

EPPR Progress report to Senior Arctic Officials

For the SAO meeting number CA02 in *Yellowknife, March 26-27, 2014*

1. Introduction. Response to Arctic Council priorities and potential new projects under consideration.

During the time since the last SAO meeting, EPPR has arranged its EPPR II 2013 meeting and focused heavily on one possible project and on one approved project.

One is a project proposal stemming from the RP3 report (Recommended Practices Prevention Pollution Project). One of the recommendations from the RP3 summary report was to conduct a Circumpolar Marine Environment Risk Assessment (CMERA). As a follow up activity EPPR conducted a workshop in Tromsø, Norway, in November 2013. The workshop had broad participation from Arctic Council states, observers, other working groups, PPs and NGO's.

In addition to improved charting, there was near-universal agreement that better knowledge-sharing among the Arctic states is critical. Better knowledge-sharing can help technology to advance even more rapidly, as well as avoiding unnecessary duplication of research, thus perhaps getting more from each dollar devoted to emergency-preparedness research. It was pointed out that a CMERA must give an overall picture of the oil spill risk in the Arctic. From the workshop report two different ways of follow up are proposed: a Circumpolar Marine Environmental Risk Assessment and/or a Circumpolar Response Gap Analysis. The next steps from the workshop are still under consideration in EPPR and will be discussed at the next meeting.

The second focus area was EPPR's new project to develop a guide for combating oil pollution under snow-and-ice conditions. This project originated from a request from the International Maritime Organization to EPPR. The Table of Contents is finalized and EPPR has, based on the agreed Table of Contents, prepared a document for the IMO OPRC HNS Technical group meeting in the end of January 2014 for information and guidance. An external consultant has been selected and an agreement was recently signed with the consultant. A first draft guide will be reviewed in the EPPR I 2014 meeting.

The EPPR WG has considered the EPPR Operating Guidelines in relation to the updated AC Rules of Procedures and the Observer Handbook. The revised Operating Guidelines is a separate document for the SAO meeting.

The procedure for updating the Arctic Marine Oil Pollution preparedness and Response Agreement – Operational Guidelines was approved by the SAOs in the fall 2013. The Operational Guidelines must be periodically reviewed and updated as needed; so the Guidelines will be a perpetual item on EPPR meeting agendas. The typical cycle for updating the Operational Guidelines is to conduct an exercise first to identify possible text that needs to be updated. Canada will host an exercise on the Oil spill Agreement in summer 2014. The initial planning indicates that the exercise will be a tabletop exercise. Following the procedure, the Guidelines will be reviewed and updated if necessary at the EPPR I 2015 meeting.

2. Summary of progress on EPPR projects

Project: Arctic Rescue

Russia is the lead of this project. The aim of this project is to gather new ideas and capture best practices in the sphere of reducing the consequences of emergencies. In August 2013 Russia arranged a conference in Naryan-Mar City, Russia with 95 participants from government officials, oil industry and Russian Academy of Sciences. The conference participants formulated and adopted recommendations which summarize the findings and proposals from the conference. The 2014 conference will be held August 19- 21 2014 in Arkhangelsk, Russia.

Project: Development of safety Systems Implantation of Economic and Infrastructure projects

As part of the 2013 conference in Naryan-Mar the opening ceremony for the Arctic Complex Search and Rescue Center of the Emercom of Russia was held. It is the first center in the North-West Federal district. The main objectives of the Centers are to accumulate the monitoring results and manage rapid reaction forces in the strategically important spheres, which will make it possible to ensure the implementation of efficient emergency response activities.

A group of conference participants visited the “Prirazlomnaya” Offshore Ice-resistant Oil-Producing Platform, the latest infrastructural project of “Gazprom”. The platform is located on the shelf of the Pechora Sea.

There will be a written report from the Development of Safety Systems - Project for the next EPPR meeting. The report will be uploaded on EPPR’s website

There will be a new SAR exercise in the Varanday region 5-7 August 2014. The exercise will include offshore and onshore SAR and oil spill response.

Project: Arctic Environmental Hazards and National Mitigation programs

The idea is to assemble information on national programs to respond to risks in the Arctic. The document was reviewed at the EPPR I meeting in June 2013. The document will be further improved and will be finalized in the EPPR I meeting in June 2014.

Project: Arctic Region Resources and Logistics Guide

The aim of the project is a guide and GIS tool for oil spill response resources and logistics. US is the lead and will prepare a paper for the EPPR I 2014 meeting where progress and results of the project will be highlighted.

Project: Occupational safety and health in Arctic oil spill response workers

The output from this project will be a supplement to the Arctic Council “Field Guide for Oil Spill response in the Arctic Waters”. The project is led by the US and is expected to be finalized in 2014.

Project: IMO manual on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow Conditions

EPPR is developing a manual on oil spill response in ice and snow conditions. This manual will also be a contribution to the IMO. The project is co-lead by Canada and Norway and is on-track for finalizing in 2015 pending decision in IMO PPR meeting.

Project: Radiation Emergency Training and Exercise

Exercise “Arctic 2014” will be conducted June 23-24 in the Murmansk region, Russia. EPPR members and representatives from other working groups have been invited. The scenario is a conventional radiation emergency that occurs on a nuclear icebreaker at the dock in Murmansk. The exercise will include response to a radiological release impacting the region. Specific goals are to

- (1) check level of preparedness,
- (2) develop recommendations for enhancing capabilities,
- (3) verify the effectiveness of detailed procedures,
- (4) execute recommendations for public protection and communication,
- (5) examine what regulations and chosen intervention levels does to response time.

3. Deliverables for the next Ministerial

It is possible that an Arctic Council version of the IMO Guide on Oil Spill response in Ice and Snow Conditions might be finalized in time for the 2015 Ministerial.

The next steps for the Circumpolar Marine Environmental Risk Assessment project are pending on decisions in the EPPR I meeting in June 2014.

4. Working Group administration and next meeting(s)

Mr. Ole Kristian Bjerkemo is EPPR Chair and Ms Ann Heinrich is vice Chair of the group. Ms. Synnøve Lunde is Executive Secretary for EPPR. In the future The Arctic Council's Working Group Coordinator will provide administrative secretariat support to EPPR.

The next EPPR meeting (EPPR I, 2014) is scheduled in St. John's, Newfoundland the week of June 16, 2014 probably back to back with the TFOPP meeting. There is usually an EPPR II meeting in October/November but time and venue is not set yet.

5. Collaboration with other working groups / other organizations

- EPPR is engaged in the AACA-C, the cross-cutting project on adaption to climate change in the Arctic and has attended the workshop for the Barents Region in Tromsø and the AACA-C Integration Team workshop in Washington DC 7-8 January 2014. EPPR Executive Secretary is in the Advisory board for the Integration Team.
- EPPR attended the SDWC workshop in Reykjavík in February on traditional knowledge.
- EPPR attended the PAME I meeting in February 2014.
- EPPR is collaborating with the IMO on the guide for Oil spill response in Ice and Snow Conditions.
- EPPR has attended the first meeting of the TFOPP and is ready to support the TF if necessary.
- EPPR attended the first meeting of the Arctic Council's Scientific Cooperation Task Force in Stockholm in December 2013.
- The EPPR Chair is the contact person for the steering group for the Revised Arctic Marine Strategic Plan project and will inform EPPR about the project.
- The EPPR Chair has attended several meetings to inform about Arctic Council/EPPR activities.
- EPPR has invited members of AMAP's radiation monitoring group to participate in the radiation emergency exercise "Arctic 2014"

