

# **Improving Risk Governance: Defining a Better Process for Risk Communication and Stakeholder Participation**

A tutorial workshop  
to be held in conjunction with the

**[Society for Risk Analysis Annual Meeting](#)**

8:00 - 4:00 pm  
Sunday, 7 December 2008

BOSTON

## **Synopsis**

The success with which risks are managed in society, in the world, depends on a complex system of risk governance. Not only does risk governance include what we traditionally define as 'risk analysis' and 'risk management' but it also includes a range of decision makers, stakeholders, scientists and other experts, or members of the public and the roles they have on decisions throughout the process. Failures of risk governance can often be traced to failures to understand and respond to this 'bigger picture'. In this workshop, we focus on a major challenge to successful risk governance – risk communication throughout the process.

The basic core of this workshop is formed by a broad conceptual framework for risk governance developed by the International Risk Governance Council (IRGC), a private, non-profit foundation in Geneva, Switzerland. Their risk governance framework was designed to provide a more comprehensive characterization of risk governance -- one that builds on foundations of risk analysis and risk management as embodied in many existing frameworks --- and thereby to guide risk analysts and policy makers around common pitfalls that have been encountered before.

The workshop will be a combination of lecture and interactive case studies, including development of mock press conferences and other role-playing exercises, and feedback discussions. The cases studies will be drawn from recent experiences of the two presenters on the governance of food safety. It is designed to help workshop participants think through the issues involved in dealing with risk communication both in the design of programs for the governance of new risks and when faced with a crisis.

## **Overview of topics**

- What do we mean by Risk Governance?: New frontiers and challenges
- Toward an integrated approach: an introduction to the IRGC risk governance framework
- Risk Communication as part of governance: Where does it go wrong and how to get it right.
- Case studies from food safety:
  - Acrylamide in Food
  - Avandia
- Role play exercise: dealing with an eminent food crisis

Workshop attendees will be given copies of IRGC framework as well as case study materials.

## **Importance of Risk Communication**

Why should politicians, stakeholders or researchers communicate risks to other audiences and the public? How can we make sure that the intended message on risk is well understood by the targeted audiences? What is so special about risk communication? How and to what degree can scientific researchers contribute to successful risk communication?"

Responses to these questions are addressed in this SRA Special Workshop.

Communicating risk to the public is often an end-of-pipe-product informing the public of what a researcher has assessed and what actions a risk manager has taken. Methods such as risk scenarios, risk classification, dose response modeling, exposure assessments, and probabilistic risk assessment provide scientific insights. These assist industrial risk managers and public regulators to handle and administrate hazardous substances. Our emphasis in this course is on food risks. These risks are particularly of concern to the public and can become hot topics in public debates.

Many people have difficulties understanding risks and risk assessments. It is a major challenge to communicate to individuals untrained in toxicology, epidemiology and risk analysis. However, most consumers demand to be informed about potential threats and safety issues and respond with outrage and withdrawal of trust when they believe to be misguided or misled.

Therefore, there is a need for risk professionals to develop skills and proficiency in communicating scientific results to a variety of different audiences. The Course will provide some insights from risk perception and communication research and include some exercises to improve communication in difficult risk situations.

# Program of Workshop:

Sunday, December 7, 2008, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Boston

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8.00 am	<b>Introduction to the Course</b> <b>Ragnar Löfstedt</b> <b>Ortwin Renn</b>
8.30 Uhr	<b>Impulse 1:</b> <i>The IRGC Risk Governance Framework</i>  Ortwin Renn <b>Exercise 1:</b> <i>Fish Advisory</i>
10.00 Uhr	Coffee Break
10:15 Uhr	<b>Impulse 2:</b> Risk Perception Insights  Ortwin Renn <b>Exercise 2:</b> Listeria in Cheese
11.15 Uhr	<b>Impulse 3:</b> Risk Communication: Challenges and Insights <i>Ragnar Löfstedt</i>
12.15 Uhr	LUNCH BREAK
1.15 p.m.	<b>Case Studies:</b> Avandia <i>Ragnar Löfstedt</i>
2.15 p.m.	<b>Role Play Exercise</b> on Risk Communication <i>Ortwin Renn and Ragnar Löfstedt</i>
3.45 p.m.	<b>Summary</b> <i>Ortwin Renn and Ragnar Löfstedt</i>
4.00 p.m.	End of Workshop

## Venue

The event will be held 8:00 - 4:00 on Sunday, 7 December 2008, at the conference hotel (room will be given to all registered participants by the SRA secretariat)

## Who would benefit from this workshop?

This workshop is for anyone who works at the interface of risk analysis and policy. While the case studies are taken from food safety, they offer concrete lessons to risk analysts and managers in the public and private sectors on how to develop and integrate risk communication programs into the overall process of risk governance.

## Presenters

### **Ortwin Renn:**

Ortwin Renn has been full professor and chair of Environmental Sociology of the State University in Stuttgart (Germany) since 1994 and, since 2003, has also been director of the nonprofit company Dialogik, a research institute for the investigation of communication and participation processes in environmental policy making. He has also been (1993-2003) a member (and from 1999-2003, chair) of the board of directors at the Center of Technology Assessment in Stuttgart. He is a fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) and is a member of the IRGC's Scientific and Technical Council. He received the "Distinguished Achievement Award" from the Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) in 2005 and an honorary doctorate from the Swiss Institute of Technology in 2007. Renn serves on the Panel on "Public Participation in Environmental Policy Making" of the US-National Academy of Science in Washington, D.C. He is also a member of the Risk Communication Advisory Group of the European Food Safety Authority.

For more information:

<http://www.dialogik-expert.de/en/dialogik/renn.htm>

### **Ragnar Löfstedt:**

Ragnar E. Lofstedt is Professor of Risk Management and the Director of King's Centre of Risk Management, King's College, London, UK where he teaches and conducts research on risk communication and management. He is also an adjunct Professor at the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis at Harvard School of Public Health, an Adjunct Professor at the Department of Engineering and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University, and a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Public Sector Research, Gothenburg University, Sweden. Dr. Lofstedt has conducted research in risk communication and management in such areas as renewable energy policy, transboundary environmental issues, telecommunications, biosafety, and the

siting of building of incinerators, nuclear waste installations and railways. He is on the Society for Risk Analysis-Europe's Executive Committee and is the previous chair of the Society for Risk Analysis' Risk Communication Specialty Group. He also is the external chair of the European Food Safety Authority's risk communication advisory group. In December 2000, Dr. Lofstedt was the first non-American awarded the Chauncey Starr Award for exceptional contributions to the field of risk analysis by the Society for Risk Analysis.

For more information:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/geography/research/kcrm/people/academic/lofstedt/>

## **More information**

More information can be obtained from Ortwin Renn (ortwin.renn@sowi.uni-stuttgart.de)