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## EPPR Working Group Report to SAOs, October 2017 in Oulu

### Introduction

EPPR held its first meeting of 2017 in Vologda, Russian Federation on June 27-29. 38 participants attended representing the Arctic States, one Permanent Participant (AIA), and two observer states (Italy and South Korea). The meeting focused on follow-up activities from the last EPPR meeting in Copenhagen, reviewing the approved work plan, and planning of activities according to the approved 2017-2019 workplan. EPPR Heads of Delegation met in advance of the plenary session. 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 June 27, 2017, the second meeting of the MER EG took place. The purpose of the meeting was to agree on a mandate (charter and work plan) and next steps. EPPR approved the MER EG mandate. EPPR decided to support participation of the working group in the joint PAME/EPPR project titled the Compendium of Arctic Shipping Accidents. The U.S. has prepared and submitted a project proposal to EPPR for approval intersessionally.

The first Meeting of the Parties to the MOSPA was held in Oslo in March 2017. During the meeting, the Parties expressed strong commitment to the Agreement and operational cooperation on marine oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic. The procedure for updating the Appendices to the Agreement, including Appendix IV: Operational Guidelines, and the procedure for approving such updates, were discussed in detail. The Parties agreed that it is necessary to clarify these procedures (specifically paragraph 10 Administrative Procedures) however they were not able to adopt new text and agreed that another Meeting of the Parties, to create and adopt a separate administrative appendix to the Agreement, is a viable way forward. This meeting will take place ahead of the EPPR meeting in December 2017.

### SAR Agreement

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, the SAR EG met in Vologda to discuss and approve the SAR EG Mandate, share information through SAR country updates and discuss next steps. EPPR approved the SAR EG Mandate. EPPR welcomed the incoming Finnish Chair of the SAR EG and welcomed that Norway stay on as Co-Chair. It was agreed that the SAR Expert Group will develop a project proposal for a SAR Asset Database for EPPR to consider. The project will need to be led by an Arctic state or Permanent Participant.

### ARCSAFE project and the ARCSAFE Technical Workshop

ARCSAFE is a radiological project promoting cross-border prevention, preparedness and handling of maritime incidents or accidents which may involve a potential release of radioactive substances. Beneficiaries of project work include Arctic states' national eppr-agencies. On June 27, 2017, an ARCSAFE Technical Workshop aimed at a broader EPPR audience discussed various aspects of the projects. Initial results of the workshop include, identification of differences in the national organization of eppr towards maritime radiological events, a need for more detailed technical information and hazard assessments, development of detailed technical guidance for proper emergency preparedness for transport and deployment of floating nuclear power plants in the Arctic, the need for more knowledge and trust-building between emergency workers and radiological experts, and a need for continued cooperation and joint exercises. A full workshop report will be provided to EPPR intersessionally.

## Cross-Cutting activities

- EPPR participated in meetings of the TFAMC and PAME, and has agreed that representation at future meetings would be beneficial. EPPR will also participate in upcoming meeting of the TFICA.
- EPPR decided to support participation of the working group in the joint PAME/EPPR project titled the Compendium of Arctic Shipping Accidents.
- EPPR and PAME continue to work together on follow-up to the Framework Plan on Oil Pollution Prevention. Projects developed in support of addressing gaps will be approved by EPPR, or other WGs, as appropriate. The status report, final project reports and other materials will be approved by EPPR and be put forward for SAO and Ministerial approval in 2019. Within EPPR, reporting of activities that follow-up the objectives of the FP-OPP in the 2017-2019 period will be co-led by the EPPR Chair/Secretariat, Norway and the U.S.

## Current projects

**Field Guide for Oil Spill Response in Arctic Waters:** The United States agreed to submit a project proposal to develop education tools to facilitate the use of the Field Guide in small communities, for intersessional approval. There are strong links to the EPPR Small Communities project that will be taken into consideration.

**Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities:** Three deliverables were approved by Ministers in May 2017, an interactive map displaying the data from the survey tool, a database of survey responses, and a resource guide in the form of a short brochure to share with small communities. The second phase of the project was approved. A series of short videos to communicate the results of Phase I is under production.

**Development of a Database of Arctic Response Assets:** This project will create a stand-alone, searchable database of major response assets in the Arctic. EPPR discussed next steps and agreed: to assess the database for use in country contingency planning and emergency response purposes, to use the database during future MOSPA exercises to test viability in requests for assistance, that the MER EG and SAR EG work together to explore options towards updating the database, including the possibility of migrating it to a live agreed upon platform.

**Conditions on Oil Spill Circumpolar Response Viability Analysis:** The COSRVA was approved by Ministers in Fairbanks and has the goal of providing more science-based decision-making in Arctic oil spill response contingency planning. An additional benefit of the study is the identification of components or methods used in response countermeasures that could be optimized through additional research and development. A follow-up workshop on risk assessment is being held in Ålesund at the end of October to explore next steps.

**Safety Systems in the Implementation of Economic and Infrastructural projects:** The goal of this ongoing 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 on-going 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 II) will be held in Malmo, Sweden, December 5-7, 2017.