

Development of methods for evaluating risk communication (EMERik)

Short description

A project funded by the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (Bundesamt für Risikobewertung, BfR) that aims at developing methods for the evaluation of communication programs.

Appropriate risk communication for different target groups is increasingly coming to the fore of public authorities and institutes dealing with risk assessment and risk management issues. The way in which communication is carried out is significantly decisive for its efficacy and effectiveness. Evaluation is a tool to continuously improve the standards of the communication and to measure its effects. In spite of all theoretical achievements in the communication sciences, evaluation experts agree that improvements have to be derived from empirical studies. Reliable information about the effects, processing and generation of attitudes as well as long term learning successes of the addressees can only be gained through measuring the reactions to contents and methods of communication. The perception of risk communication will particularly be analysed through the instrument of “focus groups” within this project. Additionally, the assessment of the contents of the BfR’s web pages will be carried out. A systematic approach will be used to exclude intuitive and situation specific assessments, i.e. to obtain neutral findings.

The project aims at providing support for the optimisation of communication measures as well as highlighting possibilities of the implementation of a continuous evaluation process. More specifically, this will be achieved through the production of a guideline for orientation. This guideline will primarily deal with the contents of communication programs, since the methods for the exchange of information have been analysed explicitly in the already published program “ERiK” (the report “ERiK – Entwicklung eines mehrstufigen Verfahrens der Risikokommunikation” is available under the menu item “Publikationen/BfR Wissenschaft 2005) at the BfR homepage (www.bfr.bund.de).

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