

## **Guidance for National Regulatory Organisations Principles for Openness and Transparency**

The Nuclear Safety Directive (Directive 2009/71/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations) in Article 8 establishes legally binding obligations on Member States in relation to information to the public. These obligations confirm the commitments of the Member States pursuant to already existing national, European and International Law.

Nuclear Regulatory Organisations (NRO's) face many challenges in their quest to be open and transparent with those that are interested in or affected by what they do. A particular challenge is the need to strike the right balance between openness and security and commercial-related considerations, whilst still accommodating the public's desire to be well informed.

This document provides general guidance to NRO's on principles for ensuring openness and transparency in their communications activities. The principles are challenging and go beyond the legal obligations set out in Article 8 of the Nuclear Safety Directive. They are generic in nature and may need to be adapted to the organisational structures in individual Member States.

### ***Principles:***

- **Develop a communications strategy** which sets out clearly the organisation's commitment to open communication and the way in which transparency will be implemented, taking account of the principles set out in this document. Underpin the communications strategy with regular plans detailing the activities that the NRO will undertake to ensure effective communications with all those that are interested in or affected by what the NRO does.
- **Disclose information in a timely manner.** Some national legislation may require specific timescales for specific types of information, but generally a 4 week timescale is deemed to be good practice. In the event of an incident or event, communicate quickly to avoid an information vacuum developing or rumour and speculation taking over in the media where news is a 24-hour a day fast paced business.

- **Develop an accessible web site** for the general public and for specific stakeholders where they can find in-depth and understandable information on all aspects of the NRO's work and, in particular, on regulatory decisions and opinions. The website should, for example, include access to live monitoring data, to all relevant guidelines and legislation, to information on specific events and incidents, to research and other reports and to press releases. It should also support interactive consultations with stakeholders and incorporate a facility to gain feedback from visitors to the site.
- **Produce an annual report** on the NRO's activities which seeks to demonstrate key achievements during the previous year. The annual report should be developed in a way that makes it easy for those reading it to see if the organisation has achieved what it set out to at the beginning of the year.
- **When developing documents, consider in advance which information might be sensitive**, and organise the contents so as to ensure that the public version contains as much useful information as possible. For pre-existing documents being made public, delete only those parts of the document where commercial, national defence, public safety, security, proprietary, privacy issues or other restrictions within the framework of national legislation apply. This promotes a high degree of transparency.
- **Proactively engage with stakeholders** who are interested in or affected by the work of the NRO using traditional and emerging means and seek to build on and enhance the stakeholder engagement or consultation activities that are required by law. Establishing relationships in a more informal manner helps to promote a more trusting environment.
- **Proactively build relationships with the media** and become the point of reference for the media for neutral, objective information on nuclear safety issues. Doing this will help to establish the NRO as a credible source of information and will ensure that there is regular interaction in addition to when an event or incident has occurred. Eurobarometer surveys have shown that, in most countries, the media is the main source of information for the public on nuclear matters.
- **Promote a culture of openness and transparency within the NRO** so that all staff understand the importance of being transparent and of proactive engagement with all stakeholders.

Embed openness and transparency into the organisations values and behaviours.

- **Produce information in plain language that is easy to understand.** The information may need to be adapted for different target audiences. For example, some audiences will require more technical and complex information. (the KISS principle: Keep It Simple but not Stupid). Provide translated information where deemed necessary.
- **Measure the effectiveness of openness and transparency** with a stakeholder and staff survey at least every two years. Share the results of the survey and develop an action plan for improvements.