Field: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Version 1

Topic: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC RELATIONS, AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Course type	TUTORING
Host institute	National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control (CNCAN) Bucharest, Romania
Date	13 May – 07 June 2024
Duration	Four weeks
Working language	English

Objective

The course offers theoretical and practical knowledge contributing to the competence development in communication and safety culture. Practices will be presented to enhance the effectiveness of the communication within organization as well as of the external communication with decision makers, stakeholders, representatives of the public and general public. Particular emphasis will be put on the procedures, with particular emphasis on the procedures, importance and difficulties of providing information to the public through different communication channels under emergency circumstances, responding rapidly and effectively, and managing media and public perceptions.

Outline of course content

I   Foundations of Emergency Communication:

Participants delve into the foundational principles of effective communication that are vital to establishing and maintaining a strong safety culture within organizations. This includes exploring the various mechanisms of internal communication that ensure messages are conveyed clearly and received accurately by team members. Additionally, the influence of external communication channels is covered, examining how they impact an organization's relationship with external stakeholders and the wider public, and how these channels can be leveraged to uphold the organization's reputation, particularly in critical times of crisis management.

II   Internal Communication in Emergencies:

The critical aspects of internal communication during emergencies are addressed. Participants learn to craft an emergency communication plan, detailing protocols, and procedures to follow when crises arise. Moving further, the focus shifts to the dynamics of team communication in high-pressure situations, ensuring that critical information is shared efficiently and effectively among team members. Lastly, real-world case studies are discussed, analyzing successful internal communication strategies employed by organizations during emergency situations, providing participants with practical, actionable insights.

III   External Communication Strategies:

Participants delve into the nuances of communication outside of an organization. *Engaging with Decision-Makers and Stakeholders* unit focuses on the strategies and techniques necessary for effective interaction with influential individuals and groups that have a stake in the organization's activities. *Public Relations Tactics in Emergencies* explores the specific approaches and methods used in public relations during emergency situations, emphasizing timely and effective communication under pressure. *Crisis Communication with the General Public* is dedicated to understanding and implementing communication strategies during crisis scenarios, with a particular focus on maintaining transparency and trust with the general public.

IV   Media Relations and Public Perception:

The key aspect of media engagement is addressed. Insights and strategies offered for collaborating effectively with media outlets when an organization faces a crisis, ensuring accurate and constructive dissemination of information. Guidelines provided for creating impactful press releases and conducting press conferences that can shape media narratives and public opinion. Participants are equipped with the skills needed to navigate the fast-paced world of social media during emergency situations, focusing on message control, rapid response, and engagement with a digital audience. Collectively,

these units aim to enhance one's proficiency in handling media relations and molding public perception, especially in high-stakes situations.

V Practical Challenges in Crisis Communication:

Three specific challenges are targeted that professionals may encounter in high-pressure situations. *Overcoming Information Barriers* delves into identifying and surmounting obstacles that obstruct the flow of information, ensuring messages reach their intended audiences effectively. *Addressing Misinformation and Rumors* is dedicated to strategies for correcting false information and rumors that can exacerbate crisis situations. *Ethical Considerations in Emergency Communication* addresses the moral implications and responsibilities in communicating during emergencies, emphasizing the importance of honesty, transparency, and respect for all stakeholders.

VI Simulation Exercises:

An immersive learning experience is provided through tabletop exercises designed to prepare individuals for real-world crisis communication. The first part presents participants with dynamic simulations that replicate actual crisis situations, allowing them to apply their knowledge in a controlled, yet realistic environment. The second part focuses on developing the skills needed to respond quickly and effectively to unfolding events, helping to build confidence and competence under pressure. The last part offers a hands-on practice environment where participants can practice their abilities to manage information dissemination and media relations effectively. This module aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, equipping participants with the tools and experience to handle crisis communication with professionalism.

VII Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:

This part is dedicated to critical review and enhancement of communication strategies. *Measuring Communication Effectiveness* guides learners through the processes and metrics that can be used to assess the impact of communication efforts, ensuring that the objectives are being met. *Feedback Mechanisms and Improvement Loops* emphasizes the importance of integrating feedback into communication planning, allowing for iterative improvements through established feedback channels. *Developing a Personalized Action Plan for Communication* enables participants to create customized plans that align with their specific communication goals and the unique needs of their audience, incorporating the insights gained from feedback and effectiveness measures.

Technical schedule and delivery methods

The course takes 4 working weeks (i.e. 4 × 5 workdays).

- **Classroom lectures:** Core content will be delivered through lectures, supplemented by PowerPoint presentations and handouts to cover theoretical aspects.
- **Interactive sessions:** Participants will engage in role-playing activities and simulations to apply communication principles in practice.
- **Workshops:** Hands-on sessions where participants will develop communication plans and strategies.
- **Simulation exercises:** Realistic crisis scenarios will be used to practice emergency communication and response.
- **Group discussions:** Facilitated discussions to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences among participants.
- **Feedback sessions:** Opportunities for participants to receive and give feedback on exercises and simulations.
- **Multimedia resources:** Use of videos, case studies, and online platforms to enhance learning.
- **Assessment activities:** Including written examinations, presentations, or practical demonstrations of skills learned.

Target audience

This course is intended for experts and professionals of Nuclear Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) and Technical Support Organisations (TSOs), particularly for designated public information officers as well as other emergency preparedness and response professionals who play a critical role in emergency preparedness and crisis response within their organizations.

Target number of participants: 2

Prerequisites and requirements for participants

Participants should have an adequate level of knowledge in English (at least an 'Independent user' level defined by the CEFR). A relevant university degree and at least 2 years of professional experience in functions relevant to the content of the course (i.e. real-life experience and responsibilities for either communication, safety, or emergency preparedness and response) is also a prerequisite. Familiarity with and understanding of the basic concepts and principles of communication within a professional setting is expected. Knowledge of organizational structures and functions, including the hierarchy and roles of actors involved in EPR and crisis management, is beneficial.

Relevancy of the course topic in the work and institutionally justified interest in participating will be considered as selection criteria as well as the need and opportunity for filling competence gaps. Efforts are made to ensure gender equality.

Terms of participation

The project is implemented under the European Union (EU) external assistance programme, called the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC), and aims to support the National Nuclear Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) and their Technical Support Organisations (TSOs) in non-EU countries in strengthening their capabilities with regard to their regulatory tasks and responsibilities in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection. Employees of the NRAs or their TSOs in the Beneficiary Countries are eligible for financially supported participation in the T&T courses. Beneficiary Countries of the project are published on the website https://training.ek-cer.hu/.

Costs

Travel and accommodation costs and subsistence allowances (including the international and national travel tickets as well as shuttle services, insurance and visa costs, per diems) for participants will be covered from the project budget.

Application

Application via the website https://training.ek-cer.hu/, according to the process and deadlines indicated there.

Examination

Technical and linguistic tests will be written by the applicants as part of the application and selection process to assess their underlying knowledge and preparedness. Knowledge and development of selected participants will be assessed through technical tests throughout the course. Work reports will be prepared by the participants to allow for progress monitoring and determining their final development through acquisition of knowledge, practical experience and expertise, as well as task completions.

Participants attending the full course will be issued with attendance certificates. Successful participants will receive certificates confirming their knowledge achieved and skills acquired.