4. Aspects to consider when developing effective stakeholder engagement

• Engaging with stakeholders is essential in optimising protection in existing exposure situations
• The decision maker will make the final decision
• The objective is stakeholder engagement, not stakeholder consensus
• Stakeholders need to know how their views and concerns can influence decisions
  – Understand that decisions will address stakeholder’s diverse interests as best possible
• It is important to be proactive in identifying, supporting and engaging with stakeholders
Aspects to consider when developing effective stakeholder engagement

• It is essential to build trust
  – Transparency is essential
  – Face to face interactions
  – Consistent and robust message
  – Trusted individuals
  – Diverse sources of information
  – long-term engagement

• It is important to transparently set objectives clearly and early
• The ‘rules of engagement’ need to be established and agreed
• The interests of all stakeholders need to be clear
• It is important to appropriately address the actual context of the risk being addressed
  – Different contexts may be associated differently with ‘perception of blame’ (ex. Radon versus post-accident)
• There is a significant difference between communication and engagement

• It is essential to listen to stakeholder concerns, and to let them know you are listening, and that their voice can have an impact on decisions

• Management of expectations is important
  – Involvement to participate in decision, versus to voice views and concerns
  – Different stakeholders will have different levels of motivation

• Recognise that stakeholders will have different levels of ‘stake’ in a given situation, and that this will affect actions and involvement
  – The distinction between agenda and stake should be recognised
• For radon, need to achieve engagement by stakeholders to act. Positive elements include:
  – Survey measurements
  – Case studies
  – Multiple sources of experience
• The timing of stakeholder engagement can affect its effectiveness, the earlier the better
• It is important to assess stakeholder feedback, particularly from information campaigns
• It is important to learn lessons for incorporation into future activities
• The final decision should be clearly presented to stakeholders, along with its rationale
• Communication of risks is a delicate balance of ‘scientifically precise information’ and ‘easy to understand information’
• Stakeholder engagement should be targeted, and it is essential to know your audience
• Stakeholders may need ‘support’ to effectively participate (e.g. financial, technical, outreach, etc.)
Exposures in existing situations will be broadly driven by individual behaviours. It is thus essential that authorities engage to assist stakeholders to achieve their own optimised protection.

Involvement with stakeholders is key to sustainability.