



Introduction to societal challenges in decommissioning projects and importance of communication and stakeholder engagement

RICOMET, 11th of May 2022;

Utrecht, The Netherland

Agenda of the day:

- Introduction to societal challenges in decommissioning projects
- Practical experiences from communication and stakeholder engagement in decommissioning from different countries
- Participatory workshop on challenges for communication and stakeholder engagement
- Participatory workshop to develop recommendations for communication and stakeholder engagement in decommissioning of nuclear facilities & identification of SSH research needs

Common barriers for D&D projects

(2016, Cider project/IAEA survey results):

- Lack of funding
- Lack of infrastructure for waste management
- Lack of technology (in countries with less advanced programmes)
- Lack of regulatory framework
- Lack of national policy
- Lack of qualified personnel
- **Stakeholder opinion /resistance**
- Uncertainty over the end state

Societal constraints (2016, Cider project/IAEA consultancy report):

- Limited technical knowledge and understanding of the issues and process
- Groups and individuals opposed to the programme
- Concerns related to the waste disposal on site
- Different demands and concerns between stakeholders
- Limited budget to cover stakeholders demands
- Negative experience with some related/associated programmes
- Lack of support by the governmental authorities to implement D&D
- Changing the administrative procedure and legal framework related to D&D programmes
- Lack of trust between stakeholders
- Lack of recognition of links between environmental, economic and social concerns
- Constraints that hinder progress in stakeholder involvement in D&D programmes

Challenges in communication and stakeholders involvement

Perko et. al, 2019

- Complexity of procedures for involvement
- Changing positions within one group
- Lack of funding sources to undertake involvement
- Information overload
- Negative experience with stakeholder involvement
- Lack of use of independent facilitation
- Lack of motivation to participate in the process
- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of continuous stakeholder involvement and communication.
- Lack of balance between transparency and security

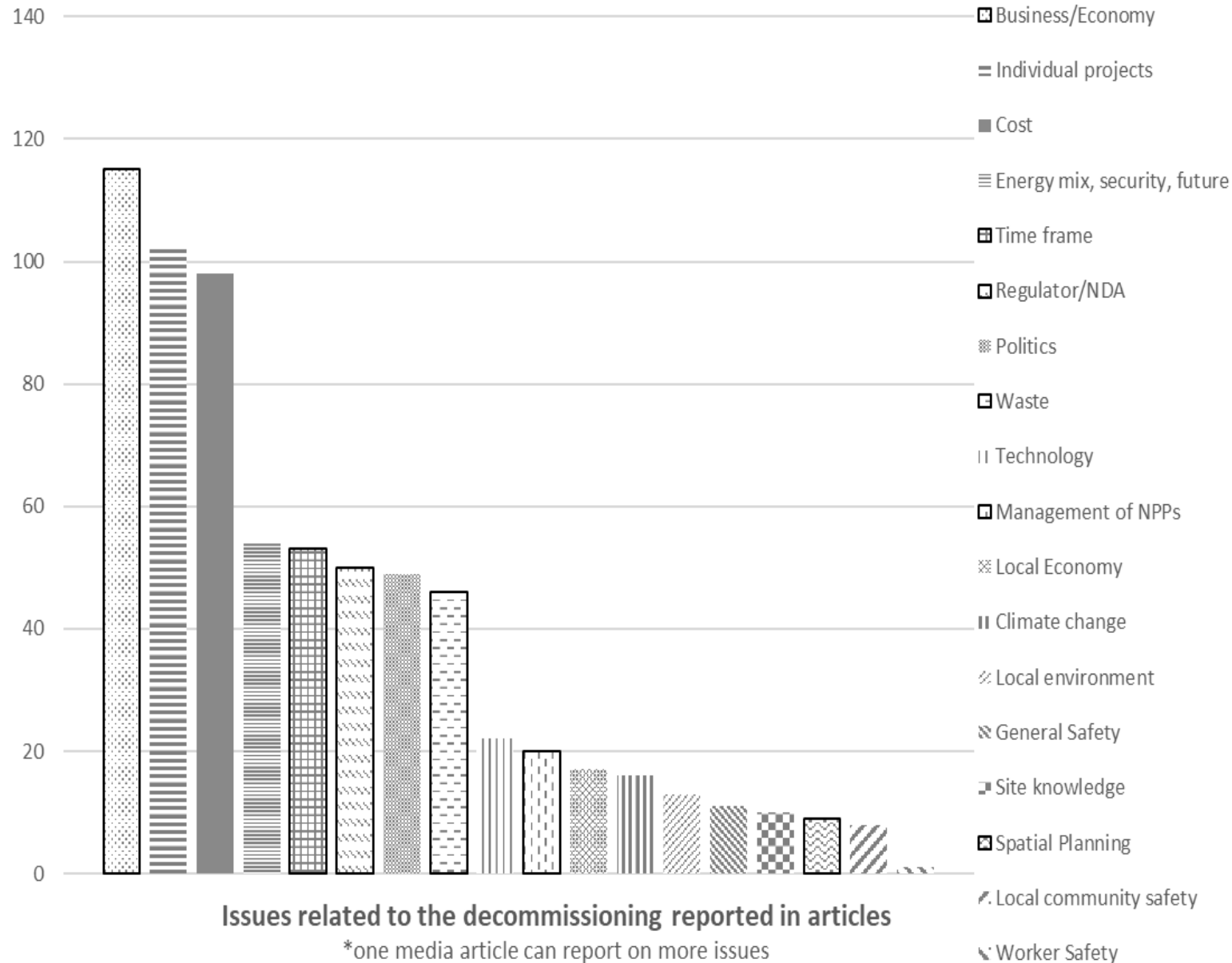
Media reporting, UK print media in the period 2011-2020. (M. Martell & Perko T.; 2022)

Media gave the most attention to nuclear decommissioning as an **economic opportunity or challenge for private companies**, through provision of services, technology, operations, expertise etc.

Costs incurred by decommissioning processes were often discussed in those articles. Costs were reported as plain figures or in relation to (mis)management.

The least reported issues in media include **local economy** (e.g. little focus was given to job creation or losses, and to socio-economic impact on local communities rather than to national-scale costs), local environmental impact (e.g. little focus on potential consequences of nuclear decommissioning for local environments – soil, air or watercourses), and safety of locals and community (e.g. little focus on the safety of people living near the plants being decommissioned).

Number of articles between 2011-2020 in UK media
(N=232)



Why to communicate and engage?

Decommissioning programmes tend to be more effective if **communication and stakeholder involvement** is a formal part of the early planning.

- Different perceptions, attitudes, opinions and concerns of stakeholders;
- Trust, cooperation and mutual understanding between different parties;
- Respect of the societal, ethical and cultural aspects;
- Open, clear and agreed upon lines of communication;
- Consensus between the public, project owner and regulator.

HOW?

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Solution for complexity of procedures for involvement

- Elaborate an involvement plan that consists of well- defined and short term goals
- Develop indicators to measure progress achievement
- Make clear from the beginning the different phases of the involvement process and the capacity that stakeholders may have to influence decisions in each of the phases
- Provide possibilities for feedback and improvement.

Solution for Changing opinions within one group

- Keep track of the opinions (e.g. record keeping)
- Encourage the nomination of a spokesperson for each stakeholder group who represents a joint opinion
- Encourage the stakeholder group to write and share with other groups their position so that any change in opinion needs to be well justified

Solution for limited capacity to express opinions in public

- Employ trained and independent facilitators
- Use different participatory tools to allow the stakeholders with limited capacity to express opinions (e.g. face-to-face interviews, anonymous voting, etc.)
- Conduct targeted stakeholder group meetings
- Organise public speaking courses for main communicators

Solution for Information overload

- Provide enough time for processing the information
- Establish the information management system (e.g. Database, search engines)
- Encourage the use of Executive summaries and visual aids in reports
- Organise public speaking courses for main communicators
- Prioritise and categorise issues, from most relevant to less prone to create impacts in the decision-making process.

Solution for Lack of motivation to participate in the process

- Explain the advantages of participation in the achievement of a mutual satisfactory result and the potential consequences of the absence of effective involvement.
- Clarify and guarantee in advance the participants' capacity to influence the decisions related to the D&D programme
- Increase general knowledge about the problem being faced
- Organize events (e.g. meetings, interviews, etc.) in convenient time and venue

Solution for Lack of continuous stakeholder involvement and communication

- Establish the mechanisms for record keeping and membership of the stakeholders group (e.g. Minutes of the Meetings to be issued and approved appropriately, encourage the nomination of the representatives of the stakeholders group)
- Encourage the representatives of stakeholders groups to disseminate the information of the activities undertaken among the members of their group
- Provide regular feedback regarding the improvements, modifications or compromises made to the process and which are the results of stakeholder involvement.
- Always design the involvement events from “What is here for me” point of view.

Solution for

Negative experience with stakeholder involvement

- Identify negative experiences with former projects at the local, regional, national and even international arena
- Acknowledge and explain the motifs and pitfalls of experiences
- Apply the lessons learned

Lack of use of independent facilitation

- Employ trained and independent facilitators
- Get the neutrality of the facilitator recognized by all parties involved in the process