NEA
NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY

Setting the stage

Second preparatory webinar on mitigating power imbalances

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Third NEA Stakeholder Involvement Workshop on Optimisation in Decision Making

Held in Paris on 5-7 September 2023

120 participants from 23 countries

Objectives:

✓**Improving the common, practical understanding of what optimisation in decision making means**

for policymakers, regulators and other stakeholders, notably civil society, across the nuclear sector and compare with non-nuclear sectors.

✓**Identifying the foundation of a generic multidimensional framework to support the optimisation process**

for decision-makers across the nuclear sector to achieve more sustainable decisions

✓**Supporting inclusive stakeholder involvement, notably civil society, and identifying the relevant tools/approaches**

to optimise decision making using qualitative and quantitative elements across the nuclear sector and achieve more sustainable decisions

NEA Photo from the Third Stakeholder Involvement workshop: optimisation in decision making, 5-7 September 2023, Paris.

Some key takeaways from the event

The ultimate goal of stakeholder engagement, depending on the specific circumstances, is to **enable people to make their own informed decisions** on what they view as a desirable outcome.

Holistic decision making is gained through involving a **diversity of stakeholders and perspectives**. Holism suggests to embed **cultural traits**.

Stakeholder involvement is not undertaken to obtain consent or acceptance for options and **must offer real opportunities to affect the decision**.

The effective **balance of power** (of different groups) impacts the actual level of engagement, as well as the decision outcome. Decision makers should consider diversity of stakeholders and their capacity (both technical and financial) to engage in the process. Process arrangements must promote equality.

First Preparatory Webinar

Topic: Ensuring Balanced Power and Influence Among Stakeholders

Webinar took place 14 October 2024

Participants from 12 countries and 1 international organisation

- Focus: Understanding and addressing power imbalances in stakeholder involvement.
- Format: Keynote presentations followed by moderator-led breakout discussions.

The first preparatory webinar had the following objectives

- Examine power imbalances in decision-making processes and their impact on policymakers, regulators, and civil society in the nuclear sector.
- Identify key contributors to power imbalances and their root causes.

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Highlights from keynote remarks during the first preparatory webinar

Rumina Velshi

William D. Magwood, IV

Haidy Tadros

Representation: Processes must foster **trust**, **transparency**, and meaningful public involvement.

Power Imbalances: Address disparities in **knowledge**, **resources**, and **platforms** to ensure inclusivity.

Transparency: Access to information is vital for building trust and participation.

Engagement: Direct involvement of affected stakeholders is essential.

Global Learning: Sharing experiences improves decision-making and collaboration.

Actionable Solutions: Move from ideals to realistic actions to address imbalances.

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Examples of Actions to Address Power Imbalances

- Ensuring balanced representation
- Respect and support for all
- Allowing adequate time for feedback
- Clear information
- Reflecting stakeholder input
- Enhancing transparency and accessibility
- Early stakeholder involvement
- Accessible technical information

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Structure of todays webinar

Topic	Speaker	Time
Welcome Remarks	**Head of Division, RP-HANS** Nina CROMNIER	5
Keynote Remarks	**EPC Co-chairs** Nadja ŽELEZNIK, Thierry SCHNEIDER	15
Session 1: Breakout discussion **I. Mitigating power imbalances to ensure equitable stakeholder engagement practices.**	**ALL Moderators** Lead Thoughts: • What are **effective strategies** to manage challenges that lead to power imbalances? **What worked and what did not work?** • What **solutions** can **be implemented to better address** such imbalances and foster more genuine and inclusive stakeholder involvement?	80 (including a 10-minute break at the discretion of the moderator)
Session 2: Rapporteur Delivery	**ALL Rapporteurs**	65
Session 3: Closing Session Summary Remarks	**EPC Co-chairs** Nadja ŽELEZNIK, Thierry SCHNEIDER	10
Path Forward & Next Steps	NEA Scientific Secretary: Tamara YANKOVICH	5

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Group discussion topics

Group 1: Disparities in resources

Group 2: Communication and accessibility

Group 3: Inclusiveness and equitable representation in decision-making

Group 4: Trust and transparency

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Group 1: Disparities in resources

(Governance and decision-making) Inadequate understanding of decision-making processes (e.g. policy and strategy, legal and regulatory frameworks and management systems).

(Fairness) Balanced resource allocation to support equitable opportunities for participation. Parties external to the local community need time and patience to establish trust and understanding for meaningful engagement.

(Expertise) The technical nature of nuclear issues can pose challenges for those without specialised expertise.

(Financial resources) Level of resources available to stakeholders can affect their capacity to participate and influence discussions.

(Impact of Educational Backgrounds) Differences in educational backgrounds may affect the ability of stakeholders to fully engage.

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Group 2: Communication and accessibility

- Involving stakeholders from the beginning of decision-making processes can ensure their input shapes outcomes. Ongoing stakeholder involvement can ensure their input is considered throughout the lifetime of facilities and activities.
- Emphasis on establishing clear agendas and decision-making criteria at the outset to manage expectations and clarify how stakeholder input will be utilised.
- Timely feedback loops, allow for meaningful participation and higher quality feedback and outcomes.
- Communication barriers can affect reach and understanding (e.g. lack of transparent communication channels, exclusion from key discussions, ineffective dissemination of information)
- Language barriers can hinder effective collaboration and understanding by excluding those less fluent in the working language (e.g. lack of translation, lack of consideration of non-native speakers)

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Group 3: Inclusiveness and equitable representation in decision-making

- Inclusion of representative stakeholders (e.g. vulnerable and marginalised populations, civil society and indigenous peoples) can ensure their voices are heard and considered.
- Ensuring a diverse representation of stakeholders (e.g. age, gender, expertise, ensuring representation from both local and central organisations) can facilitate innovative thinking and mitigate participation barriers.
- Attention to cultural differences and sensitivities can enhance the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement.
- Physical setup of engagement forums (e.g. safe and inclusive spaces, room layout) should be structured with consideration of stakeholder and local community culture and needs.
- Consideration of stakeholder well-being (e.g. emotional and societal factors) can foster effective participation

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Group 4: Trust and transparency

- Absence of trust in different parties involved in the decision-making process (e.g. civil servants, government bodies, etc.)
- Inadequacies in information shared by decision-makers during consultation processes can lead to loss of trust.
- Parties external to the local community need time and patience to establish trust and understanding for meaningful engagement.
- Lack of independent decision-making can detrimentally affect transparency and impartiality.
- Consistent actions, openness, and responsiveness to stakeholder concerns can establish and maintain trust. Trust is critical for effective decision-making and can contribute to ongoing collaboration.

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Topics for Each Breakout Group

	Group 1: Disparities in resources	Group 2: Communication and accessibility	Group 3: Inclusiveness and equitable representation in decision-making	Group 4: Trust and transparency
Moderator	Peter BRYANT	Adrian BULL	Andrea KOCK	Nicole MARTINEZ
Rapporteur	Nuria Prieto SERRANO	Sigrid EECKHOUT	Meghan GERRISH	Malcolm DE BUTLER

Call for Case Studies for the 4th SIWS

- **Goal**: Early brainstorming for potential case studies for the **4th Stakeholder Involvement Workshop**.
- **Why it Matters**: Your input can shape the workshop discussions and outcomes.
- **What to Do**:
  - Start thinking and keep it mind during the breakout discussions
  - Bring your suggestions to your breakout discussions and todays webinar.
  - It can also be shared with the NEA Secretariat after the webinar.

🗣 *We value your ideas and insights!*

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Towards the next workshop

The insights and ideas shared during today's discussions will **directly influence** the agenda and outcomes of the next webinar and workshop. **Your voice matters in** shaping the next steps

Save the Date for the Fourth NEA Stakeholder Involvement Workshop: **15-17 October 2025 in Paris**

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Thank you for your attention

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