

## EPPR Working Group Report to SAO CA-04, March 2015 in Whitehorse

### Summary of Main Activities

February, 2015

### Introduction and New Projects

Since the last SAO meeting in October 2014, the Emergency Prevention Preparedness and Response working group met in Seattle, USA, December 2-4, 2014. Project leads have continued to implement projects and progress has been made in priority areas. The Working Group welcomed the U.S. Chairmanship Priorities and has reflected relevant priority areas in the draft 2015-2017 Work Plan.

Three projects were approved at the meeting of the EPPR WG in Seattle.

Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities: EPPR agreed on the development of a scoping workshop for the project "*Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities*" which will be led by the U.S., Norway, Canada, ICC and AIA. Funding is pending with national authorities. The agenda and other relevant documents will be circulated to EPPR for comment and information.

Development of a Database of Arctic Spill Response Assets: EPPR approved the project "*Development of a Database of Arctic Response Assets*" which will be led by the U.S. Initial funding for the project has been allocated by the U.S. A scoping meeting to develop the project scope and schedule will be held in the coming months. Norway noted interest in working together with the U.S. on this project.

Circumpolar Oil Spill Response Gap Analysis: The Gap analysis will provide an evaluation of mechanical and alternative oil spill response based on available metocean data throughout the Arctic. EPPR accepted the proposal put forward by Norway, the Kingdom of Denmark and the U.S. to hold a scoping workshop before the next EPPR working group meeting. Canada will contribute to the planning of the workshop. The EPPR WG will be updated on the agenda/invitations for the workshop.

### Proposed Inclusion of Search and Rescue in EPPR Mandate

At the Executive SAO meeting in Yellowknife, March 2014, Denmark presented a discussion document regarding the coordination and implementation of the Search and Rescue Agreement and the Marine Oil Agreement. EPPR discussed this at their June meeting and sent a letter to the SAO Chair seeking further guidance from SAOs.

Following a decision by the WG in December in Seattle, and follow-up consultations at the national level, EPPR is seeking agreement from SAOs to amend the EPPR mandate to explicitly include search and rescue activities, including following-up on relevant aspects of the SAR Agreement.

Should approval be given by SAOs, and bearing in mind that the mandate of EPPR is refined biennially through Declarations, we request SAOs to instruct EPPR on next steps needed to ensure mention of the addition of SAR to the EPPR mandate in the Iqaluit Declaration (2015) and/or the SAO Report to Ministers.

### Summary of progress on EPPR projects

EPPR can provide the following update on current projects:

- EPPR welcomed the proposed planning concept for the second functional exercise of the Operational Guidelines for the *Agreement on cooperation on marine oil pollution, preparedness and response in the Arctic* under the U.S. Chairmanship. Objectives for the exercise will link to use of several EPPR projects including the proposed Arctic response equipment database and the Arctic Environmental Risk Assessment Model. The U.S. will send out letters of invitation to EPPR requesting participation in the planning process.

- Safety Systems in the Implementation of Economic and Infrastructural projects - Russia has opened the first Arctic Complex Search and Rescue Center in Naryan-Mar. The area off the oil platform Prirazlomnaya, Varandrey region, played host to a SAR and Oil Spill Response exercise on August 5-7, 2014.
- Arctic Rescue – Russia presented the recommendations from the conference in Naryan Mar, August 20-23, 2013. EPPR attended this year's conference which was held September 23-25, 2014 in Arkhangelsk, Russia.
- Occupational Safety and Health in Arctic Oil Spill Response Workers –Data synthesis will result in an EPPR report and a supplement to the AC's Field Guide for Oil Spill Response. The project supports work under the Marine Oil Agreement.

## Deliverables for the Ministerial

Four of EPPR's current projects will be producing deliverables for the Ministerial meeting in April 2015:

**IMO/EPPR Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow Conditions** – The final draft of the Guide is under consideration at the IMO. An Arctic version of the guide has been finalized and will be put forward for approval by SAOs in Whitehorse as a deliverable to the Ministerial meeting.

The radiation emergency exercise, **Arctic 2014** was held June 23-24, 2014 in Murmansk, Russia. The exercise involved a simulated accident at a nuclear icebreaker. A full report, including lessons learned, will be put forward for approval by SAOs as a deliverable to the Ministerial meeting.

**Arctic ERMA (Environmental Response Management Application)** - Arctic ERMA is a GIS mapping platform designed to assist in oil spill response by providing a common operating picture of all response assets in theatre and threatened environmental resources. The final report on Phase I and Phase II will be submitted to SAOs for approval at the March 2015 SAO Meeting as a deliverable to the Ministerial.

**Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (MOA)** - The first exercise under the auspices of the MOA was hosted by Canada in May 2014. All AC states participated in the exercise. EPPR welcomed the success of this first validation of the Agreement. Phases 1, 2 and 3, which include analysis of results and finalization of the exercise report, identification of proposed amendments to the Operational Guidelines and Appendices to the Agreement, and follow-up actions were approved by EPPR. A report on the exercise will be put forward for approval by SAOs as a deliverable to the Ministerial meeting.

## Working Group administration and next meeting(s)

EPPR is Chaired by Ole Kristian Bjerkemo (NO) and Co-chaired by Ann Heinrich (U.S.). Secretariat support is provided by Norway and by the Working Group Coordinator at the Arctic Council Secretariat.

A new Chair for EPPR was elected, as were two Vice-Chairs. Dr. Amy Merten (U.S.) will assume the position of Chair on May 1, 2015. She will be supported by Mr. Ole-Kristian Bjerkemo (NO) and Mr. Jens-Peter Holst-Andersen (DK) as Vice-Chairs. Secretariat support will be provided by the Working Group Coordinator at the Arctic Council Secretariat.

The next EPPR Working Group meeting will be in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway, May 26-28, 2015.

## Collaboration with other working groups/other organizations

The Chair of SDWG, and representatives from PAME participated in the WG meeting via teleconference, providing valuable updates on cross cutting activities relevant to EPPR. National delegations and PPs agreed to contribute, whenever possible, with experts and information to appropriately reflect EPPR in the work of the Arctic Marine Strategy (PAME) and the important work of SDWG on traditional knowledge. The EPPR Chair has attended all of the Task Force on Oil Pollution and Prevention meeting and regularly updates the WG.

The International Association of Oil and Gas Producers attended as invited experts, highlight areas of common interest. EPPR welcomed a presentation on Arctic SDI, and connections to on-going work within EPPR, including Arctic ERMA.