



Arctic Council SAO plenary meeting
20-21 November 2019, Hveragerði, Iceland
Meeting code: SAOIS201

Document Title

EPPR Working Group Report to SAOs, November 2019 Hveragerdi,
Iceland

Agenda item number

4.2

Submitted by

EPPR

Document filename

SAOIS201_2019_HVERAGERDI_4-2-D_EPPR-Progress-Report

Number of pages, not including this cover sheet

4

EPPR Working Group Report to SAOs, November 2019

Hveragerdi, Iceland

Introduction

EPPR held its first meeting of 2019 in Bodø, Norway on June 4-6. 60 participants attended representing the Arctic States, one Permanent Participant (GCI), five observer states (Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Spain), three observer organizations (IFRC, UArctic, and UNEP) and one invited guest (International Atomic Energy Agency). The meeting focused on follow-up activities from the last EPPR meeting in New Orleans, reviewing the progress and planning of activities according to the approved 2019-2021 workplan. EPPR Heads of Delegation met in advance of the plenary session. The relevant sections of the AmaroK were updated after the meeting.

Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (MOSPA Agreement)

On June 4, 2019, the MER EG met in Bodø. The following accomplishments and continuing work were noted:

- 1) *Follow-up from the 2019 connectivity test* (February 2019), which achieved 100% success by at least one of fax, phone or email. It was agreed to carry out another no-notice 24-hour connectivity test in 2020 and to review the Operational Guidelines by December 1, 2019.
- 2) *The need for a lessons learned database*. Intersessional work to deliver a system will start with MER EG members extracting lessons learned to populate the database when available.
- 3) *The SAR to ER transition*. This topic will continue to be discussed in the MER EG in close collaboration with the SAR EG.
- 4) *MOSPA 2021 Exercise*. The exercise will be led by Iceland (planning lead is ACGF Secretariat) and is planned to be a live exercise that will explore a SAR to ER scenario. The Exercise Planning Guidance (approved at 2019 AC Ministerial) will be used as appropriate. The MER EG agreed to invite MER members (or others as appointed by HoD) to form an Exercise Design Team to facilitate planning of the Live-Ex in 2021 with Iceland.
- 5) *A proposal on Aerial Surveillance* brought forward by Canada in the MER EG for further refinement and/or approval by the MER EG and EPPR intersessionally. The project will seek to enhance national aerial surveillance capacity through international cooperation. This work will support implementation of the FPOPP.
- 6) *Follow-up on the Legal Challenges related the MOSPA Agreement Paper and Summary Report*, approved at the 2019 AC Ministerial Meeting. EPPR decided to have a workshop on Monday, December 2, 2019, organized by Norway and Iceland, to discuss follow-up to recommendations in the *Legal Issues Related to the MOSPA Agreement: Summary Report*.

Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (SAR Agreement)

On June 4, 2019, the Search and Rescue Expert Group (SAR EG) held a meeting to discuss:

- 1) *A review of the Arctic SAR Agreement, Article 8 «Request to Enter the Territory of a Party for*

- 2) Purposes of Search and Rescue Operations» (completed) and Article 9 «Cooperation among the Parties (started). Feedback was requested from Arctic States on whether SAR Agreement Article 8(3) allows the movement of SAR resources across borders in the absence of bilateral agreements.
- 3) *Uploading of contact data and locations of Rescue Coordination Centers (RCC) to Arctic ERMA.*
- 4) *Use of the Arctic ERMA as the repository for Arctic SAR Agreement data.* The SAR EG will develop a template to upload additional information.
- 5) *Planning of a seminar of all relevant stakeholders to review the Viking Sky incident* with potential recommendations for decision makers. HoD supported this idea, and the Kingdom of Denmark agreed to take the lead, with Norway as co-lead, to pull together a small steering group.
- 6) *Development of a Request for Assets/Border Crossing form* to move personnel and resources across borders for SAR operations.
- 7) Suggestion that EPPR recommend a *meeting of the Parties to review the Arctic SAR Agreement* and assign implementation responsibilities. EPPR agreed to send a letter to Canada, as the depository nation of the SAR Agreement, suggesting that the Parties meet to discuss implementation of the SAR Agreement and offer assistance from EPPR regarding any follow-up activities to support maintenance of the Agreement.

Current projects

ARCSAFE: *ARCSAFE Summary Status Report* was approved by ministers at the 11th Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi in May 2019. On June 3, 2019, an ARCSAFE workshop and an international table-top exercise related to rescue operations in a radiologically hazardous scenario and with risk for radioactive contamination at sea in the Arctic (RADEX 2019) took place. The workshop report and RADEX 2019 evaluation report will be presented at the EPPR-II 2019 meeting in Reykjavik. After EPPR-I 2019 meeting in Bodø, the EPPR Chair and Executive Secretary worked with Norway to circulate the relevant documents to establish a RAD Expert Group and request Heads of Delegation to make an intersessional decision on the establishment of said expert group.

RADSAR: The ARCSAFE sub-project RADSAR focuses on the sharing of competence within search and rescue in a maritime radiological/nuclear (RN) scenario. RADSAR project leads will present a draft of the full RADSAR report at the EPPR-II 2019 meeting in Reykjavik.

Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities: The second phase of the project includes developing a series of short videos to communicate the results of Phase I. EPPR agreed to proceed with production of a second outreach video for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response n Small Communities project.

Risk Assessment methods and metadata – development of guideline and tool: This project is part of the follow-up to the AC Framework Plan for Oil Pollution Prevention (FPOPP). Through various in-person and online workshops and project meetings EPPR has identified the need for a common approach to marine risk assessments in the Arctic. Funding has been secured to establish a digital platform and framework for the guideline, to arrange workshops, and to disseminate results. On September 17, 2019, a Workshop on Guideline and Tool for Arctic Marine Risk Assessment took place in Høyvik (Oslo), Norway.

Circumpolar Oil Spill Response Viability Analysis (COSRVA) – Phase 2: Phase II of this project is part of the follow-up to the AC Framework Plan for Oil Pollution Prevention (FPOPP). In Phase I, a comprehensive technical written report that summarized the background, methodology, input data and results from the project was delivered and approved at the 2017 Ministerial meeting in Fairbanks. In a

study completed by the Norwegian Coastal Administration a web-based tool was implemented. This enables user to work with the results online and directly via computer, tablet or smart phone. EPPR/MER EG supported the Norwegian proposal to develop a similar web-based tool for the circumpolar study. Funding is in place to develop a web-based tool for the Arctic, including the Bay of Bothnia.

EPPR Image Library: The guidelines for submission of images to the EPPR Image Library were approved by EPPR through a silence procedure intersessionally in October 2019. The guidelines include instructions on the quality of the images (including photographs, illustrations animations, and video) and a template to capture the necessary metadata for proper archiving in the image library.

EPPR Research & Development (R&D) Collaboration: On June 3, 2019, the EPPR Arctic Oil Pollution Research and Development Workshop took place. The goal of the workshop was to exchange information on global oil spill response research for Arctic and cold-water environments. The Norwegian Center for Oil Spill Preparedness and Marine Environment (MARINENVIRON) prepared a workshop report that was shared with EPPR HoDs in October 2019. Follow-up will take place through a steering group under the MER EG.

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. EPPR attended the International Prevention and Response Conference in St. Petersburg in October 2019.

New Projects

One new project is under approval:

At the EPPR-I 2019 meeting in Bodø, Norway, GCI presented a project proposal for **Wildland fire cooperation in the Circumpolar region**. This project aims to improve the coordinated response by Arctic States and Permanent Participants in response to catastrophic wildland fires in the Arctic region, and to promote the possibility of international cooperation and contracting of wildland fire resources across State boundaries, as well as coordinate trainings between relevant agencies so that emergency preparation and response to wildland fire is effective and contemporary. After the meeting, the proposal was sent to the EPPR HoDs for intersessional decision. A final decision is expected prior to EPPR II, December 2019.

Cross-Cutting activities

- EPPR participated in the first AC-AEC joint meeting (October 2019), and has invited the AEC Chair to make a presentation at the EPPR-II 2019 meeting in Reykjavik.
- EPPR Chair was invited to the EGBCM meeting in Reykjavik (October 2019) to update its members on EPPR's work related to wild fires.
- EPPR Chair participated in a panel debate about Safety at Sea under the Arctic Circle conference in Reykjavik (October 2019).

- EPPR Chair participated in the Warsaw Format meeting with Observer States (September 2019).
- EPPR will discuss with PAME the need for member states to validate their data collected as a result of the joint PAME/EPPR project titled the *Compendium of Arctic Shipping Accidents (CASA)*. EPPR will review the results of/provide feedback to PAME's project *Overview of Low-Impact Shipping Corridors & other Shipping Management Schemes in the Arctic*.
- EPPR and PAME continue to work together on follow-up to the Framework Plan on Oil Pollution Prevention (FPOPP). Projects developed in support of addressing gaps will be approved by EPPR, or other WGs, as appropriate.
- Cooperation with the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) remains important to EPPR and opportunities to collaborate and share information in a consistent manner is being discussed between the two bodies.

Upcoming Working Group Meetings

EPPR II 2019 will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland, December 3-5, 2019.

Kingdom of Denmark has offered to host EPPR I 2020 (June 2-4, 2020). Exact location and dates TBC.

EPPR II 2020 will be hosted by Canada, location and dates (December 1-3, 2020) TBC.