

Summary Report

ANSN Radioactive Waste Management Topical Group

Regional Workshop on Communication and Consultation Regarding Issues Related to Radioactive Waste Management

24-28 October 2022

Background

The IAEA is providing technical assistance and support to Member States in Radioactive Waste Management. In this regard, several regional and national activities were organized with the objective to assist Member States to develop and strengthen their awareness and capabilities on the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, including on the communication aspects in this domain

Whether generated from nuclear power production or from the use of radioactive materials in medicine, industry, research, agriculture, education...radioactive waste must be managed in a safe and responsible manner. Although solutions exist for their safe management, the topic is raising a lot of questions for the public and other interested parties and the aspects of communication, exchange and consultation is of high importance for any radioactive waste management programme.

Society places an enormous responsibility on organisations dealing with the management of radioactive waste (Governments, waste management organisations, regulatory bodies...) to address challenges concerning radioactive waste management and only when nuclear waste is safely and robustly managed, public confidence increase in how this vital technology does and can contribute to a sustainable future for all.

Due to the pandemics situation the regional workshop on communication and consultation of issues related to radioactive waste management was postponed from the ANSN Activity Plan 2018-2020 to October 2022.

Objectives

The objective of the event is to assist participating countries improving the communication, exchange and consultation of national organisations with interested parties, including regulatory bodies on issues regarding safe radioactive waste and spent fuel management.

The regional workshop will address, through lectures and discussion sessions, the approaches for communication, exchange and consultation of the different steps (pre-treatment, treatment, conditioning, storage, disposal) of the management of

radioactive waste. The workshop will also address the importance of safety and its demonstration in radioactive waste management for communication, exchange and consultation with public and other interested parties and how such a demonstration of safety has to adapt to the audience.

The workshop will be an opportunity to stimulate exchange between the participants and the experts in the field of communication but also in the safety of radioactive waste management. Also, feedback from the participants on their approach of communication, consultation with interested parties will be of interest to feed the discussion during the workshop. The event aims at supporting capacity building of the participants in the communication, exchange and consultation with interested parties for the safe management of radioactive waste.

The workshop will finally be an opportunity to discuss further follow-up activities of interest for the participants in the field of communication for safe management of radioactive waste.

Work Done

The 4-days Regional Workshop was organized through lectures on communication, consultation and exchanges in the field of radioactive waste management. Discussion sessions between experts and the participants as well as application exercises were organised on those topics. It is, in this regard expected that the participating countries give presentations on their approaches, if any, of communication and consultation in the field of radioactive waste management or other related technical fields.

The first day of the regional workshop started with lectures to introduce the basics of the safety of radioactive waste and spent fuel management in particular through the introduction and explanation of the relevant safety standards and the Joint convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The lectures covered predisposal management and disposal of radioactive waste as well as the requirements and guidance on the development and implementation of organisational, legal and regulatory framework. Dedicated lectures on effectiveness of communication and challenges in communicating in the field of radioactive waste management were also given. The second part of the first day was devoted to the organisation of an application exercise on “stakeholder mapping and communication planning.

The second day of the regional workshop focused on presentations from the IAEA experts on the key principles of communication and consultation in radioactive waste management and on country presentations from the participating Member States on their status on radioactive waste management and the way communication aspects are addressed.

The third day continued to address the key principles of communication and consultation in radioactive waste management followed by an exercise as a Role Play / Interactive Session on Communicating RWM Requirements to Concerned Stakeholders. (Scenario 1 Waste Operator; Scenario 2 Local Community).

Finally, during the fourth day a final plenary discussion was organized prior to

debrief and summarize the outcome and identify lessons to be learned by the participants from the workshop.

All along the sessions of the workshop, discussions, questions and answers between the experts and the participating Member States were to assure common understanding was reached.

Workshop achievements / Recommendations

According to the evaluation made by the participants the workshop achieved its objectives.

There was very positive feedback on the organisation of the workshop and the fact that the topic (communication for radioactive waste management) had never been addressed before. Also, very positive feedback was given to the organisation of application exercises (even requesting more exercises of this types) as they allow all the participants to be involved in the discussions and really realise how the didactical lectures are applied in the reality.

Proposals were made for future steps, including the continuation of organisation of such regional workshops but focusing on real case studies or, as well, on how to address communication aspects in emergency situations. Most if not all of the participating Member States also asked for organisation of regional workshop on Policy and Strategy for radioactive waste management.

Further document submitted to the PMO

- a) Final agenda
- b) Attendance Sheet
- c) Group photos
- d) Presentations as listed in the agenda
- e) 1 page summary for GNSSN Newsletter



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