



EJP-CONCERT

European Joint Programme for the Integration of Radiation Protection
Research

H2020 – 662287

D 5.1 – CONCERT Stakeholder Management Strategy

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Work package / Task	WP 5	T 5.1
Deliverable nature:	Report	
Dissemination level: (Confidentiality)	Public	
Contractual delivery date:	31 January 2016	
Actual delivery date:	3 December 2015	
Version:	1	
Total number of pages:	14	
Keywords:	Stakeholder, public, societal, engagement	
Approved by the coordinator:	15 December 2015	
Submitted to EC by the coordinator:	15 December 2015	

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CONCERT Stakeholder Management Strategy

Version 1

Work package 5: Stakeholder involvement and communication in radiation protection research

Task 5.1 Strategy for public and societal stakeholder engagement

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CONCERT Stakeholder Management Strategy

Purpose of this document

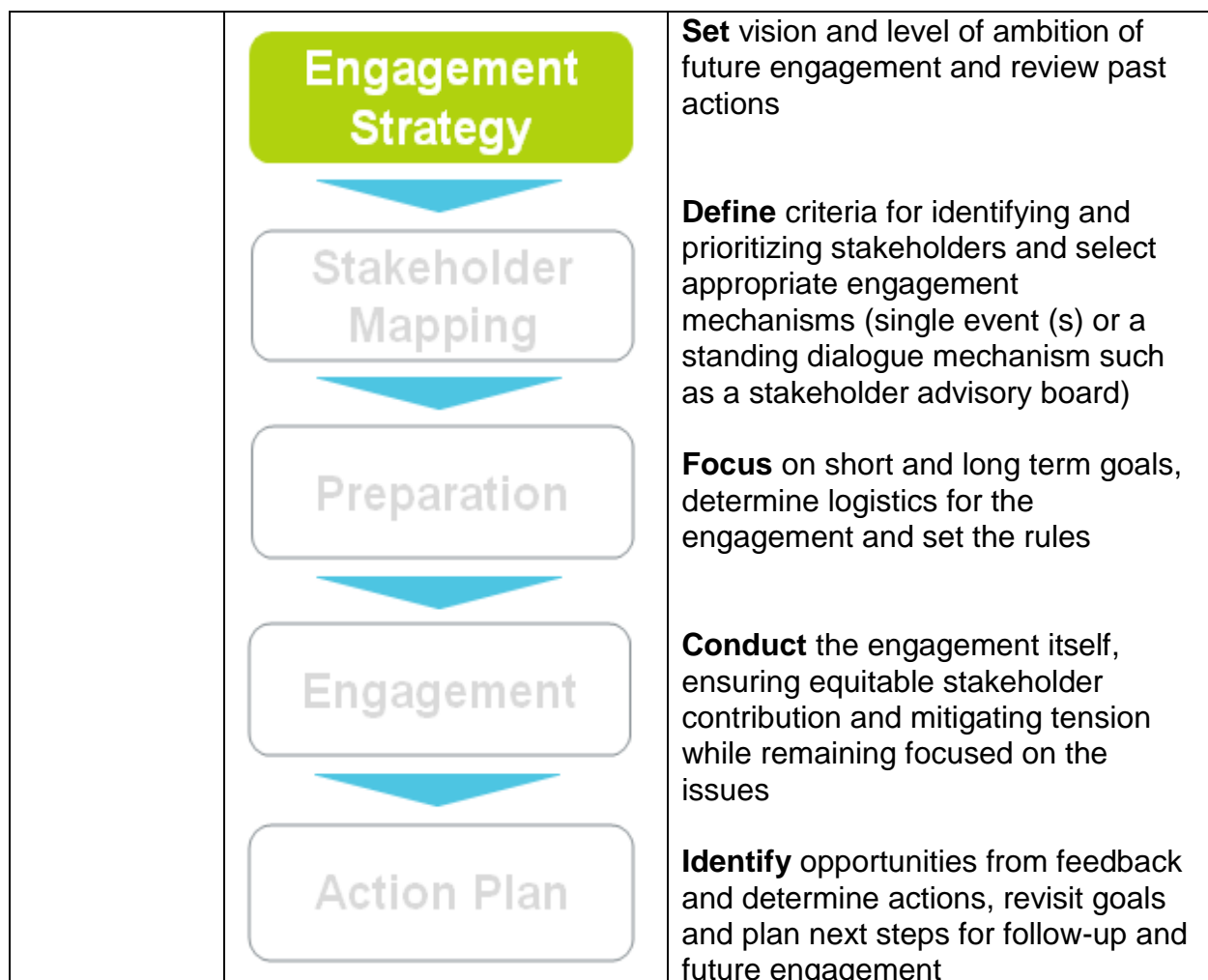
This document sets out the general approach that will be taken with regard to stakeholder engagement by the European Joint Programme for the Integration of Radiation Protection Research (CONCERT). It describes why stakeholder engagement is of value, the types of stakeholder that may be encountered and mechanisms to encourage and promote engagement. The CONCERT approach to stakeholder engagement can be anticipated to evolve over time and so this document will be subject to periodic review and revision as appropriate.

Introduction

The European Joint Programme for the Integration of Radiation Protection Research (CONCERT), co-funded by the EC and Member states, will continue the establishment and development of a long-term European research programme in radiation protection that has been started through the EC funded Open Project for the European Radiation Research Area (OPERRA). CONCERT aims to contribute to the sustainable integration of the European and national research programmes in the field of radiation protection by, (i) bringing together relevant scientific disciplines, (ii) strengthening integration between disciplines, (iii) fostering and stimulating scientific excellence by co-funding specific projects, (iv) communicating effectively with relevant stakeholders and (v) fostering the harmonious application of available scientific evidence for effective radiation protection practices. The European research platforms MELODI (<http://www.melodi-online.eu/>), EURADOS (<http://www.eurados.org/>) NERIS (<http://www.eu-neris.net/>) and ALLIANCE (<http://www.er-alliance.org/>) representing the low dose risk, radiation dosimetry, emergency preparedness and radioecology areas respectively are important players in CONCERT. Encouraging a similarly strategic approach in the field of medical radiation protection is an important aspect of the CONCERT programme of work. It will be essential that CONCERT encourages and supports research that examines and addresses in a scientifically rigorous fashion key aspects of the current system of radiation protection. CONCERT also recognises that its research must respond to the needs and ambitions of society, reflect its values and be conducted in a responsible manner. The established research platforms have successfully implemented an approach of identifying research priority topics through developing strategic research agendas (SRAs) taking into account feedback provided by stakeholders. In addition to supporting high quality research, CONCERT aims to increase the impact of its activities through communication and dialogue with stakeholder groups both from within the field of radiation protection and the wider public. Such communication and dialogue will help improve the understanding of the risks associated with radiation exposure and the balance between risks and benefits in uses of radiation in differing applications. Further the stakeholder work will help ensure that CONCERT addresses issues that concern and are of relevance to stakeholders in the radiation protection arena and that are scientifically feasible. Thus the CONCERT Stakeholder work has the following objectives:

- To encourage a wider public and societal stakeholder interest in radiation protection research and at the same time encourage support within CONCERT for science and research for and with society, and communicate the societal benefits of radiation protection research.
- To establish mechanisms for public and societal stakeholders to have a say in developing CONCERT’s research priorities.
- To engage informed stakeholders in establishment and development of long-term European research programmes in radiation protection.
- To establish routes to inform and educate public and societal stakeholders on the scientific basis of radiation protection, and the judgements made within the system of protection.
- To provide consistent and clear information on implementation of radiation protection standards in Europe with a view to encouraging consistent approaches among nations.

These activities can be seen as elements of a wider scope of engagement activities, all of which stem from an initial strategy, as illustrated in the generic model below.



The CONCERT stakeholder activities will be informed by those carried out within the context of OPERRA, which tended to focus on the need to obtain stakeholder views on the prioritisation of research topics, and the activities that the various research platforms have undertaken. In this way duplication will be avoided and the experience gained elsewhere developed further. The engagement strategy of CONCERT should be seen as a “living document” being revisited and refined regularly according to experiences made and the feedback of stakeholders.

This document constitutes CONCERT deliverable 5.1, due at project month 8 (January 2016) and has been developed by CONCERT WP5 members.

The value of stakeholder engagement

Dialogue and communication with CONCERT stakeholders is expected to be a valuable activity to help ensure that:

- CONCERT addresses concerns of the radiation protection stakeholder communities and the wider public.
- CONCERT supports responsible research and innovation: applies openness and transparency in the research process; employs effective, adaptable and responsive oversight; explores, integrates and considers social, ethical and environmental issues
- CONCERT provides relevant, accurate and accessible information to stakeholders
- CONCERT’s activities are integrated with related activities elsewhere.
- CONCERT’s achievements are recognised by the wider radiation protection stakeholder communities.
- CONCERT does not become too inward-facing or self-serving on its activities.
- CONCERT’s activities are seen to be an appropriate use of EC funding.

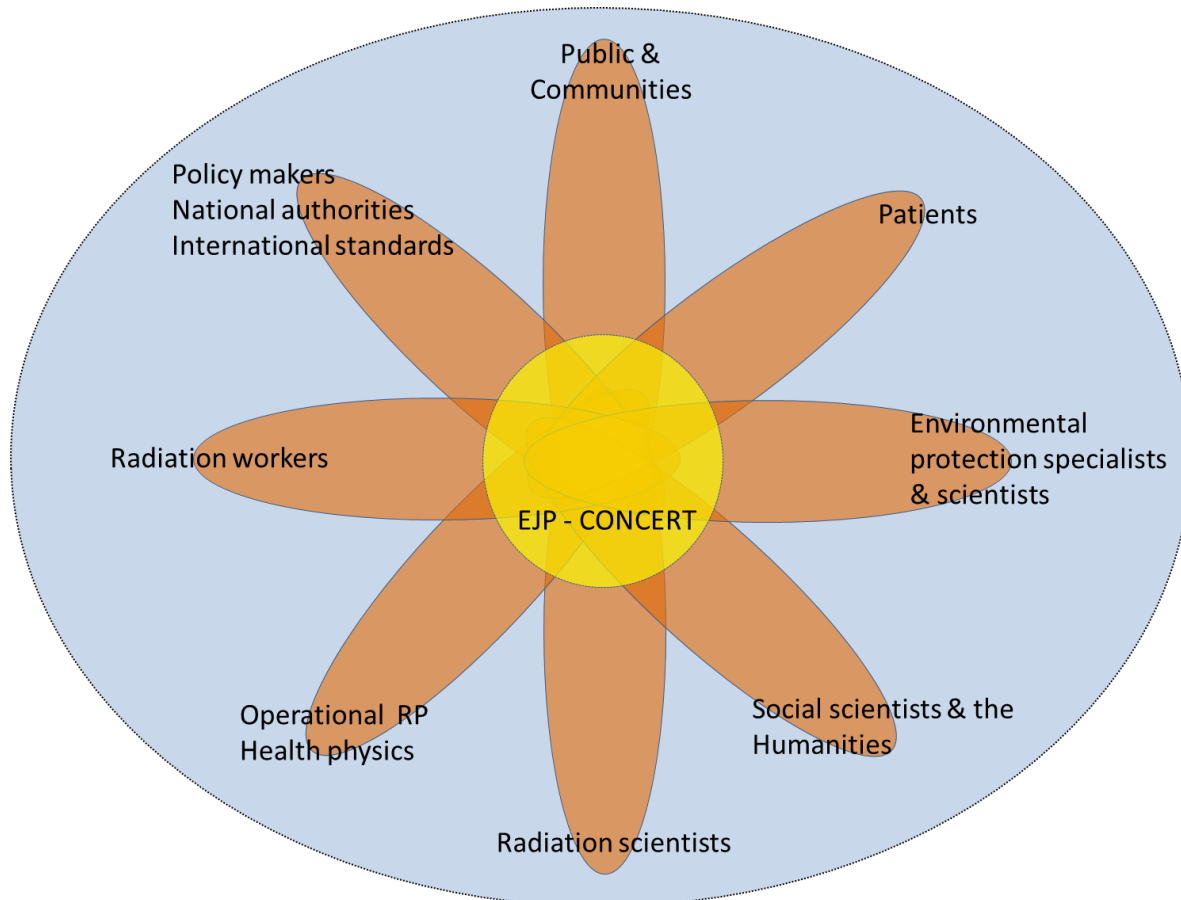
It is recognised that stakeholder engagement does take time and effort; however, effective stakeholder engagement will help ensure that CONCERT’s activities have maximal impact on improving the acceptability of the system of radiation protection, providing a wider understanding of the system. In turn this should help build confidence that the system of radiation protection adequately protects human health and the environment in the eyes of professionals and the public alike. Moreover, it will encourage an approach whereby the research and other activities consider aspects beyond purely radiological and technical issues, and include consideration of implications for wider society. It is further anticipated that stakeholder engagement will help CONCERT define future needs for training and education.

Who are CONCERT's stakeholders?

CONCERT and the research and wider activities that it supports are expected to address issues relating to protection of humans and the environment from occupational, medical, public and emergency incident exposures. In these areas there are stakeholders with differing scopes of interest and responsibility:

1. Stakeholders with responsibilities for ensuring adequate radiation protection of those exposed. These will include for example policy makers, those involved in international standards development, and national authorities.
2. Stakeholders with an interest and/or duty of care in system of radiation protection of humans and the environment and its improvement. These include industrial stakeholders, operational protection specialists, public health workers and health physicists, for example.
3. Stakeholders in the wider scientific and academic communities, including social sciences and humanities. This group will include those actively involved in research on issues relating to radiation protection, and those who have skills applicable to the relevant questions and issues.
4. Stakeholders who are exposed or affected/impacted in an occupational, medical or environmental context. These will include patient groups, those members of the public affected by non-routine and routine releases of radiation in the environment and any interested member of the community.

Stakeholder groupings and interactions with CONCERT, set in prevailing societal standards and norms for values and ethics



As noted earlier, the OPERRA project made useful steps towards engagement with some stakeholder groups, particularly those with professional involvement in radiation protection and interested researchers. The stakeholder activities within CONCERT will aim at wider and more general groups including informed civil society (e.g. associations for patients' rights, consumers' organisations, environmental activists, farmers, hunter and fisher associations etc.), societal groups (e.g. cancer patients, local populations/communities potentially affected by a nuclear or radiological accident) and the public. In particular CONCERT will benefit from input on what kind of radiation protection information would be useful to the wider stakeholder groups, and which issues these groups see as requiring more research to inform their own views and for policy-level decision making. Special attention will be given to vulnerable groups of stakeholders to help them to voice their opinion and have influence on decisions within CONCERT. CONCERT will of course welcome input from all stakeholders. CONCERT will not be bound to act on any individual stakeholder's comment but will have to take the range of views into consideration, evaluate the scientific feasibility of any specific suggestions for research and merits of specific requests for information, and give feedback to stakeholders on decisions taken.

CONCERT activities to promote stakeholder engagement

CONCERT Work package 5 (*Stakeholder Involvement and Communication in Radiation Protection Research*) includes four tasks:

- 5.1 Strategy for public and societal stakeholder engagement
- 5.2 Establishing a stakeholder group, or groups
- 5.3 Interaction with informed civil society, including use of social media for stakeholder communication
- 5.4 Development of general and specialist information for the CONCERT website

The present document constitutes the strategy (Task 5.1). The specific mechanisms for promotion of stakeholder engagement are given in the following sections.

1. Establishing contact and interacting with a wide range of stakeholder groups

In the previous section, (*Who are CONCERT's stakeholders?*) the broad classes of stakeholder were identified and we noted that the main focus of efforts on stakeholder engagement will be on wider community stakeholders rather than professionals engaged in radiation protection. This brings some very specific challenges in a pan-European project dealing with a highly specialised area such as CONCERT. We need to deal with communities and individuals with a range of native languages. We need to ensure that our wider stakeholder groups are assisted in developing their opinion within the specialised area of radiation protection. We need to engage with stakeholders with a range of previous experience both in engagement activities in general but also in relation to radiation risk and protection. We need to recognise the diversity of situations where radiation protection becomes important, medical diagnostics or treatment, those living in proximity to large installations, those living in areas of higher than average natural background exposure, those actually or potentially exposed as a consequence of an accident or incident, etc. We need to recognise the diversity of specialisms within radiation protection as a discipline and reflected in CONCERT and its associated platforms (MELODI, EURADOS, NERIS, and ALLIANCE)

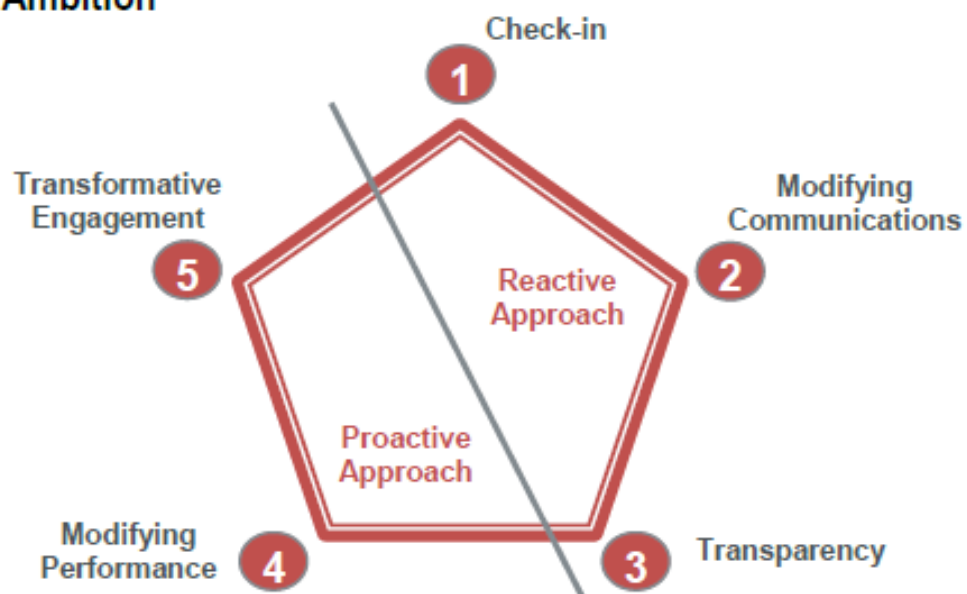
CONCERT will continue to identify stakeholder groups through dialogue, research and experience; the groupings will evolve with time and prevailing circumstance. We will also have to consider ways to encourage and motivate stakeholder engagement, building and maintaining the interest and momentum will be a challenge. The project will also develop means to categorise stakeholders. The categorisation may include:

- Scope of interest/responsibility as stated above
- Geographical scope (international/national/local group)
- Main interest (eg, science/regulation/standards/practice)
- Radiation protection sector (occupational/medical/public/environmental/emergency incident)

2. Selecting a level of ambition

Ideally there should be no misunderstanding or misalignment of expectations between CONCERT and the stakeholders (both internal and external) from the outset. The ambition diagram below will help to assess the level of expectation for each given engagement activity. Lower numbers have lower levels of ambition and are generally reactive in nature; higher levels of engagement, illustrated by higher numbers would be expected to have a greater impact on both CONCERT itself and understanding of the project and area by relevant stakeholder communities. Future activities can then be developed according to this level of ambition. The chosen level of ambition will help determine which stakeholders require a prioritisation during the stakeholder-mapping process.

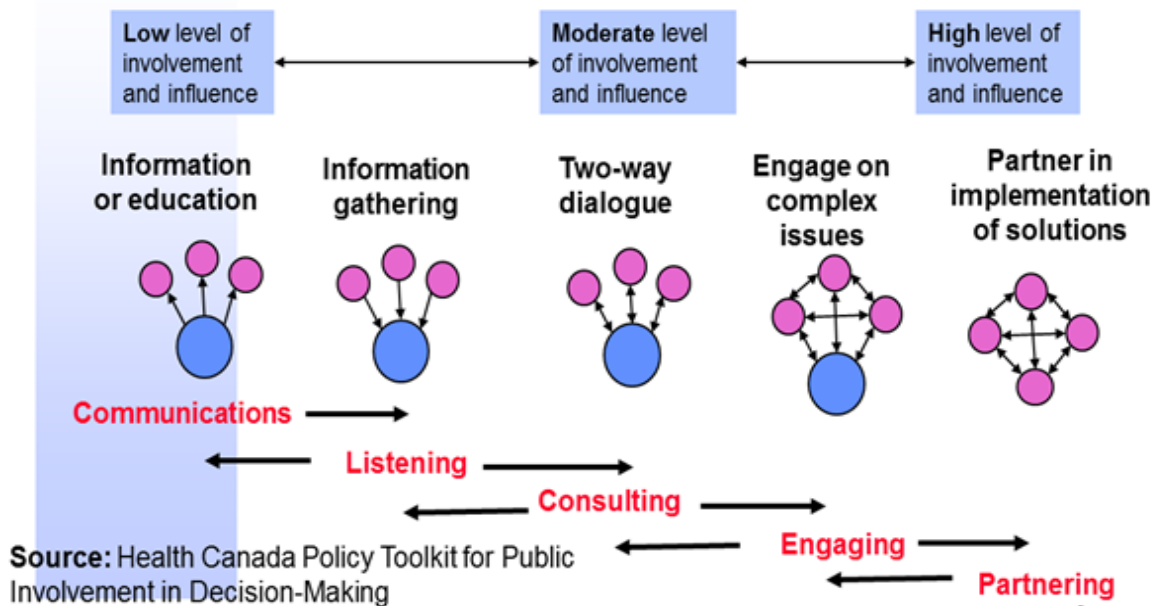
Levels of Ambition



3. Establishing communication concepts, strategies and routes promoting stakeholder engagement

Differing levels of stakeholder engagement can be defined as illustrated below, and these can have differing extent of impact.

Levels and modes of stakeholder engagement



CONCERT intends to explore a range of avenues and approaches to stakeholder engagement. As noted previously, these are likely to evolve over time with the aim to improve engagement.

A **stakeholder group approach** (Task 5.2) will be developed to:

- Ensure a route for stakeholder opinion to be heard within CONCERT
- To provide stakeholder input to identifying areas of concern where further information or research could be beneficial

It is recognised that CONCERT will have to work with many different stakeholder communities. These can be dependent on sector, for example, (i) nuclear site stakeholders (ii) medical patient groups, covering for example radiotherapy and diagnostically exposed groups (iii) nuclear worker groups (iv) hospital radiographer groups (v) medical practitioner groups (vi) industrial radiographer groups (vii) those living in radon affected areas (viii) those involved in site remediation (ix) NORM representatives (x) those involved in emergency planning (xi) those living in contaminated areas, and (xii) those involved with nuclear waste disposal. There is also the need to address differing European nations, where it will be important to use the appropriate language and ensure that specific local issues can be raised and considered. Originally a single stakeholder group was envisaged but it is now considered that dialogue will be more effective and productive if a more tailored approach is adopted, whereby meetings, dialogues and other exchanges are organised around specific themes/issues and/or countries. Part of the interaction will require an element of education of stakeholders in the ways in which radiation protection currently operates in relation to the specific exposure situation under consideration.

One approach to provide information for the public and communities will be the **CONCERT website** (Task 5.4). While practical aspects of website development are the responsibility of Task 1.8, Task 5.4 will work in co-operation to develop website materials that will be of use to wider stakeholder groups. The material will aim to help CONCERT to become a trusted source of reliable, balanced and evidence based information on radiation risk and approaches to radiation protection. Topics covered will over time be informed by stakeholder feedback from the group (Task 5.2) and survey (Task 5.3). It is likely that material from existing web resources of partners and others will be utilised where relevant.

OPERRA was successful in developing and utilising a stakeholder questionnaire (eSurvey) to canvas opinion and views on its research priorities and other matters from a well-informed scientific audience. Participation from non-specialists was limited, full details are available (see http://www.melodi-online.eu/doc/operra_esurvey2014/OPERRA%20D4-5%20Analysis%20of%20stakeholder%20questionnaire%20responses%202015-07-06.pdf). CONCERT needs to reach out to wider and more general stakeholders and so will develop a more public-facing **CONCERT eSurvey**. The survey will aim to gauge the perception of radiation risk, the ambitions and the values amongst a wide range of people who are not radiation specialists. Their opinion will be sought on information that would be helpful for a general audience to promote better understanding of radiation risk and their suggestions of areas requiring further research to improve the available evidence. Careful consideration will have to be given to the length of the survey, the time taken to complete it, and the level of detail required. Some useful lessons were learned through running the OPERRA eSurvey, and we will also draw upon experiences of all the Platforms. We currently aim to launch the eSurvey in June 2016. The selection bias of eSurveys for potential participants of the wider public is obvious and recognised. The eSurvey will be designed taking into consideration the excluding effect of online Surveys on parts of the public.

In the spirit of openness that is an important aspect of CONCERT, the eSurvey will be available through an open web portal (i.e. linked through from the CONCERT website) but this 'open door' approach will be supplemented by targeted emailing to those known to have interests in radiation protection. Questionnaires will be analysed using web based tools and where needed individual scrutiny by Task 5.3 participants.

When we have made progress on developing the stakeholder groups, the eSurvey and building of web resources, CONCERT will consider exploiting social media and related tools such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook as additional communication channels to provide information to a wide audience of stakeholders. Monitoring of their use and impact will inform decisions on future development of social media and web based communication channels.

The further route for communication with stakeholders will be through the posting of key project documents, most notably the Research agendas, for website consultation. This has already been done for the MELODI, EURADOS, NERIS and ALLIANCE Strategic Research Agendas and it is hoped a more pro-active approach to stakeholder communication will promote more discussion of key documents within the stakeholder communities.

4. *Ensuring stakeholder views impact CONCERT and its evolution*

It is clear that communication with stakeholders will be undertaken for the purpose of ensuring that CONCERT is seen to be fulfilling a useful role, to be of value and 'fit for purpose'. Thus it is essential that there are clear routes for stakeholder views to be fed back to the CONCERT partnership. As noted previously, stakeholder feedback is anticipated in several forms:

- Collation/analysis of questionnaire responses
- Reports from stakeholder meetings
- Feedback from consultation exercises
- Information about previous stakeholder dialogues in different countries in the radiation protection context

These modes of feedback and summary of responses will be made through the CONCERT Executive Board (ExB) and be made available to all partners following agreement/approval by the CONCERT Management Board (MB). Feedback to stakeholders will be communicated through the CONCERT website by posting of summary documents.

Conclusion

This document has set out the approaches CONCERT will take to stakeholder engagement as the activities identified in Work package 5. Key elements are:

- Stakeholder identification and interaction
- Development, implementation and analysis of a questionnaire
- Organisation of meetings with stakeholders
- Developing clear and credible website content
- Gathering comments on key documents through website consultation
- Ensuring clear communication of stakeholder views back to the wider CONCERT partnership

It is anticipated that these activities will contribute to the development of CONCERT as a respected and trusted organisation that promotes and supports research and other activities to improve the protection of humans and the environment from the adverse effects of exposures to ionising radiation.