as the main reasons why Circular Economy is important for nuclear decommissioning and radioactive waste management. A lot of attention was also given to Stakeholder trust and public perception. Recycling and reuse and Clearance were indicated as the most important themes to be further studied within HARPERS project to deeper analyse the challenges associated with regulatory discrepancies and regulatory constraints. Protection of citizens and environment, economic renewal and growth and public trust and confidence were selected as the main drivers for implementing Circular Economy principles.

The outcomes of the workshops were carefully evaluated and a methodology for prioritisation was developed to arrive to a limited list of priority topics that will be further analysed within the 2nd phase of the project.

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