

SOCIETAL CONSTRAINTS RELATED TO STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION AND DECOMMISSIONING PROCESSES

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Different academic studies and the IAEA project CIDER (Constraints in Decommissioning and Environmental Remediation) argue that lay people are able to reason about complex technical matters. Judgement of radiological risks related to contaminated environment or decommissioning of nuclear installations includes a wider range of considerations in lay population reasoning processes as well as in experts. Judgment includes, not only scientific and factual knowledge about ionizing radiation, but also values, trust, experiences, familiarity with risk, etc. Therefore, risk communication about decommissioning and environmental remediation processes (D&ER) should not be seen as a form of technical communication and education whereby the public should be informed about remediation and decommissioning plans nor as a marketing practice with the aim to persuade people to adopt certain solutions. Nowadays, risk communication is seen as a stakeholder engagement process through which the gaps between stakeholders can be bridged.

Different past experiences of IAEA Member States point out diverse constraints related to stakeholder involvement in D&ER processes, leading to unsuccessful remediation of the environment or decommissioning. The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the major societal constraints that some organisations in different IAEA Member States may encounter when implementing D&ER programmes and different approaches to overcome these constraints. The following constraints are discussed: i) limited technical knowledge and understanding of the problem and process by stakeholders; ii) groups and individuals opposing project implementation, iii) the 'Not In My Backyard' (NIMBY) syndrome - with particular importance for the disposal of generated wastes from D&ER operations, iv) different demands and concerns between stakeholders, v) limited budget to cover stakeholders demands, vi) negative experience with previous D&ER programmes, vii) lack of support by the Governmental authorities to implement D&ER, viii) changing administrative procedures and legal framework, ix) lack of trust between stakeholders, x) lack of recognition of links between environmental, economic, and social concerns. Examples of existing practices related to the integration of societal aspects in D&ER programmes worldwide collected in the context of the IAEA project CIDER are presented in the light of recent trans-disciplinary research findings. Additionally, a CIDER initiative on a stakeholder engagement programme taking place in real uranium project in Brazil will be presented stressing lessons learnt which could be generally used.

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Primary author: Dr PERKO, TANJA (SCK·CEN)

Co-authors: Mr MONKEN-FERNANDES, HORST (IAEA); Dr MARTELL, MERITXELL (MERIENGE); Dr ZELEZNIK, NADJA (REC)

Presenter: Dr MARTELL, MERITXELL (MERIENGE)

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