EPPR Working Group Report to SAOs, March 2017 in Juneau

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Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)

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Introduction
EPPR held its second meeting of 2016 in Copenhagen, Denmark on December 6-8. 65 participants attended representing the Arctic States, one Permanent Participant (AIA), three observer states (Italy, Singapore and South Korea), two observer organizations (UArctic and WWF), 2 Working Groups (AMAP and PAME), and 4 invited guests (IALA, Bonn Agreement, International Ice Charting Working Group, and Harvard National Preparedness Initiative). The SAO Chair and incoming SAO Chair from Finland also attended the meeting. The meeting was opened by the SAO from the Kingdom of Denmark.

The meeting focused on follow-up activities from the last EPPR meeting in Montreal, agreeing on Ministerial deliverables, and work planning for 2017-2019. EPPR Heads of Delegation met in advance of the plenary session. It was decided that the Kingdom of Denmark will take over the EPPR Chairmanship after the Fairbanks Ministerial in May 2016. The relevant sections of the Amarok (the AC Tracker) were updated after the meeting.

Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (MOSPA Agreement)
On December 6, EPPR decided to formally establish the MER Expert Group, focusing the mandate of the group to MOSPA related activities, supporting obligations stated under the MOSPA Agreement including maintenance of the Operating Guidelines, exercise design, development and follow-up of an After Action Report (AAR), and developing a MER EG page on the EPPR website. The scope of work for the MER EG may be expanded on a needs basis, decided by EPPR. The AAR from the second MOSPA exercise held in June 2016 will be put forward as an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

SAR Agreement
The EPPR SAR Expert Group (SAR EG) met on December 6 and finalized the mandate document to guide future work to support the Arctic SAR Agreement. The specific goal of the expert group is to identify key lessons of Arctic incidents and exercises and communicate/disseminate necessary mitigation or remedial actions to the ministerial level, Member States and other international bodies. The SAR EG supports existing operational fora dealing with Arctic SAR issues by leveraging high level engagement from government and scientific institutions.

Follow-up on the Framework Plan on Oil Pollution Prevention (FP-OPP)
As agreed by SAOs (October 2015), EPPR has the lead on prevention, in cooperation with PAME. Norway and Canada have drafted a report and implementation matrix to identify follow-up activities that support objectives in the Framework Plan. Follow-up activities are already taking place and the report has been circulated to AC working groups and relevant stakeholders to capture details of this work. This information can also be used to identify gaps in follow-up and encourage development of initiatives in these areas. The report/matrix, and a fact sheet, will be put forward as an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

Cross-Cutting activities
- EPPR welcomed the participation of AMAP and PAME representatives at its meeting in Copenhagen, finding it useful for sharing information and identify areas where closer coordination would be mutually beneficial.
- EPPR participated in meetings of the TFAMC, CAFF, and PAME and agreed that representation at future meetings would be beneficial.
HAVBASE was presented by the Norwegian Coastal Administration at the EPPR meeting in Copenhagen. This project, has relevance work taking place in EPPR, PAME and CAFF.

The EPPR Oil Spill Research and Technology Workshop will be held in Reston, Virginia, on April 26, 2017, as part of the AMAP-led International Conference on Arctic Science: Bringing Knowledge to Action.

EPPR participated in the WG Chairs/Executive Secretaries meeting on December 10, in an effort to harmonize 2017-2019 work plans.

Current projects

ARCSAFE: The goal of this project is to promote cross-border prevention, preparedness and handling of maritime incidents or accidents which may involve a potential release of radioactive substances. EPPR agreed to have a technical workshop on ARCSAFE at EPPR I, June 27, 2017 with a focus on response to an accident involving a radiological release on a ship. Broad participation by members of the Arctic Council is encouraged.

Field Guide for Oil Spill Response in Arctic Waters: EPPR is in the final stages of reviewing the updated version of the guide. The updated Field Guide will include the addition of new sections on “Health and Human Safety in the Arctic”, “Wildlife Response in the Arctic”, and “Logistics and Response Strategies in the Arctic”. The project is on track and will be submitted as an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

International Standards for Petroleum, Offshore-Oil and Maritime Industries: The aim of the project is to give a brief introduction to how standards for the offshore and maritime petroleum industry are developed, maintained and followed up. The full and summary report, “Standardization as a tool for prevention of oil spills in the Arctic” has been submitted to SAOs for approval and will be submitted as an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial Meeting. This project has linkages to implementation of the Framework Plan on Oil Pollution Prevention.

Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities: The project team (Norway, U.S., Canada and AIA) have circulated a self-assessment survey to 350 communities. Synthesis of the data will result in a report and interactive map, which will be submitted as an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial Meeting. The outcomes from the project will be: (1) greater awareness of risk and preparedness at a local level, and access to best practices, (2) the ability for national governments to address misperception or lack of awareness, and (3) the identification of gaps in preparedness relative to risk.

Development of a Database of Arctic Response Assets: This project will create a stand-alone, searchable database of major response assets in the Arctic. The database will be linked into Arctic ERMA, displaying both government and industry owned equipment. The database and user manual have been submitted to SAOs for approval and will be an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

Conditions on Oil Spill Circumpolar Response Viability Analysis: The goal of the project is to estimate how often different types of response systems can be effectively deployed in different areas of the Arctic based on historical metocean conditions. The report has been finalized and submitted to SAOs for approval and will be an EPPR deliverable for the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

Safety Systems in the Implementation of Economic and Infrastructural projects: The goal of the project is the improvement of industrial and environmental safety related to economic and infrastructure projects, primarily the development of hydrocarbons on the Arctic continental shelf and hydrocarbons transportation. In support of these projects, SAR and Oil Spill Response exercises are undertaken annually.
Arctic Rescue: The focus of this Russian-led project is to elaborate best practices, recommendations and key elements of the emergency risk assessment system and the system for improving safety of potentially hazardous facilities.

Next meeting
The next EPPR meeting (EPPR I) will be held in Vologda, Russia, June 27-29, 2017.