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THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL DYNAMICS ON SAFETY AT THE RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITY

The National Radioactive Waste Disposal Institute is in a process of a licensing application to manage and operate the country's low level waste disposal facility. While the organisation is in this transitional phase to manage the facility, it is crucial to develop processes and design an organisational structure that fosters leadership for nuclear safety practices and ultimately meets nuclear safety goals and build resilience. This paper, looks at how organizational structure and its dynamics can impact operational nuclear safety. We also look at how centralisation, or the concentration of managerial and decision-making powers at the top of an organization's hierarchy, might jeopardize nuclear safety. A case study of actual experience at a low-level radioactive waste disposal site is presented, revealing how centralisation contributed to a number of nuclear safety events. From our analysis of the practical experience, we demonstrate how a highly centralised organisational structure can impede the opportunity for top managers to influence the understanding of organisational rules and values by employees at operational level. Our analysis show that a highly centralised organisational design constrains the flow of information and decision process across the organisation. We further argue that such structures impede the process of sense making-sense giving interplay between top management and staff at the facility. According to the study, in order for nuclear organisations to create resilience, they must always strive to strike a balance between standardization and mutual adjustment.

Primary author: Ms KEKESI, SEITIBALENG (NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL INSTITUTE)

Co-author: Dr MKHOSI, Margaret (NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL INSTITUTE)

Presenter: Ms KEKESI, SEITIBALENG (NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL INSTITUTE)

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