

# **17. Feedback experience exchange in an ALARA perspective: the French RPO and Qualified Experts regional networks**

# You said feeling of loneliness ?



In France there are around 20 000 RPO's, Qualified Experts and other "local" radiological protection stakeholders (physicians, physicists,...) who, very often, felt lonely and not well recognised in their hospitals, industries or research centres both by their hierarchy and their colleagues.

## An answer from the “floor” to set up regional networks

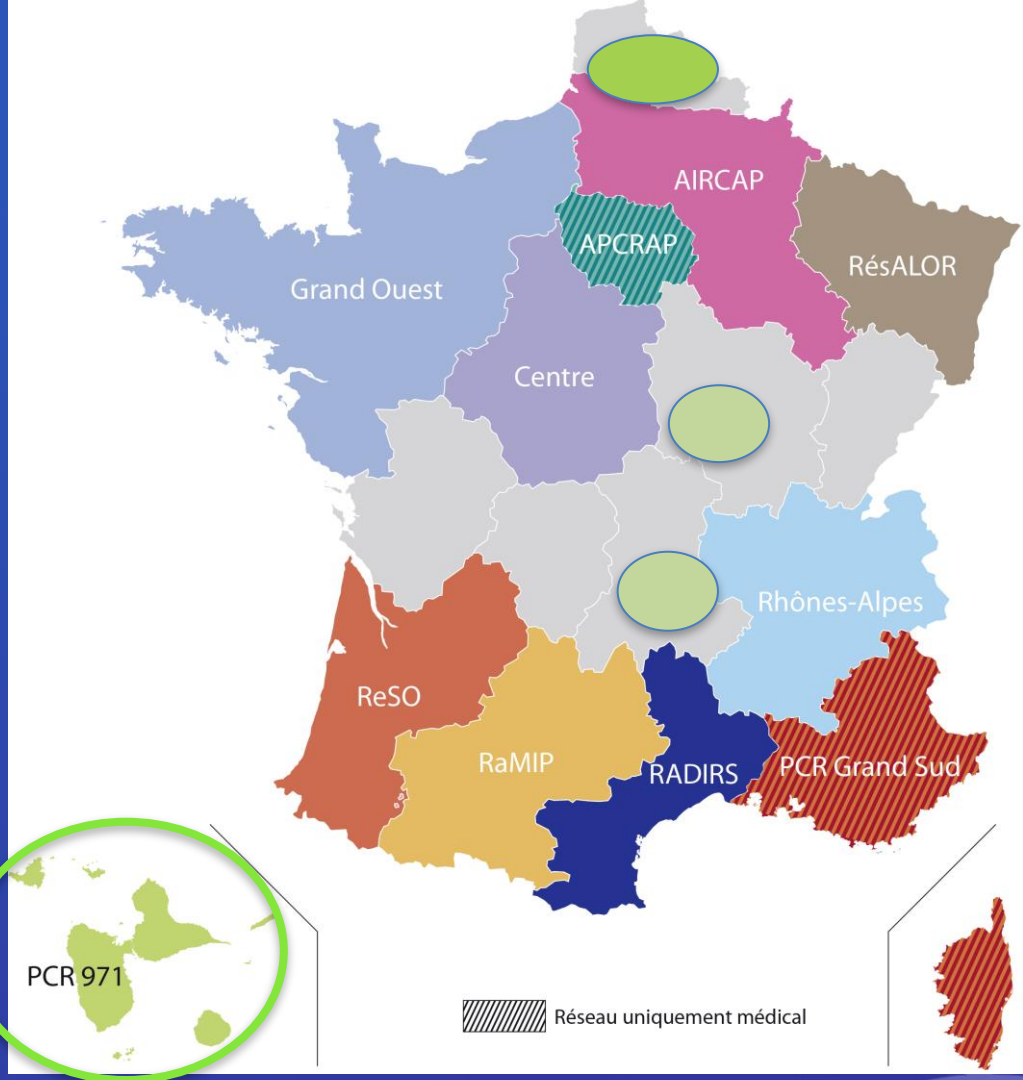
In order to facilitating feedback experience exchanges for optimizing occupational radiological protection and to providing them updates on regulations and scientific evidences, they started setting up regional networks a few years ago.

As of end of 2012, 12 regional networks have been set up which cover more than three quarters of the French territory and gather more than one thousand RPO's and Qualified Experts. All these networks have been set up on a totally voluntary basis; their organisers' work is totally provided through in kind contribution.

A national coordination of all chairpersons of the networks has emerged at the end of 2010.

In setting up

To be set up



# Following an ethical path (1)

All networks' representatives have signed an ethical chart during the first official meeting of that coordination in October 2011.

## **ETHICAL CHARTER OF THE RPO'S, QES NETWORKS**

The RPO's, QEs networks commit themselves :

- To favouring feedback experience exchanges between their members, allowing them to update their knowledge in regulatory and technical matters in order to improve their legitimacy and therefore their contribution to a better radiological protection implementation.
- To being force of proposal and sharing, as feedback experience holders, through reports, standpoints towards the others radiological protection partners.
- To being stake holders as early as possible, within the decision processes in development by the regulatory institutions, favouring beforehand dialogue between the different networks.

## Following an ethical path (2)

- Not to let neither conflicts of interests, nor managerial pressures or personal or commercial interests from their members, to compromise the abovementioned objectives.

- To guaranteeing their independency towards institutions and firms that should provide them with resources both in forms of grants or supports, and to making their independency respected.

- To keeping their publications and advices-coherent with the regulations and the radiological protection principles –up to date with the actual state of knowledge – and spread in an appropriate manner.

- Not to carrying out a censure in the circulation of members opinions since there is no defamatory or illicit aspects in these opinion.

# What do they do? They increase legitimacy of participants organizing regional meetings

All the networks organise each year a few “one day” meetings (1 to 3), where participants may:

**exchange experiences** in particular on their workstations analysis for implementing optimization

and **listen to presentations by experts** (from regulatory body, trade companies, scientists, lawyer...).

**find** good **arguments** to convincing their hierarchy and colleagues for improving occupational radiation protection situation

# What do they do ? They increase legitimacy of participants organizing regional meetings

To increasing legitimacy they favour the most wide possible exchanges; therefore most of them are multi sectors; which means they cover both, medical sector, industrial sector and research sector. Feedback experience has clearly shown that it is of interest for each one to listen and discuss with all others.

Most networks have become continuous training institutions, their meetings are then officially considered as participating to the employers duties dealing with training.

Web sites and forum, email newsletters, became popular tools.

And after a while, participants feel more legitimate within their own institutions. Therefore the numbers of participants, their origins, are increasing year after year as well as the activities of the networks.



## **With support from regulatory bodies and other radiological protection stakeholders.**

Since the beginning the French Safety Regulatory Body (ASN) and the Ministry of labour (DGT) are strongly supporting these initiatives from individuals both in terms of advertisement and providing resources for the coordination itself.

## How do they work? (1)

Most often one network starts at the initiative of one or two individuals.

The first meeting to set up a network comprises between 4 and 10 individuals. That is a good start.

They organise a first working day open to all RPO's and QE and other type of stakeholders concerned by occupational radiological protection. The day comprises case studies presented by some participants, analysis of the regulation by the regulatory bodies representatives, presentation of material by vendors and time for a lot of discussions or even practical exercises with material.

The number of participants per network starts at about 20/30 during the first meeting day and grows up to 200 to 300 after three years.

## How do they work? (2)

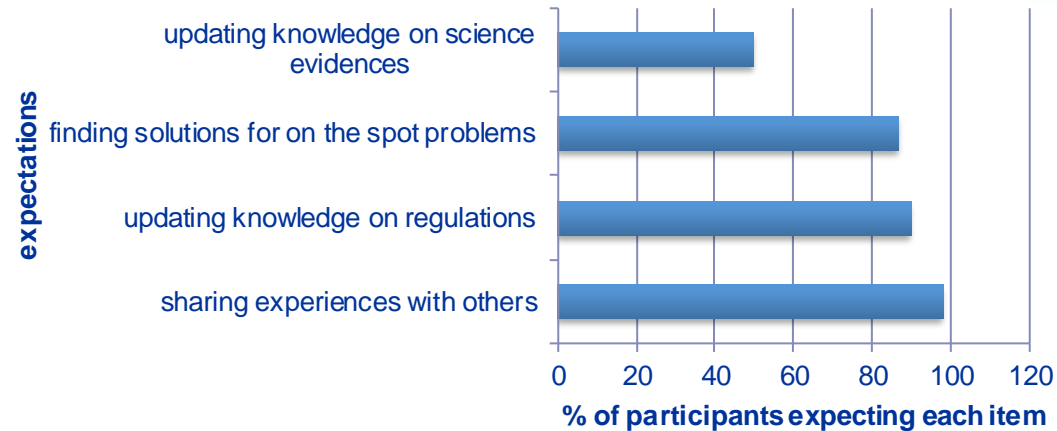
The support of the organisation (s) to which belongs the coordinator (s) is very important (giving some time, facilitating access to rooms, ...)

After a few months the network becomes a legal entity, generally not for profit, that allows it to receive funds and resources.

The time spent by the coordinator team varies from 1 or 2 man weeks to 1 or 2 man months.

The budget exceed rarely a few k€ (5, 10 maximum).

# The expectations of the members : results of a survey.



Three objectives are quite unanimously and spontaneously quoted

The existing networks fulfil totally these expectations

# What is the role of the national coordination? (1)

To facilitating existing networks life and supporting new networks setting up

To share

resources and tools  
experiences from all networks

To provide national counterparts with bottom up collection of problems, demands and expectations from isolated RPOs from the spot.

## What is the role of the national coordination? (2)



Each network nominates 2 representatives that meet at least 2 times a year with the support of the regulatory bodies.

The coordination has become a new partner for many institutions, allowing the RPO's and Qualified Experts to provide input, through a bottom up approach, to future regulations dealing with all aspects of occupational exposure life in France or to facilitating organizing the profession.

The RPO's networks appear to be an efficient tool for optimization implementation

Why not to favour the setting up of such networks in other countries?