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EPPR Working Group Report to SAOs, October 2015 in Anchorage

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Progress report

EPPR Working Group Report to SAOs, October 2015 in Anchorage

September, 2015

Introduction

EPPR held its first meeting under the US Chairmanship in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway. 43 participants attended representing all eight AC countries, one Permanent Participant (AIA), two observer states (Singapore and South Korea) and 3 three observer organizations (WWF, CCU and UNECE).

The meeting focused on follow-up activities from the last EPPR meeting in Seattle and the Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit. Project updates and project proposals were discussed. Member States provided country updates on search and rescue (SAR) and other EPPR relevant activities. The relevant sections of the Amaroq (the AC Tracker) were updated after the meeting.

New Projects

International Standards for Petroleum, Offshore-Oil and Maritime Industries: EPPR approved the Norwegian-led project, which includes a workshop in cooperation with International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP). This project is a follow up activity to the TFOPP Framework Plan. Project work has started and a first draft report is expected to be discussed at EPPR II. The US has agreed to co-lead the project.

Radiation: Three projects are expected for EPPR approval, either intersessionally or at EPPR II.

- Possible project to revise a brochure on radioactive sources.
- The US and Iceland will bring forward a proposal to hold an expert level workshop on radiation detection in 2016.
- Norway plans to present a project proposal on nuclear icebreaker traffic and transport of radioactive materials, based on outcomes from a table top exercise in June and a workshop in late 2015.

Summary of progress on EPPR projects

Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities: It was agreed that the project would start with issues related to oil spill response. A scoping workshop will be held October 7-9, 2015 in Anchorage, USA. Representatives from small and remote communities will be invited to attend the workshop.

Development of a Database of Arctic Response Assets: This project, which will create a stand-alone, searchable database of major response assets, is on track. Project partners have been identified and a contractor will be hired to collect data from relevant players. The project timeline has been established and agreed.

Circumpolar Oil Spill Gap Analysis: Funding has been approved by Norway. A scoping workshop will be held in Copenhagen, October 8-9, 2015. Invitations will be sent EPPR HoD to be forwarded to appropriate experts. Primary consultants have been identified to participate in the project and produce the final report.

Safety Systems in the Implementation of Economic and Infrastructural projects: In 2015, plans include opening an Arctic Complex Search and Rescue Center in Murmansk. In 2016-2017, plans include organizing training and exercises on emergency response in the Russian Arctic with international participation/observation. An invitation to AC states, PPs, WGs, and Observers will be extended.

Arctic Rescue: In August 2015, a conference on the subject of safety provisions of Arctic project implementation took place in Salekhard. AC states, PPs, WGs, and Observers were in attendance and presented best practices in risk assessment and safety improvement of potentially hazardous facilities. In 2016-2017, knowledge sharing will continue through conferences and workshops.

EPPR – SAR Mandate: Approach and Way Forward

At EPPR I, a Search and Rescue (SAR) Expert breakout session was held to discuss how EPPR should incorporate SAR into its work. This session focused on follow-up to the SAR Agreement. It was agreed that broader implications for the EPPR mandate vis-a-vis SAR would continue at a later date. The breakout group reported back to EPPR and the working group agreed the following:

- To create a SAR section on the EPPR website that includes reports and lessons learned.
- To use the ACS-EPPR Planning calendar to inform about relevant SAR exercises.
- To formalize the process by which SAR issues will be integrated into the EPPR working mandate. EPPR will identify short, medium, and long term issues for the SAR Agreement follow-up.
- EPPR agreed to forward the following text from the breakout session to SAOs:

Language reflecting EPPR mandate change to include support to SAR agreement and its follow up:

Pursuant to the Arctic Council Iqaluit 2015 declaration, EPPR will support the SAR agreement and its follow up, especially article 9 and 10 of the agreement. EPPR would have no operational mandate, being cognizant that operational SAR responsibilities rests with the States.

It will not be for EPPR to implement all elements of the agreement but EPPR could offer recommendations and information to entities within and outside the Arctic Council, including but not limited to other AC WGs and other fora. The EPPR Chairmanship and Secretariat will reach out to the Arctic Offshore Regulators Forum and Arctic Coast Guard Forum for issues related to SAR and prevention, where appropriate.

EPPR will identify short, medium and long term issues for the SAR agreement follow up. SAR would be an integral part of EPPR-meetings, and be included in reports to SAOs on a regular basis.

Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (MOSPA)

Maintenance of the Operating Guidelines: It was decided that a small group (Canada, US, Finland, Norway and the EPPR Chair) will communicate to finalize a process for making substantive changes to the Operating Guidelines. It was agreed that contact information updates (e.g. names of responsible organizations, telephone numbers) specific to MOSPA appendices I, II, III and the relevant subsection of the Operating Guidelines, be updated immediately on the EPPR website.

Update on Preparations for the US-Led Exercise: The US is hosting a planning workshop September 15-17, 2015 in Washington, D.C. to discuss the second functional exercise of the MOSPA. The workshop will include scoping of potential scenarios for the exercise. Arctic Council States, PPs and Observers will participate in the workshop.

EPPR Strategic Plan

EPPR will update its Strategic Plan to reflect the current work streams and addition of SAR to the EPPR mandate. Norway, Sweden, the Kingdom of Denmark and the US will lead the process, with a view to finalizing the update at EPPR II.

Working Group administration

EPPR is Chaired by Amy Merten (US) and Co-chaired by Ole Kristian Bjerkemo (NO) and Jens Peter Holst Andersen (DK). Secretariat support is provided by Executive Secretary, Patti Bruns at the Arctic Council Secretariat.

The next EPPR Working Group meeting will be in Reykjavik, Iceland, December 1-3, 2015.

Collaboration with other working groups/other organizations

- Following up on the EPPR Unmanned Aircraft Systems workshop held in December, EPPR notes that this is an emerging issue for EPPR and presents a number of potential future projects for EPPR, including collaboration with AMAP.
- EPPR will follow the work in the newly established Task Forces and provide further information to EPPR HoD as it becomes available.
- It has been agreed with PAME that EPPR will be the primary point of contact for oil-spill prevention. This includes reporting on areas of relevance/interest within the Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution.