



Terms of Reference

Task Group on Public Understanding

2021-2024

Introduction

Through experiences from past emergencies, including the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in 2011 and the following post-disaster recovery, the importance of enhancing our efforts on public understanding of radiation and risk is recognised both by IRPA and the Associate Societies. There was a strong request for IRPA to assist societies and individual members in providing tools and training to improve our ability to communicate effectively outside of our profession. At the same time, there is a growing need and interest for the Associate Societies to enhance their programmes in this important area, and also for every individual radiation protection professional to become much more engaged and competent in communicating with members of the public. This is a key but challenging activity which needs further support.

In response to this, IRPA continued a TG activity for Public Understanding (2016-2020) based on the results in the previous TG on Public Understanding (2013-2016). From 2018 to 2019, a series of workshops was organized in various regions of the world to develop "IRPA Practical Guidance for Engagement with the Public on Radiation and Risk"; final guidance was published on the IRPA website on Oct 1, 2020. The Guidance provides the 'how' to engage and communicate, but not the 'what' to say. By publishing the Guidance, IRPA invites all RP societies to actively promote an enhanced public engagement programme and also welcomes a proposal to actively promote the engagement programme. Presentations and publications on this guidance document have been well received.

Objective

To encourage and support the Associate Societies in the development of effective means of enhancing public understanding of radiation risk through the sharing of good practice, ideas and resource material.

Membership

Chair: Hiroko Yoshida

Vice-Chair: tbc

Exec Liaison: n/a

Nominees from AS will be invited to continue or join, with the objective of wide participation ideally covering all regions: Africa, North and South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

Key Tasks

- To keep collecting good practices, needs and views.
- To promote the work of IRPA in this area to our colleagues.

- To encourage the Associate Societies to organize internal meetings-workshops to share the IRPA Guidance, to assist the AS and individual professionals to better understand the challenges of communication, and to keep collecting good practices, needs and views.
- To consider emerging issues, e.g. how we cope with the spread of information through social media, Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites especially misinformation and rumours through social media? These might lead fears about radiation and harmful rumours.

Working Methods

The work of the Task Group will be conducted principally via email, internet, and telephone. No physical meetings are envisaged.

The Task Group Chair will provide progress reports to the IRPA Executive Council at each Executive Council meeting.

Approved by the IRPA Executive Council

Date: 17/12/21