



HERCA Strategy

December 2021

This document has been approved by the Board of HERCA on the 1st of December 2021

Title: HERCA Strategy

Summary: HERCA, as a voluntary association in which the European **Heads of Radiation Protection Authorities** work together in order to identify common issues and propose practical solutions for these issues, has developed its strategy. The aim of this document is to share both internally and with HERCA's counterparts its vision, mission and main objectives for the years to come.

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HERCA Strategy – Overview

– Sum up and cartography of objectives –

Sum up

COOPERATION	
<p>General Objective 1</p> <p><i>HERCA creating high added value for its members</i></p>	<p>Enhance and reinforce the cooperation between the European Authorities in RP, in order to share knowledge and best practices, increase common understanding of the implementation of the European and international framework and to harmonise regulatory approaches as far as practicable, taking national and regional considerations into account.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 1</p>	<p>Strengthen and consolidate the mechanisms within HERCA that promote sharing of experiences and exchange of best practices between members.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 2</p>	<p>HERCA should by 2024 analyse the Euratom BSS Directive and the International Basic Safety Standards, based on the authorities' experiences of implementing the Directive and using the Standards, identifying areas which merit specific attention in a future revision process.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 3</p>	<p>Develop mechanisms and work methods within HERCA which enables HERCA to analyse and revise, on a regular basis, its priorities with the view to identify issues of common interest to HERCA members, in particular those connected to regional and cross-boundary stakeholder issues.</p>
EFFICIENCY	
<p>General Objective 2</p> <p><i>HERCA being an effective organisation</i></p>	<p>Ensure that the organisations structure, capacity and capability are sufficient to anticipate, identify and tackle new issues in an efficient manner and enhance the active involvement of all members in HERCA work activities.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 4</p>	<p>By 2024, HERCA should have a structured approach for how to analyse relevant research and development information and incorporate this into its work.</p>

<p>Strategic Objective 5</p>	<p>In order to enhance the involvement of all HERCA members, the organisation shall by 2023 revise its work procedures and develop mechanisms which enable members from all parts of Europe to contribute more effectively to HERCA work activities.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 6</p>	<p>By 2023, HERCA will revise its working methods, in particular those related to the Board meetings in order to make better use of the Board's experience and knowledge. Experiences and lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic will play an important part in the evaluation of present working methods.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 7</p>	<p>In order to better share regulatory practices, HERCA should foster the establishment of regional inspection forums among the HERCA Member States where the participants can express views, share experiences and cooperate regarding different aspects of inspections.</p>
<p>STAKEHOLDERS</p>	
<p>General Objective 3 <i>HERCA being a key actor in RP</i></p>	<p>Enhance or develop interaction channels to European organisations representing end-users and professionals as well as organisations forming and setting the basis for our regulatory system.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 8</p>	<p>By 2024, HERCA will identify areas where HERCA-WENRA work activities overlap and set up mechanisms for cooperation with WENRA.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 9</p>	<p>Improve HERCA's capacity to better promote HERCA products to end-users (manufacturers, professionals, public) taking care not to interfere with the interactions already established between national authorities and stakeholders.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 10</p>	<p>In order to have an increased impact on the international framework, HERCA should re-inforce its role as strategic partner to ICRP, IAEA and the EC based on HERCA's experience with the practical implementation of the framework.</p>

Cartography of the objectives

COOPERATION

1

Strong intern mechanisms promoting sharing

2

Preparing revision of EU BSS and international standards

3

Analysis and revision of HERCA priorities

EFFICIENCY

4

R&D analysis structured approach

5

Procedures' revision to enhance members' involvement

6

Better use of Board's experience & knowledge

7

Regional inspection forums amongst HERCA

STAKEHOLDERS

8

Cooperation with WENRA

9

Promotion of HERCA products to end-users

10

Strategic partner for ICRP, IAEA & EC

HERCA Strategy

1. Introduction

When assessing the achievements of HERCA in light of its 10th anniversary, the HERCA Board recognized a need for clarification on the future direction of HERCA. Whilst the organisation has been successful in developing Terms of Reference and work methods that are well adapted to the organisation's needs, the world keeps changing and HERCA needs to adapt to challenges of the new decade. Some of the challenges that HERCA faces are:

- Demands on authorities for continuously improving their efficiency make international cooperation, such as HERCA, where authorities join efforts in issues of common interest, even more vital to its members. This is likely to increase demand on HERCA to take more issues aboard in the future.
- The changing social environment, such as that now dramatically illustrated by the Covid-19 pandemic, will challenge HERCA's resilience. The organisation will need to develop and strengthen its coping mechanisms to flexibly adapt to such changes, while maintaining the friendly and cooperative atmosphere that has characterised HERCA's work, and which has greatly contributed to its success.
- Advances in the sciences and technology underpinning radiation protection are happening so fast that it is only through collaborative efforts that the authorities will be able to cope with them.
- With the success of HERCA, the demands both from HERCA members and from stakeholders will increase, both on participation in a diversity of fora and on tackling various topics.
- A review of the ICRP Recommendations (ICRP Publication 103) has started and revisions of the International and Euratom Basic Safety Standards will eventually follow. Discussions on the pros and cons of the present system of RP will be extensive in different international fora and as an association of authorities HERCA could provide valuable information on how the system works in practice and identify possible improvements.
- The IAEA is likely to revise its Safety Fundamentals within the next ten years. HERCA has an interest in closely monitoring this process and, where relevant, getting involved.

An important task for the HERCA Board is to decide what sort of challenges, areas and issues the organisation should focus on. A strategy that defines goals for the coming years, will give the Board a powerful tool to steer the organisation towards an even more productive cooperation between the European RP authorities and towards future achievements that will be of use to HERCA members and its stakeholders.

With the main part of the HERCA work being performed on a voluntary basis and with very limited financial resources, the organisation must constantly balance the limitation of its members' contributions with the expectations of its members and stakeholders. As the demands on HERCA are generally larger than the organisations' capacity, a strategy will be useful in setting priorities and managing this balance.

2. Vision

HERCA is the leading organisation for developing, fostering and promoting protection against radiation (RP) in Europe, in particular with regard to implementation of international recommendations and regulatory frameworks.

3. Mission

Through cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience, and based on the members specific role as competent authorities, contribute to and strive towards the highest level of RP in Europe.

4. Objectives

To accomplish the vision HERCA has identified three key areas: **cooperation**, **efficiency** and **stakeholders**, for which general objectives have been formulated. Within each area, a number of strategic objectives have been set up. Each objective is accompanied by a short text putting the objective into context. A table including all objectives and a cartography can be found at the beginning of this document.

I. General objective 1: Cooperation

HERCA aims to create high added value for its members and formulates its objective as:

Enhance and reinforce the cooperation between the European Authorities in RP, in order to share knowledge and best practices, increase common understanding of the implementation of the European and international framework and to harmonise regulatory approaches as far as practicable, taking national and regional considerations into account.

➤ Strategic objective N°1

Strengthen and consolidate the mechanisms within HERCA that promote sharing of experiences and exchange of best practices between members.

- This objective touches the very core of HERCA. The organisation started as a network of authorities wanting to cooperate in areas of common interest, not only to be a stronger voice in the international community but also primarily to create a forum where they could share and benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences in the regulatory control of RP. Since the area of RP is not large many authorities struggle with having only one or a few experts in a particular field. Here HERCA provides a platform where the experts can interact and pool their resources in order to create results which are beneficial at the national levels. The pooling of resources and cooperation is also useful and sometimes essential when authorities are faced with financial challenges and demands on slimmer organisations.

- One of HERCA's strengths is the variety of its members' experience, resulting from for instance how the countries are governed, the size of the population, the presence or absence of nuclear industry, membership of the EU and/or other aspects. Although there often is consensus on the problems identified, there may be a number of ways to solve them and via an open and generous work atmosphere, both at Board level and in WG's, HERCA has managed to reach sensible and useful outcomes in a number of areas of common interest. It is important to keep in mind that for some issues, it is the discussions in themselves which are relevant, resulting in an outcome of common understanding of different ways to tackle an issue.
- Sharing experiences and best practices is an essential part of HERCA, therefore the methods presently used in HERCA, e.g. workshops, questionnaires, dedicated agenda items for thematic discussions or for sharing best practices, should be consolidated and possibly also strengthened. It would be beneficial to analyse which methods have been particularly useful, both for Board and WGs, and see what might be improved further or what needs to be formalised or strengthened and in what way.

➤ **Strategic objective N°2**

HERCA should by 2024 analyse the Euratom BSS Directive and the International Basic Safety Standards, based on the authorities' experiences of implementing the Directive and using the Standards, identifying areas which merit specific attention in a future revision process.

- The international BSS was published in 2014 and the Euratom Basic Safety Standards Directive was issued in 2013 with an implementation period of four years. Both standards contain basically the same requirements with a few minor exceptions. The EU Directive is binding for EU Member States, while the international standards are not. However, since the international BSS is the basis for the international community in radiation safety and for peer reviews such as IRRS and ARTEMIS, they are also of great importance to HERCA members.
- HERCA members have now had a few years using these two documents, which are fundamental for the radiation safety authorities. It would therefore be a good time to gather information on the benefits and obstacles identified when applying the standards and the Directive in practical RP. This information will be useful in a few years when the possible revision of these documents is considered, in the context of the outcome and discussions in the ICRP process of revising their recommendations. It should be clarified that while objective 10 focuses on ICRP, IAEA and EC in a more general sense, this objective is explicitly connected to the two BSSs and practical implementation into the authorities' regulatory control. A report pointing at the parts where the authorities are struggling and possibly also indicating what could or should be done, would be valuable for HERCA in various fora. It would also provide valuable input to the organisation when prioritising and planning future HERCA activities.

- The time frame for this objective is not imminent as for tasks related to the ICRP revision process, therefore an endpoint of 2024 is suggested. The main part of the information should be collected within the present WGs. It is of importance that any work related to this objective is coordinated with HERCA's work related to the ICRP revision process, see objective 10, since they are closely linked.

➤ **Strategic objective N°3**

Develop mechanisms and work methods within HERCA which enables HERCA to analyse and revise, on a regular basis, its priorities with the view to identify issues of common interest to HERCA members, in particular those connected to regional and cross-boundary stakeholder issues.

- Finding or developing mechanisms for follow-up, analysis and prioritization of HERCA work is essential for keeping up with increasing demands on HERCA, both externally and from members. At the same time it is of great importance that HERCA continues to be useful and relevant for its members. Here the challenge lies in identifying issues and choosing work activities that are of relevance to as many members as possible. However, WGs and the Board should look favourably on proposals for specific regional or cross-boundary issues with a potential of resulting in a permanent cooperation on this topic. Here HERCA could act as a facilitator to encourage regional cooperation.
- Presently very little is written on how HERCA establishes its priorities. The text in HERCA ToR is non-specific and basically says "Board ... defines priorities as needed". The WGs have a large influence on priorities when selecting which topics or issues they want to focus on, but it is the Board that decides on work programme, plans etc. and the Board can also demand or point the WGs in a certain direction.
- Possible measures to explore could be:
 - Identify when and in which contexts decisions on priorities and ways forward are needed, and adjust ToR accordingly.
 - Request self-evaluations of the WGs' work (results, work methods, challenges, future plans etc.) as a basis for long-term priorities at regular intervals. If the requests are spread out to each WG over a period of time, for instance three years, one (or for smaller groups two) WG would be in the centre of attention at each Board meeting based on a rotating schedule.
 - Identify which adjustments might be needed to help Board to be more strategic and possibly more executive in order for HERCA to move closer to the vision.
 - Routines for WGs and TFs about prioritisation
 - Identify relevant aspects, such as e.g. timeliness, usefulness for many members, impact global and within Europe, and likelihood of success (to reach common understanding or harmonisation), and make sure they are considered when decisions on priorities are made.
 - Questionnaires at regular intervals to gather information from members on topics of interest, including possible regional or cross-boundary issues.

II. General objective 2: Efficiency

HERCA aims to be an effective organisation and formulates its objective as:

Ensure that the organisations structure, capacity and capability are sufficient to anticipate, identify and tackle new issues in an efficient manner and enhance the active involvement of all members in HERCA work activities.

➤ Strategic objective N°4

By 2024, HERCA should have a structured approach for how to analyse relevant research and development information and incorporate this into its work.

- Research and development is a key issue for regulators. Indeed, new technologies are developing very fast, especially in the medical field, often necessitating the regulators to anticipate such changes in order to guarantee a sound control of the practices. However, keeping up with and analysing new developments is very costly and time consuming and requires significant investments for radiation protection authorities (RPA). So, in order to mutualize the It is therefore desirable to share work done among the different RPAs. HERCA should take an initiative and establish a mechanism to share the analysis among its members to avoid overlaps and duplication of effort.

➤ Strategic objective N°5

In order to enhance the involvement of all HERCA members, the organisation shall by 2023 revise its work procedures and develop mechanisms which enable members from all parts of Europe to contribute more effectively to HERCA work activities.

- Although almost all European countries are members of HERCA, the capacity to be involved in the work of HERCA is not evenly distributed between members. One reason is that some RPAs have very limited resources to be involved in HERCA activities. In order to be more useful and more attractive for its members, adjustments which might be further explored could be:
- Internal aspects:
 - Taking into account the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, encourage digital WG-meetings or hybrid meetings, at least once a year.
 - Actively seek to get more “active” participants in HERCA activities (WGs and TFs, by offering digital meetings and the possibility of corresponding membership allowing for less travels (cost and time consuming).
 - Make sure WG procedures allow for draft documents to reach participants well in advance of a meeting. Persons from authorities with less resources and staff are likely to multi-task and cover several areas at the same time, thus clear WG, TF and Board procedures and ample time for review of documents are of the essence.

- Encourage cooperation between members so that one member answers for two or three members when in a WG or WS for instance.
- Encourage co-hosting of WS or WG meetings.
- Coordinate the number of and send out of questionnaires from WG's and Board so they are pertinent, to the point and spread out over time, especially large ones.
- Create a forum to allow members to ask questions or share experiences. Such a forum dealing with practical issues could be seen as valuable for all HERCA members.
- External and cross-cutting aspects:
 - Encourage (organize) the participation in another members inspections (see objective 7).
 - Identify and clarify the attendance of HERCA members to external events where they could participate on behalf of HERCA
- This strategic objective is connected to objective 6, in particular the increased digitalization due to Covid-19 pandemic.

➤ **Strategic objective N°6**

By 2023, HERCA will revise its working methods, in particular those related to the Board meetings in order to make better use of the Board's experience and knowledge. Experiences and lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic will play an important part in the evaluation of present working methods.

- One goal could be to make the Board meetings more effective and more attractive; allowing for in depth discussions at Board meetings on specific/important topics prepared by one or two members. The Chair could select suitable topics. To make room for such in depth discussions, the agenda of the Board meetings could be adjusted to deal only with selected items from the different WGs, leaving full WG reporting to a written format.
- It is very important to keep a good working atmosphere. Finding a way for HERCA to be “executive” while maintaining ample time for discussions and reflection is difficult but both the credibility of HERCA and the relevance of HERCA to its members depend on this balance. In that regard, it is important to think about how to optimize the HERCA activities by choosing between using digital, hybrid and in-person meetings.
- There's a need for HERCA to respond more quickly to proposals, analyses and events in order for HERCA to become a major player. The feedback from WG's and Board members of the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges that the ICRP revision process poses need to be taken into account.
- The work of HERCA relies heavily on that of the WGs and TFs. In relation to this objective HERCA should also look into the mandate of the WGs and TFs and how they operate, to see where adjustments could benefit the organisation and achieve a higher efficiency. Such an internal audit would be closely connected to a number of other objectives, e.g. objective 1 and 3.

Strategic objective N°7

In order to better share regulatory practices, HERCA should foster the establishment of regional inspection forums among the HERCA Member States where the participants can express views, share experiences and cooperate regarding different aspects of inspections.

- Inspection is a core business for every RPA and an essential part of regulatory control.
- Considering the number of members, HERCA could play an active role to enhance the efficiency of the inspection activity among its members. A dedicated forum could be created to promote the sharing of practical experience in this field and discuss topical issues related to inspection. HERCA could also promote and facilitate cross-boundary inspection or participation in other members' inspections, since this is a powerful tool for cooperation. This forum and the possibility to cooperate through inspections on concrete aspects, could also support the strategic objective 5. The ways to inspect different activities and facilities and issues related to inspections could perhaps, in the long run, be an area of interest and cooperation with WENRA.

III. General objective 3: Stakeholders

HERCA aims to be a key actor in RP and formulates its objective as:

Enhance or develop interaction channels to European organisations representing end-users and professionals as well as organisations forming and setting the basis for our regulatory systems.

➤ **Strategic objective N°8**

By 2024, HERCA will identify areas where HERCA-WENRA work activities overlap and set up mechanisms for cooperation with WENRA.

- In the past HERCA has put effort into creating opportunities in several common areas with the WENRA structure. This has resulted in a first outstanding common HERCA-WENRA output in the field of emergency preparedness (the HERCA-WENRA approach). HERCA should continue to identify promising areas of interest for both organisations and investigate how such areas could be tackled in order to align possible new common approaches. Waste issues, workers exposures, emergency preparedness and the interface between safety and RP are examples of issues of possible common interest.

➤ **Strategic objective N°9**

Improve HERCA's capacity to better promote HERCA products to end-users (manufacturers, professionals, public) taking care not to interfere with the interactions already established between national authorities and stakeholders.

- With the acceleration of digital exchanges and growing expectations of its stakeholders, HERCA is facing a number of communication challenges. Transparency is a key value to its members and will become even more important in the future.
- The output from HERCA made in terms of best practices in RP has created trust between countries in a good climate. In the coming years, HERCA should reinforce the impact of the expertise and knowledge gained, towards a diversity of stakeholders.
- A first step in reaching this objective would be to analyse present communication channels, e.g. content on website and types of statements and reports, and consider possible adjustments of HERCA's way of communicating with end-users. The analysis should take into account issues like:
 - Considering the limited resources of some members, HERCA could help the members that so wish with adequate stakeholder management, to build up credibility in addition to, and without interfering with, the local ways of working.

- HERCA's main stakeholders, apart from its members, are international organisations and European trade or professional organisations representing end-users, not the public per se.
- Would HERCA benefit from using stakeholder management methods, i.e. to identify specific interested groups of stakeholders, proposing communication tools and topics that are of interest, resulting in a platform of communication as well as training and education for our members?

➤ **Strategic objective N°10**

In order to have an increased impact on the international framework, HERCA should re-inforce its role as strategic partner to ICRP, IAEA and the EC based on HERCA's experience with the practical implementation of the framework.

- Based on the members' competence and experience in how to apply RP in everyday business, HERCA has built up considerable knowledge in RP over the years that correspond to the practical expertise of involved national experts. This experience and practical expertise will be most valuable in HERCA's work to proactively impact future key developments within ICRP, EC, and IAEA. For the coming decade, HERCA aims at increasing its collaboration with these organisations. To reach this objective, HERCA needs to build up its capability to keep up with initiatives and outputs, relevant for HERCA, from these organisations. That is, to be ready to react when proposals related to e.g. regulation are presented, but also to be able to act when the time is right, that is to be proactive.
- HERCA needs therefore to adopt a cultural change by developing the right communication towards the three key stakeholders, both directly and indirectly, and choosing the stakeholder with the most possible impact for the different topics. This also connects to the internal structure of how HERCA operates between Board meetings as well as how HERCA can use Board meetings for more constructive discussion on strategic issues related to the three organisations, see objective 6. This objective also interrelates to the purpose and work of the TF Strategies. Furthermore, it might require adjustments of work methods for other WGs as they would also need to react in a shorter period of time, as well as identify strategic issues in their areas connected to ICRP, IAEA or EC.
- This objective is linked to objective 2, as a review of the Euratom BSS Directive and the international BSS will provide valuable input to HERCA's interactions with ICRP, EC and IAEA.