

Ambiguity and uncertainty: The role of ethics in leadership and management for safety

European Leadership for Safety Education (ELSE)

2nd International Workshop

June 14th, 2023 - Nice (France)

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OVERVIEW



- What does *ethics* (usually) mean in the nuclear industry?
- A procedural approach to ethics to manage uncertainty and ambiguity
- Ethical stakeholder engagement as an organizationally limited practice?

WHAT DOES ETHICS (USUALLY) MEAN IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY? (1/2)

Ethics is very often operationalized through Codes of Conduct: set of principles

And values:



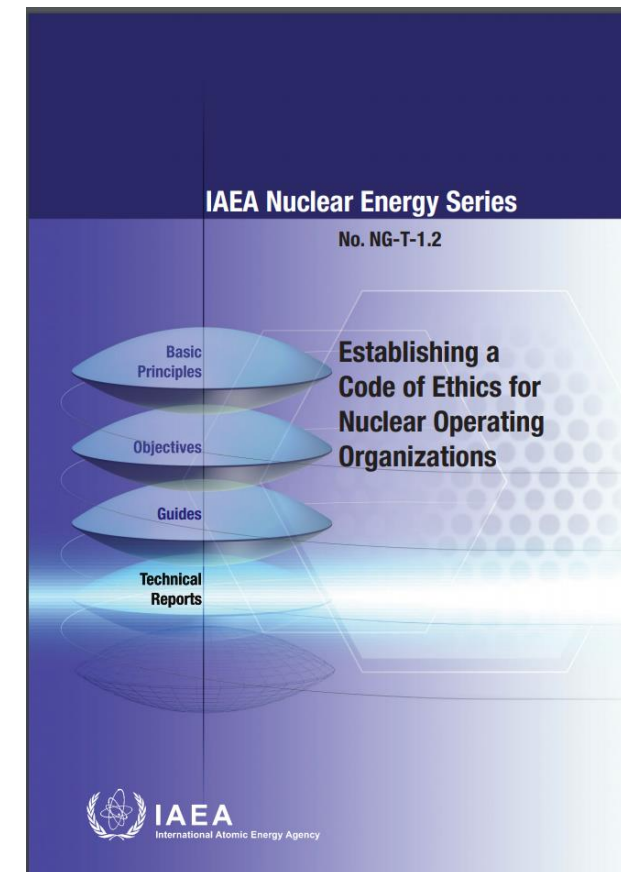
- Independence
- Openness
- Efficiency
- Clarity
- Reliability



- Independence
- Efficiency
- Openness & transparency
- Improvement & commitment
- Reactiveness (emergency response)



- Accountability
- Transparency
- Openness
- Mastery
- Integrity
- Competency



WHAT DOES ETHICS (USUALLY) MEAN IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY? (2/2)

Principles, values, framework: a substantive approach to ethics

- Focus on the result (the good decision): **Very limited in practice** if not integrated in a larger organizational program (Trevino et al., 2014);
- Very little ownership - difference between knowing the value and translate the value into action;

A PROCEDURAL APPROACH TO ETHICS TO MANAGE UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY (1/5)

Procedural: focus on the process to reach a desirable decision/action rather than the decision itself

- Empowering process to enable people to use these values and principles;

Ethics is a **process of critical reflection** aimed at identifying, justifying, and applying values and principles for making good decisions and establishing good practices, **with and for others**, in ‘just’ institutions.

(Ricoeur, 1990)

A PROCEDURAL APPROACH TO ETHICS TO MANAGE UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY (2/5)

- Allows to integrate the organizational dimension of ethics (*just institutions*);
- Is more relevant for risk management than substantive approach, which relies on exhaustive information;
- Acknowledge uncertainties and ambiguities, which characterize complex systems: toward the integration of the plurality of legitimate perspectives (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993)

A PROCEDURAL APPROACH TO ETHICS TO MANAGE UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY (3/5)

Deliberative approach to risk management (Herkert, 1994; Cotton, 2009; Pauchant et al., 2018):

- Is grounded in dialogue with oneself and others;
- Deliberate ethical inquiry involving different stakeholders: building a common representation;
- Allows to address specific issues related to risk management such as acceptability criteria and justice;



Addresses the concrete and complex reality of the situation (not abstract principles).

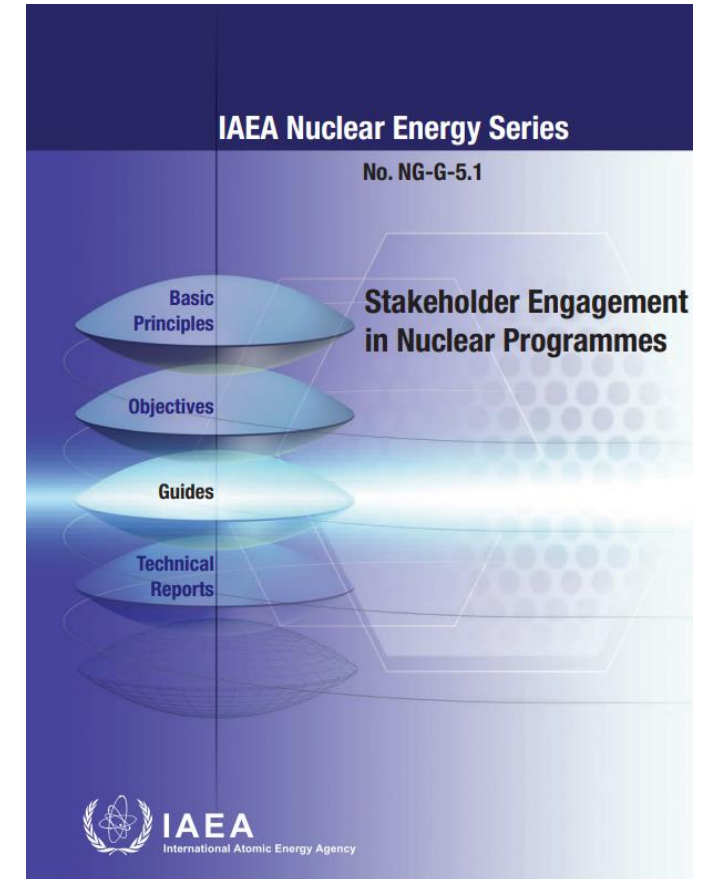
A PROCEDURAL APPROACH TO ETHICS TO MANAGE UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY (4/5)

How is it operationalized in the nuclear industry?

Stakeholder engagement



“[...] stakeholder engagement is a genuine intention to understand the concerns, perspectives and interests of stakeholders to foster collaborative work. It is more than words and needs to be reflected both in actions and empathetic dialogue” (p. 5)



A PROCEDURAL APPROACH TO ETHICS TO MANAGE UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY (5/5)

How is it operationalized *in practice* in the nuclear industry?

A recent example of the public consultation for the Flamanville EPR NPP.

Very vertical, top-down approach, more substantive than procedural.

Consultations du public > Mise à participation du public pour le ...

Mise à participation du public pour le projet de réacteur à service du réacteur EPR de Flamanville (N° 167)

Un dossier technique de 13 200 pages



CENTRAL

La création du réacteur à Flamanville 3) a été autorisée.

En application de l'article R. 593-30 du code de l'environnement, ce dossier est accompagné du rapport de sûreté de l'installation, des règles générales de sûreté que l'exploitant prévoit de mettre en œuvre, du plan de démantèlement, du plan d'urgence interne, de l'étude d'impact ainsi que de l'étude de maîtrise des risques.

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ETHICAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AS AN ORGANIZATIONALLY LIMITED PRACTICE? (1/2)

*“Organizations place limits on what constitutes **acceptable** behaviors of their members as well as **the rights they give to nonmembers**, and these limits govern goal formation, **participation, trust, and accountability**”*

(Aldrich, 1999, cited in Farjoun & Starbuck, 2007)

- Organizational (endogenous and exogenous) limits are both binding and enabling;
- If too restrictive, loss of enablement and become counter-productive;



In the previous example, the consultation creates expectations (of integration, mutual understanding, etc.) but in practice frustration, loss of trust, etc.

ETHICAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AS AN ORGANIZATIONALLY LIMITED PRACTICE? (2/2)

A less binding, more empowering example: Responsible Care[®] and its National Advisory Panel



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Thank You!

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