

Editorial: the main results of the European ENGAGE project

1 Introduction

The importance of engaging stakeholders, including wider publics, in radiation protection is now recognised by radiation protection researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and civil society organisations. Generic guidelines and recommendations have been formulated for stakeholder engagement, which became a central topic in strategic research agendas of radiation protection platforms, research projects and initiatives at international and national level.

Several challenges have been identified in the practical implementation of policies and legal requirements for stakeholder engagement, for instance how to ensure resources for sustainable engagement, how to attract long-term involvement, or divergences on who to involve, at which stage, and what the outcome of engagement should be. Moreover, in both research and practice, considerably more attention has been given to invited participation initiated by governmental actors or research institutions, than to bottom-up or citizen-led engagement. Finally, while establishment and enhancement of radiation protection culture received increasing attention in the past decade, its characterisation in different exposure contexts and for different stakeholders, as well as its interaction with stakeholder engagement have not been addressed in a systematic way.

The ENGAGE project, funded under the H2020 CONCERT, aimed at “ENhancinG stAkeholder participation in the GovernancE of radiological risks for improved radiation protection and informed decision-making”. To cover the aforementioned gaps, ENGAGE investigated the formal or informal demands and expectations for stakeholder engagement, and how these are translated into practices at national and local levels. It addressed three contexts of exposure to ionising radiation: nuclear emergency preparedness, response and recovery, exposure to indoor radon; and medical exposures to ionising radiation.

The objectives of ENGAGE were to analyse formal discourses prescribing or recommending engagement; highlight forms of stakeholder engagement that can be observed in practice, and potential gaps between prescriptions and practices; investigate the role and potential benefit of radiation protection culture in facilitating stakeholder engagement and informed decision-making; and design a knowledge base and formulate recommendations for a more robust stakeholder engagement in radiation protection.

All project results are available with open access, as CONCERT Deliverables (<https://www.concert-h2020.eu/en/Publications>), presentations (www.engage-concert.eu) and scientific articles, notably the present issue of the *Radioprotection* journal.

2 Content of the special issue

This special issue presents main results of the ENGAGE project. While this review does not cover all results obtained during the project, it presents a summary of key themes identified in the project, transversally and for each field.

The first paper by [Turcanu *et al.* \(2020a\)](#) sets the scene by describing the objectives, methodology and transversal results crystallised over the three fields addressed in ENGAGE. Further details for each field, together with recommendations the enhancing stakeholder participation in the governance of radiological risks are provided in [Geysmans *et al.* \(2020\)](#) (emergency preparedness, response and recovery), [Turcanu *et al.* \(2020b\)](#) (indoor radon exposures) and [Schieber *et al.* \(2020\)](#) (medical exposures).

Two papers represent collaborations of ENGAGE with other projects and address transparency and stakeholder engagement in emergency management ([Perko *et al.*, 2020](#)), and citizen science ([Kenens, 2020](#)).

The paper by [Duranova *et al.* \(2020\)](#) describes the knowledge base concept developed in ENGAGE for documenting participation in radiological protection. The last paper by [Meskens \(2020\)](#) is dedicated to the ethical questions related to stakeholder engagement in radiation protection.

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