

EPPR Report to the SAO meeting in Oulu 15-16 May 2002/ preparations for the 3rd Ministerial Meeting

1. Follow-up since Barrow Ministerial Meeting

Since the Ministerial meeting in Barrow (October 2000) the EPPR working group has had two annual meetings: one in Kiruna, Sweden, on 20-22 February 2001 and one in Cordova, Alaska, USA, on 15-16 April 2002.

In accordance with the tasks given in the Barrow declaration EPPR can report on the finalization of the Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil spills in the Arctic. The project has produced a series of GIS-based circumpolar maps showing the areas of highest risk of an oil spill and those areas with sensitive natural resource or subsistence communities. The idea has been to highlight a limited number of areas where sensitive Arctic resources overlap with potential oil spill areas, and in this way facilitate the prioritizing of mitigation actions. The Circumpolar Map is accessible to the public at the web address <http://www.akvaplan.niva.no/eppr>, as well as through the EPPR website <http://eppr.arctic-council.org>. The agency Akvaplan-niva, Tromsø, Norway, that has implemented the whole work has kindly offered to host the final product. A proposal on how the update and maintenance of the Circumpolar Map should best be handled, and on how the cooperation with other Arctic Council working groups on the issue should be conducted will be prepared by Norway. Decision on these aspects will be taken through correspondence. The correspondence procedure will be finalized in the beginning of September, so that these aspects can be reflected in the report to the Ministers. Further development of the Circumpolar Map is included in the work plan for 2002-2004 and will be considered at the next EPPR meeting.

EPPR has further continued with activities initiated under EPPR's Strategic Plan. Under the lead of the US and Russia, EPPR has conducted a pilot project on source control management at the Apatity-vodokanal. The aim of the pilot project has been to develop and test a methodology for reducing the potential for emergencies at facilities. At its meeting in Cordova EPPR endorsed in principal the final report of the Emergency prevention/ Source control pilot project in Apatity-vodokanal and the first version of the developed methodology. The meeting further encouraged US/Russia to continue with the project in another facility as planned, and included these plans in its work plan for 2002-2004. Full endorsement to the final report and the methodology, as well as to the plan on the continuation of the project will be given through correspondence. The report will then be forwarded to the SAOs and the Ministers for approval in Inari.

The project on developing an Arctic Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technology (SCAT) manual is continuing bilaterally between US and Canada, with other countries giving possible input through correspondence. An expert meeting will be held in June 2002. The final product, the Arctic SCAT manual is expected to be available nine months after the expert meeting, which means that it will not be presented for the Ministers in Inari.

A table top emergency exercise between Russia and USA will be conducted at the Bilibino nuclear power plant (Chukotka, Russia) in the summer 2002. This exercise is an opportunity for EPPR parties to meet any national goals in the area of international co-operation for response to a nuclear emergency with potentially widespread consequences. It will be possible for the exercise designers to co-ordinate with the International Atomic Energy Agency so that EPPR countries receive

notification of the simulated accident. Participants can then exercise their national procedures to the extent they deem appropriate.

Finland has on part of EPPR conducted a survey on past major accidents in the Arctic. Due to very little response the data gathered provide limited information on the issue and no conclusions can be drawn from it. A more extensive inventory of natural disasters in the Arctic is included in the EPPR work plan for 2002-2004. Possibly this inventory will be done in close cooperation with the Northern Forum.

Election of chair and vice-chair: The 2002 EPPR meeting in Cordova elected Ms. Laura Johnston from Canada as chair and Mr. Kjell Kolstad from Norway as vice-chair for the period 2002-2004. Canada will provide EPPR with the secretariat support during this period. The SAOs are kindly requested to endorse these elections.

During the period 2000-2002 EPPR has finalized its operating guidelines, which were approved by the SAOs in Rovaniemi (June 2001). EPPR has also published a brochure telling about its activities.

At the last two meetings extensive discussion on the expansion of the mandate of EPPR and on possible new projects has taken place. The outcome of these discussions can be read in chapter 3 and chapter 2 respectively.

Administrative and financial issues: The secretariat support for EPPR has during the period 2000-2002 been taken care of by Finland. During the years 2001 and 2002 Finland has also hosted the EPPR website. The costs for the secretariat support and the hosting of the web site are estimated to 16.800 € (~\$15.000) per year.

The costs for the source control management project are estimated to \$75.000 (~85.000 €) over the past two years.

2. Tentative work plan 2002-2004

EPPR's suggestion is that chapter 2.3. of the Strategic Plan of Action for the Arctic Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group, dated 18 August 1998 (adopted in Iqaluit), will be updated according to the below draft (the final, elaborated text will be ready in time for the Ministerial meeting.) This would serve as the work plan for 2002-2004.

2.3 Activities and projects

2.3.1 Project support elements - no changes to the existing text

2.3.2 Existing projects

- a) Shoreline cleanup assessment technology
- b) Update of Arctic offshore oil and gas guidelines, in co-operation with PAME
- c) Arctic Waters Oil Transfer Guidelines, in co-operation with PAME

2.3.3 Ongoing activities

in addition to the existing text:

- information on bilateral and multilateral agreements and plans
- the maintenance and updating of the EPPR web site, including the Arctic Guide
- the maintenance and updating of the Circumpolar Map of resources at risk from oils spills in the Arctic

2.3.4 Possible future activities

- a) Emergency prevention and source control management, phase II, in a facility that presents radiation hazards
- b) Further development of the Circumpolar Map (most possibly in co-operation with the other working groups)
- c) Development of the EPPR web site further to include information on spill response equipment stockpiles
- d) Inventory of past natural disasters in the Arctic
- e) Research and development on oil spill response in ice
- f) Co-operation with the Northern Forum (oil spill response and natural disasters, e.g. flooding)
- g) Radiological issues: Developing a best practices emergency program for prevention, preparedness and response for a nuclear/radiological emergency
- h) Regional co-operation on the effects of transboundary accidents
- i) Disposal of oily waste from response actions and spills
- j) Co-operation with ACAP on the Cleaner production project in Norilsk
- k) Co-operation with AMAP on the International conference on oil and gas activities

3. Request for a new mandate

The present mandate of EPPR is to deal with prevention, preparedness and response to environmental emergencies in the Arctic that are a result of human activities. By tradition the projects carried out within EPPR have focused mainly on oil pollution issues.

The role and mandate of EPPR have been discussed among SAOs during the review process of the Arctic Council. It has been proposed that EPPR in the future should give more emphasis to prevention, preparedness and response to radiological and other hazardous materials, which fits within the present mandate of EPPR. It has further been proposed that the mandate of EPPR should be expanded to include also prevention, preparedness and response to natural disaster. The EPPR meeting in Cordova discussed these proposals and endorsed them in principal. Some hesitation occurred, *inter alia* as it is unclear how this will affect the structure and organizing of the work of the working group.

Several actors operate within the same fields as EPPR and therefore the need for co-ordination and co-operation with sub-regional bodies, such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Northern Forum, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Baltic Sea States, should be emphasized.

4. Developments which seem to call for Ministers' attention

The ministers' should decide upon the expansion of the EPPR mandate (see above, chapter 3). Further the ministers' attention will be drawn to the finalization of the Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic and to the finalization of the first phase of the Emergency prevention/source control project conducted at the Apatity-vodokanal (see above, chapter 1). The aim is to distribute coloured promotional handouts about the Circumpolar Map to the Ministers.

5. Elements to be included into the SAO report to the Ministers in Inari

The aim is to include this report (chapters 1-3), more or less, in the SAO report to the Ministers, unless different instructions are given by the SAOs or Arctic Council Secretariat.

6. Elements to be included in the Inari declaration

Draft suggestions for the declaration text on EPPR, further elaboration is still needed within the working group before final submission:

- Note with appreciation the work done by EPPR on finalizing the Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oils Spills in the Arctic, and on finalizing the pilot project on Source Control Management at the Apatit vodokanal.
- Endorse EPPR's new work programme as outlined in the SAO report to the Ministers
- Encourage EPPR to initiate new projects and activities in accordance with the new mandate of the working group

7. Actions by the SAOs in Oulu:

Based on this report the SAOs are kindly asked to:

- **endorse** the election of Ms. Laura Johnston from Canada as Chair and Mr. Kjell Kolstad from Norway as Vice-chair for the period 2002-2004, and **take note** of that Canada is providing for the secretariat support during this period.
- **welcome** the finalization of the Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic, and **take note** of the state of the ongoing project on Source Control Management at the Apatity-vodokanal.