

MANDATE

A goal of the Arctic Council's Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (EPPR) Working Group is to contribute to the protection of the Arctic environment from the threat or impact that may result from an accidental release of pollutants or radionuclides. In addition, the Working Group considers questions related to the consequences of natural disasters. EPPR accomplishes many of its objectives through the implementation of the *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (MOSPA Agreement)* and *Appendix IV: Operational Guidelines* that address procedures for notification and request for assistance, command and control in response operations, joint training and exercises, administrative issues and other recommended measures to facilitate an effective cooperative oil pollution incident response. The objective of the *MOSPA Agreement* is to strengthen cooperation, coordination, and mutual assistance among the Parties on oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic in order to protect the marine environment from pollution by oil.

The Marine Environmental Response Experts Group (MER Experts Group) is a group working under the direction of the EPPR. The goal of the Experts Group is to promote the implementation of EPPR initiatives specific to the *MOSPA Agreement*, as well as future initiatives as determined by consensus of the EPPR membership. The EPPR adopted the creation of the MER Experts Group on December 8, 2016, at EPPR II held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Purpose/Role: The MER Experts Group's purpose is to focus specifically on promoting the implementation of the *MOSPA Agreement* and its *Operational Guidelines* in order to ensure accuracy and effectiveness by:

- Assessing outcomes from MOSPA exercises to develop corrective actions and recommendations to promote continuous improvement.
- Ensuring corrective actions and recommendations are consensus approved and appropriately reflected in the *MOSPA Agreement* and its *Operational Guidelines*.
- Making recommendations for future exercises, workshops, and training focus areas based upon the Experts Group's assessment of lessons learned and best practices from previous events.
- Participating in various activities and projects specific to EPPR's MER roles and responsibilities, coordinating with academia specific to Arctic MER, and creating efficiencies / alignment with other fora and working groups as related to Arctic MER initiatives.
- Ensure appropriate coordination and communication with other relevant fora [working with the *MOSPA Agreement* and its *Operational Guidelines*].

Administration:

- MER EG meetings will be scheduled as appropriate by the MER Experts Group.
- Projects [and activities] to be undertaken by the MER Experts Group will be presented to and voted on by EPPR member states and Permanent Participants during regularly scheduled EPPR meetings.
- Updates on projects undertaken by the MER Experts Group will be presented at EPPR meetings by the MER Experts Group.
- The MER Experts Group reports to the EPPR Chair.



EMERGENCY PREVENTION,
PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Arctic Council
Marine Environmental Response
Experts Group



- EPPR Member States, Permanent Participants, and Observers should endeavour to participate in MER Experts Group activities as per the Arctic Council Rules of Procedures.
- The MER Experts Group will be chaired (Chair) on two-year terms by a representative from one of the EPPR Members States, which may be the EPPR Member State holding the current Arctic Chairmanship or as recommended by the Experts Group through consensus approval of the EPPR. A Co-Chair position may be a representative from one of the EPPR Members States not holding the position of MER Experts Group Chair.
- The Chair and Co-chair responsibilities include the management and facilitation of MER Experts Group meetings (both in-person and teleconferences) and projects. Even though project leads may differ from the MER Experts Group Chair, the MER Experts Group Chair should report project status to EPPR when appropriate. The Chair should inform the EPPR Executive Secretariat of the administration, agenda, and outcomes of MER Experts Group activities as appropriate.

Amendment / Termination: This MER Experts Group Mandate is effective from the date of signature and may be terminated by consensus of the EPPR Heads of Delegation. This Mandate may be amended biennially by either consensus approval of the EPPR.

Jens Peter Holst-Andersen

June 29, 2017

Signed (Date)

Chair, EPPR

Appendix: 2017-2018 MER Experts Group Work Plan

MER Experts Group projects will focus on the *MOSPA Agreement* and its *Operational Guidelines*. The MER Experts Group should endeavor to exercise and update the *MOSPA Agreement* and its *Operational Guidelines* in order to strengthen cooperation, coordination and mutual assistance protocols regarding oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic. Other focal points for the Experts Group may include, Notifications (including the annual Connectivity Test); Monitoring Request for Assistance; Cross-border Resource and Cost Reimbursement management; Joint exercise planning; Training; and Exchange of Information (including Common Operating Picture development, lessons learned and Data Sharing). Projects, in addition to MOSPA-specific initiatives, may be adopted by the MER Experts Group under the direction of the EPPR.

Below is an overview of 2017-2018 MER Experts Group work plan activities. A lead should be assigned to each activity and develop / manage specific planning details for each activity. Project completion dates are estimates and can be adjusted as needed by the MER Experts Group. This work plan may be altered without updating the MER Experts Group (EG) Mandate in order to facilitate completion of applicable projects and timelines.

2017 MER Experts Group Work Plan Activities		
Activity	Date	Lead
2017 Connectivity Test -- COMPLETED	Feb 2017	EG Chair
MER Experts Group Teleconference -- COMPLETED	Mar 30, 2017	EG Chair
Draft EPPR Exercise/ Training / Lessons-Learned Portal	June 2017	Portal Lead (U.S. w/ EPPR Sec)
MER Experts Group Meeting (EPPR I), 2017 EPPR MOSPA Exercise Workshop	June 2017	Finland / EG Chair
Finalize 2017 EPPR MOSPA Exercise Workshop AAR	Aug 2017	Finland / EG Chair
MER Experts Group Teleconference	Nov 2017	EG Chair
MER Experts Group Meeting (EPPR II), Finalize 2018 EPPR MOSPA Exercise Objectives, Scenario, Planning.	Dec 2017	Finland / EG Chair
2018 MER Experts Group Work Plan Activities		
Activity	Date	Lead
2018 Connectivity Test	Jan 2018	EG Chair
2018 EPPR MOSPA Exercise Pre-planning Teleconference	Feb 2018	EG Chair
MER Experts Group Meeting (EPPR I), 2018 EPPR MOSPA Exercise	TBD 2018	Finland / EG Chair
Finalize 2018 EPPR MOSPA Exercise Workshop AAR	Aug 2018	ALL
MER Experts Group Teleconference	Nov 2018	EG Chair
MER Experts Group Meeting (EPPR II), 2018 EPPR MOSPA Exercise – Post Exercise Meeting	Dec 2018	EG Chair