

# Chapter 4

## Policy Proposal

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## Chapter 4

### Policy Proposal

How can we improve stakeholder involvement on nuclear energy? This chapter makes several recommendations and defines stakeholders and coexistence and co-development with surrounding communities.

#### 1. Analysis

Based on chapters 2 and 3, issues of PA, common and/or different points of recognition between the explainer and the recipient have been specified, and some common conditions for a successful PA undertaking are analysed below.

##### 1) Issues of PA

The US pointed out *anxiety* as an issue for PA. In that background, it is thought to be a temporary decline in public support for nuclear power following the accident at the NPP, which has occurred in a public opinion survey.

Finland pointed out the *misunderstanding* that renewable energy can solve everything. The background is thought to have suspended construction plans of NPPs due to the past accident at the NPP, even though it could be a means to comply with the greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

The UK pointed out *overreaction* to accidents and to risks. The background is thought to be the fact that it has been difficult to cope with the overreaction of the media when several accidents occurred in the history, which has accumulated since the early days of nuclear power generation.

Japan pointed out that *difficulty in communicating* is an issue. The background is thought to be the difficulty in restoring trust after the accident at the NPP due to the lack of discussion and identity politics.

The definition of PA is 'a certain concrete measure is clearly or tacitly supported by members of the public who may be affected, positively or negatively, by its implementation' as mentioned in Chapter 2. Considering this definition together with the issues pointed out by each country, there could be some findings. Misunderstanding hinders the correct communication of positive effects and anxiety hinders that of negative effects. An overreaction could be the cause of losing clear or tacit support. The difficulty in communicating suggests that once they lose the support, identity politics would occur from misunderstanding and anxiety. The identity politics would seriously divide the society and prevent discussions, which leads to a total loss of penetration of PA.

## 2) Common and/or different points of recognition between explainer and recipient

To overcome the above issues, it is important to consider how to make a positive effect on public awareness through communication.

The US suggested some common recognition that both the explainer and the recipient tend to have, which are common values that people would naturally desire such as availability, low carbon, and high reliability. The background is thought to be the fact that after the electricity crisis occurred in some US states in the past, many people recognised the need for a stable supply of electricity. On the other hand, the US also suggested that activities conducted solely by business operators hindered the sharing of common values, and that exclusively technical communication made people feel concerned, based on their own experiences.

Finland mentioned *values for the region cultivated through long history*. The background is thought to be the accumulation of good relations between the region and nuclear power, from the initial introduction of nuclear power to the present, including the acceptance of the world's first final disposal facility.

The UK suggested the *stance of the government and businesses* as seen as a positive feeling amongst people with prior consultation, and negative feelings without that. They also suggested that differences in recognition are unlikely to arise when they involve a trusted third party into their dialogue. The background is thought to be the hard experience of overcoming the antagonism of people that was caused when they had introduced NPPs without preliminary consultation.

On the other hand, as for differences in recognition that tend to arise between the explainer and the recipient, the US suggested the *degree of fear that people perceive*. This might be the same factor as anxiety that was mentioned above as an PA issue.

From Finland and Japan, it is pointed out that differences in recognition arise depending on the attributes of the recipients such as gender, age, and whether they attach importance to the life of future generations. It is also pointed out that the more identity politics they have, the more they cannot bridge the gap of recognition. These are also attributable to the PA issues of anxiety and misunderstanding that depend on the attributes of a recipient, and these are also factors that cause the difficulty in communicating effectively.

The UK pointed out that society's view on nuclear power can be improved by *accumulation of experiences through long history*. This is related to Finland's suggestion *values for the region cultivated through long history* as the positive aspect. In other words, if they do not have a long history, or if it is a long series of bad cases, the recognition of its value would be changed seriously.

The following is a summary of the discussion above. In order to improve PA, common values that people would desire such as availability, low carbon, and high reliability should be nurtured. This is considered a positive aspect amongst common points of recognition that are likely to occur from the good stance of the government and the operators and interaction with a third party with no misunderstanding. In addition, it is desirable to conduct appropriate communication considering various elements such as gender difference and age difference in relation to anxiety, namely a feeling of fear where differences in recognition tend to occur.

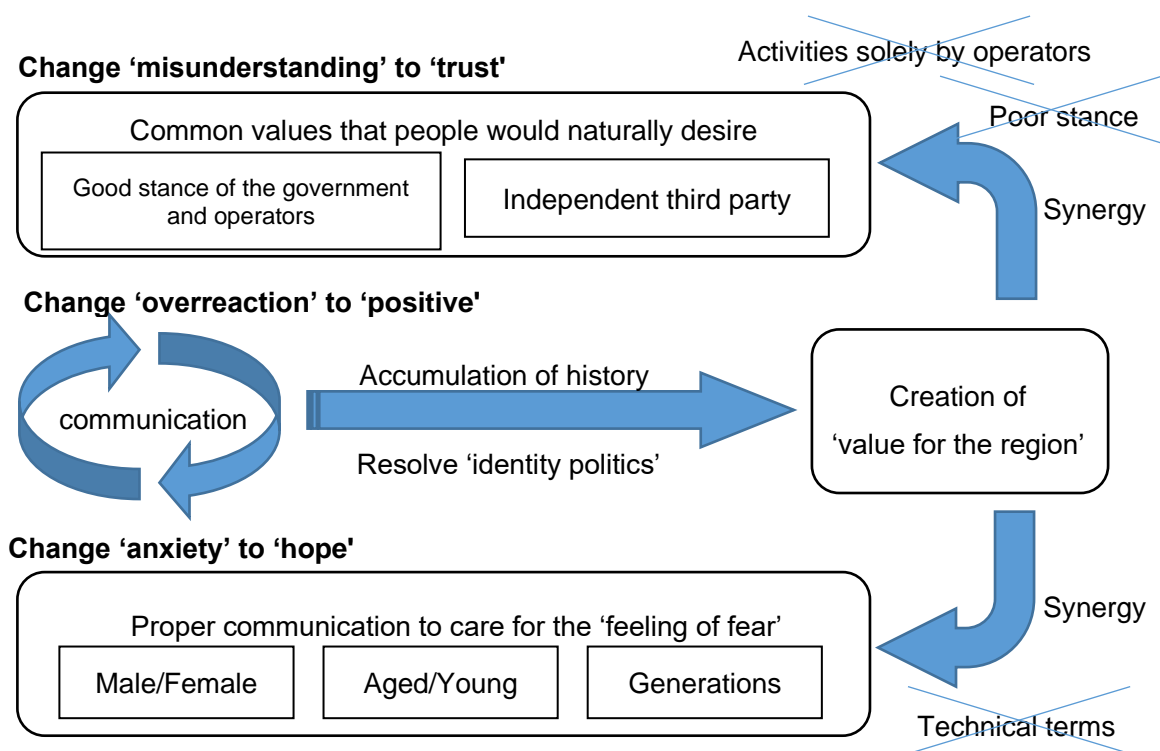
The accumulation of such experiences would lead to the resolution of the identity politics caused by anxiety and misunderstanding that bring about the difficulty in communicating, would reduce cases where support is lost due to overreaction, and eventually will create values for the region cultivated through long history. If the differences on the negative aspects are resolved and a common recognition on the positive aspects is constructed, the synergistic effect of PA improvement is expected.

On the other hand, the poor stance of the government and the operators, activities conducted solely by business operators, and technical communication can create a common recognition of

the negative aspects. It is desirable to learn from these failures in the past of knowledge transfer to grow the positive aspects paradoxically.

Such findings can be illustrated as follows (Figure 4.1).

**Figure4.1: Process for Improvement of Nuclear Public Acceptance**



Source: IEEJ.

By continuing such interaction as illustrated in Figure 4.1, it can be expected to realise the situation in which PA is obtained – in other words, in which the number of those who support nuclear power exceed those who do not.

### 3) Common conditions for a successful PA undertaking

This section summarises the common conditions for successful PA acquisition through the interaction illustrated in the previous section. The conditions focused here are the ones

mentioned in the workshop. This section summarises the conditions in accordance with some categories: trust, transparency, transmission of appropriate knowledge, and the economy of the host area. These are key topics which were discussed in the workshops in Kashiwazaki and Tsuruga. Since the transmission of appropriate knowledge is realised by mutual communication and transparency is a key factor to make communication effective, these two are grouped together. There are three categories: trust, communication and transparency, and economic efficiency.

### *Trust*

In the first place, a relationship of trust between stakeholders will significantly affect the difficulty of obtaining PA. To make the situation where trust has been obtained from the beginning, a government's policy decisions are considered to be the most important factor. If the government changes its decisions too frequently, it will not be able to build a relationship of trust. The first step in improving PA will be *to announce consistent policies* and to clearly explain their commitment to achieving them.

In addition, it is important to make sure that the operators who will carry out the projects in accordance with the government's policy gain the confidence, not distrust, of the stakeholders. The operators are required to not only provide information that is convenient for them, but also *to be honest with people about disclosing the information they are looking for*, even if it is inconvenient. For example, when nuclear power is introduced, radioactive waste is always accumulated, and how to deal with it becomes an unavoidable issue. It is necessary to inform this fact well in advance. Such attitudes are necessary not only for operators but also for the government that implements its policy and that should show its seriousness.

These are the conditions for the good attitude of the government and operators, and it leads to *being trusted by people*.

Even if the government and operators, who are responsible for the policy and its implementation, engage in activities to improve PA with the proper attitude described above, they may not be able to obtain PA and could lose their credibility if they communicate inappropriately. The following are conditions to avoid this and to obtain more trust.

### *Communication and transparency*

As mentioned in section 2, *an independent third party* should be involved in the communication, and the third party should consist of people from various backgrounds. The discussion in the workshop mentioned some examples: artists, writers, and pop stars. It is desirable not to make closed discussions amongst limited experts only, but to involve such people and derive their contribution.

It has also been discussed in section 2 that it is important not to trigger misunderstanding and cause anxiety. To this end, it is crucial to share and confirm undeniable facts about topics in which everyone is interested. *Sharing undeniable facts about climate change, energy security, economic issues that are related to the benefit of the community, and so on*, they could eventually reach common values with many people in their conclusion even if there should be some conflicts in the process of communication.

Undeniable facts are often proved by technical logic in which safety and risks are evaluated quantitatively or qualitatively. However, discussions about safety and risks are likely to make people anxious that such risks would happen to them. This is a mental issue, and the workshop mentioned that technical explanations would not solve mental issues. Therefore, *it is not desirable to use technical terms when safety and risks are explained*. Instead, they are required to make some efforts in communication such as citing the relationship between a risk in everyday life and economic efficiency that has already been understood and accepted by everyone and encouraging people to make a comparison with nuclear risks. The workshop noted that they need to relativise the risks, consider the economic aspects, and explain the comparison using simple words.

Certainly, such efforts are a consideration for the mental issues, but someone might suspect that the speaker is trying to avoid a concrete and technical explanation. Therefore, the credibility of the speaker is a key element that influences successful communication. Long and continuous engagement is important to form credibility, and so *the government or operators*, those who want to promote discussions with the people, *are required to appoint communication experts. The experts should stay in the same position for a long term.*

Even in discussions based on the undeniable facts, they may not be able to reach an agreement due to misunderstanding, anxiety, or identity politics. Such disagreement tends to be regarded

as an obstacle to forming a common opinion, but it brings attention to the point that people with the same opinion do not notice. Such opportunities lead to a clarification of the misunderstanding and anxiety and the consideration of how to deal with them. Therefore, communications should encourage different opinions and *respect various opinions from different people*. In the workshop, one of the foreign opinion leaders said that there were no casualties from radiation following the Fukushima accident. Local opinion leaders responded that saying 'no casualties, it is good' should be avoided, because people are unable to return to their communities. Certainly, judging from the quantified risk from the viewpoint of radiology, it is unlikely that the Fukushima accident brought definitive effects on human health. But it is also true that fears of radiation have resulted in negative consequences in people's lives and activities. Unless anxiety is wiped away, a negative effect that outweighs the radiological risk will arise when an accident happens. What was pointed out in the workshop indicates that it is needed to wipe away the anxiety through PA activities to avoid such serious effects.

It is up to the recipients to determine whether PA has been obtained for the relevant policy as a result of the communication process. Policies are proposed for the people, but their intentions would not be transmitted if they are submitted without any prior discussion. Even if there is a suggested policy, it is desirable that the value of the policy is shared and the policy is perceived as being created by the people. If so, in the actual implementation of the policy, the willingness of local people involved in the policy should be considered. *It is desirable that residents can participate in decision making and have the right to refuse the policy implementation if necessary*. Leadership in the local communities is highly anticipated when concluding opinions. In the workshop, there was a case study that a small community is suitable as a unit to summarise opinions, which can be one of the conditions. Using various communication channels, including visitor centres and camps to increase knowledge, it is necessary to provide sufficient information to not only the current generation but also to future generations, and to actively and openly communicate with each community. Direct participation and explanations from the employees of the operators could be one effective way of ensuring transparency in the communication channels.

These are some conditions for overcoming the difficulty of communication. There are also some conditions to further improve the acquired PA through past experiences.



Even if a policy is successfully implemented by acquiring PA, if the subsequent response is not appropriate, the relationship of trust with the region where the policy is implemented will be damaged, and one day local PA could be lost. If PA is lost, it would be difficult to continue with the policy implementation. The following are the conditions for avoiding that, but rather for gaining more trust.

#### *Economic development*

Implementing a policy with PA will realise its value for the people, especially for the people in the region where they are implemented. For the region, starting from that value, it is desirable to develop the region further, grow human resources, and bring up and expand various values in a sustainable way by mobilising the dynamic private sector and without depending merely on one value. In the workshop discussion, business expansion linked to university research and development was cited as an example. It is expected that *there will be links to other areas of business that can expand in the region, without depending only on those projects implemented by the policy*. In addition, if the implemented policies can solve national and international issues, it is achievable to increase regional sustainability by deepening cooperation with the nation, the world and the regions where the policies are implemented.

These are the conditions for enriching the value for the region, which will lead to the continuation of policy implementation.

By continuing the communications summarised in section 2 following the conditions described above, local residents will become accustomed to the implemented policy, and the facilities installed, along with the implementation of the policy will become ordinal, therefore it penetrates the region. In the process, good operation of the facilities and a high level of safety culture are essential. If it is lost and an accident occurs, it will frighten people, trigger misunderstanding and anxiety that have been wiped out until then, and the credibility that has been gained will be damaged. If the anxiety is not well dissolved by PA activities, the impact will be even greater. This is the method of communication for PA acquisition based on the lessons learned from past cases of PA activities including failed ones, and it is considered that this method would be one condition for maintaining the good status.

## **Policy proposals**

Based on the workshops and analysis, the following policy proposals were compiled. These proposals are the common conditions for successfully gaining PA mentioned and italicised in the previous section.

### 1) Matters on trust

- The government should announce a consistent national energy policy.
- The government and the operators should disclose information required by people in an honest manner.
- Information shall be sent by trusted bodies.

### 2) Matters on communication and transparency

- Independent third parties should be involved in the communication.
- It is important to share facts about climate change, energy security, and related economic issues for the benefit of the community.
- Technical terms should not be used in the explanation of safety and risks.
- The government and the operators should appoint communication experts who stay in the same position for the long term.
- The government and the operators should respect various opinions from different people.
- Residents should be involved in decision making and have the right to refuse the policy implementation if necessary.

### 3) Matters on economic development

- There should be links between business opportunities of nuclear power and other sectors so that various kinds of business can expand in the region.