



Norwegian University  
of Life Sciences



The Research Council of Norway

# Embracing the complexities: the value of listening to public in nuclear emergency preparedness

Yevgeniya Tomkiv, Deborah Oughton, Brian Wynne

**RICOMET 2019, July 1-3<sup>rd</sup>, Barcelona**



CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RADIOACTIVITY

<https://cerad.nmbu.no>

[twitter.com/ceradenvrاد](https://twitter.com/ceradenvrاد)





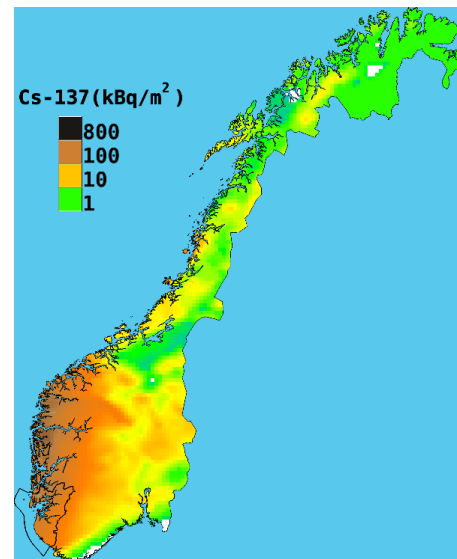


# Exploring public needs, concerns, expectations and responses in a radiological emergency

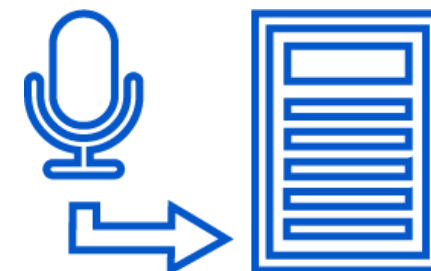
Useful for:

- developing content of communication
- developing approaches to communication
- understanding attitudes and behaviours -> to encourage actions that reduce consequences

**6 focus groups  
in Bodø  
48 participants  
age 20-65**



**2 scenarios**



# How public defines their relationships with emergency preparedness actors

## Knowledge

Who is responsible?  
Who will be making decisions?  
Do they have competence?  
Information flow

## Trust

General high trust to authorities, but..  
Topic-dependent  
Experience-based  
Lobbying and politics

# What influences public's response to recommended countermeasures

- Word use
- Social relationships
- Perceived effectiveness/no harm
- Trust in institutions
- Previous experience (even non-radiation related)



# How do people construct risk perceptions of radiation

Loss of control, disempowerment

Long-term effect

Lack of knowledge (by public  
AND by experts)

Responsibility for children



# Lessons for emergency preparedness

- There isn't a public, but rather multiple publics
- People want to know WHY
- Perceptions are complex, attitudes are ambiguous – we need to acknowledge that
- Need to develop/test messages before the emergency
- Nuclear emergency preparedness should be more visible (?)



# Thank you for your attention!

