



Outcome of the Twelfth Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 12-2018)

Introduction

0.1 The Twelfth Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 12-2018) was held as an online meeting on 18 October 2018.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives of Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Sweden as well as Sea Alarm and WWF. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**. Consent for publication of the list of participants, and the information contained therein, was received by all participants.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm and Chair of EWG OWR. Mr. Alexey Bakhtov, HELCOM Assisting Professional Secretary acted as Secretary of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Document: 1-1

1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Update on planning/preparedness in Contracting Parties

2.1 The Meeting took note of the following national OWR planning and preparedness activities which have taken place since the last meeting:

- Estonia:

Two and half year INTERREG project "OIL SPILL" lead by the Ministry of Environment of Estonia has started. Participating countries: Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Project is aimed at: 1) Filling the gaps of harmonized procedures between sea, shore and land in oil spill combatting in line with different substances; 2) Filling the gaps in the education and training with the specific focus on marine spills; 3) Finding cost-effective solutions for operational marine spill response.

Objectives in view of wildlife response: organising relevant international training events, including using simulators, clarifying key legal issues e.g. in CA & NGO cooperation, identifying administrative or other procedures where cross-border harmonisation could be improved.

- Finland:

Still in process of redistributing responsibilities between the agencies. Field exercise with a wildlife component, planned for September 2018, had been cancelled as Russia could not take part in it. There is no information whether this exercise is postponed for later.

- WWF Finland

1. Two oiled beach clean-up exercises took place in Finland in autumn 2018;

7-8 September 2018, Uusimaa, Hanko – Syndalen army shooting area, and Oulu, Nallikari, 28-29 September 2018. These were the first oil shore clean-up exercises aimed to test and rehearse the collaboration of different voluntary organisations together with the Finnish regional governmental rescue departments of Uusimaa and Oulu at the corresponding regions, responsible for the oiled

beach clean-up as a governmental officer. The organising NGO parties were Red Cross Finland (project coordinator, in exercise responsible for first aid and communications) together with WWF Finland (organisation and lead of the oiled beach clean-up activities, communications), and six other Finnish Voluntary Rescue Service (VAPEPA) organisations, including Finnish Voluntary sea rescue services (sea transportations and surveillance), Voluntary aerial surveillance (regional aerial surveillance), Radio amateurs (messaging), Martha Organisation (Food services to voluntary troops), Voluntary search and rescue troops (transportations, parking, participating in check-in process), and The Finnish Reservists' Association (FRA).

No oiled wildlife response component was involved in the practicals, but OWR was included in the tabletop exercise that took place in Helsinki on Aug 20th in preparation for the field exercises.

2. Red Cross Finland and WWF's next project in continuum with the described exercises got funding for three years, starting from January 2019.

The project will take the lessons learned from the joint beach clean-up exercises to 1) further develop the existing standard guidelines, 2) prepare practical guidelines on efficient organisation of coastal clean-up activity, and 3) drive on further development of collaboration of governmental parties and non-governmental voluntary organisations in case of a large-scale oil spill in the Baltic Sea. That includes setting up an exercise that would include OWR in the scheme.

- Germany:

Status of planning and preparedness has just slightly changed from the time of previous meeting. Planning for oiled wildlife response is being integrated into emergency plans for oil response of the coastal states of Germany. In one coastal state, special task forces are being created focusing on oiled wildlife response. Coastal states that do not have special units for oiled wildlife response are observing in exercises, to gain experience in equipping and training the staff.

There is an initiative to conduct a comprehensive national study on rehabilitation of oiled wildlife in 2019. Results will be in German, but also translated to English.

- Latvia:

The work for preparing National Oiled Wildlife Response Plan is ongoing. First meeting with involved Governmental authorities and Non-governmental Organizations, and Coastal municipalities was held to identify areas of responsibility, discuss possible forms of cooperation, communication etc. Next meeting is planned at the beginning of December where final draft of the National Plan to be discussed.

- Sweden:

Not much changes happened since the last meeting. Division of responsibilities regarding OWR remains a big question, and roles of different agencies and municipalities still need to be clarified. National guidelines for OWR are missing but in general the system of response to accidents works quite well. BALEX Delta is a good example of response exercise, although wildlife component was not included in the exercise program.

- Sea Alarm:

Oil spill occurred in Derde Petroleum port in Rotterdam in June. Hundreds of oil covered swans were captured out of the water at Maassluis and taken to a bird shelter. International rescue campaign was arranged with EUROWA experts mobilised. Report in English on the lessons learned will be ready by the next meeting.

- WWF Poland:

Oiled wildlife plan has been developed, it is incorporated to the regional crisis management plans. Workshop for stakeholders identified in the plan will be organized tentatively in 2019. Two days

event will include theoretical and practical parts. Theoretical component will address management issues of mobilisation and testing simulation procedures included in the plan, while practical component will be focused on oiled wildlife response (e.g. washing oiled birds).

Agenda Item 3 EWG OWR activities

Documents: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4

3.1. The Meeting discussed mass euthanasia of oiled seabirds, including existing practices of protocols of mass euthanasia in the Baltic countries and the steps to developing an overall strategy as well as communication strategy for mass euthanasia as an OWR tool.

3.2. Mass euthanasia is practiced as a standard approach to oiled wildlife response only in Denmark. In Germany opinions of various actors regarding mass euthanasia have changed towards general consent that individual approaches should be practiced instead of mass euthanasia, although individual rescue is not always possible. Germany suggested using the term “euthanasia” instead of “mass euthanasia”.

3.3. There are international documents published by oil industries: [Key principles for the care of oiled wildlife](#) and [Good Practice Guide for Oiled Wildlife Response Preparedness](#). The documents, among other issues, address euthanasia as a management and practical tool. The Meeting agreed to review the documents and consider whether parts concerning mass euthanasia can contribute to the work program of the group, and to discuss the issue further on the next meeting.

3.4. The Meeting discussed the lists of available equipment stockpiles. Poland reported that only small scale facility and stockpiles are available for small scale incidents. In one coastal state of Germany a list of stockpile exists for catching birds. In Finland there is a mobile unit and other equipment. Finland together with WWF Finland will further explore possibility of making a list of available stockpile, to be presented to the group on the next meeting. Estonia has a stockpile for 500 birds, information will be presented at the next meeting. Also Sea Alarm will make available for next meeting a list of content of the EUROWA stockpile of equipment that is maintained by the EUROWA members for use in European oiled wildlife incidents.

3.5. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to forward information on the list of available equipment stockpiles to the Secretariat and revisit this issue on the next meeting.

3.6. The Meeting discussed the involvement of NGOs in national and international emergency cooperation, and instructed the Secretariat to draft a format table with questions on the topic, to be forwarded to the Contracting Parties for filling in before the next meeting.

3.7. The Meeting considered and adopted a revised SAT and agreed to propose it to the HELCOM RESPONSE as a reporting tool (document 3-2). The Meeting also agreed to use the revised SAT for the national reporting to EWG-OWR 13 and HELCOM RESPONSE in 2019. On the basis of the experience with this reporting, still modifications can be proposed for discussion in EWG-OWR 13.

3.8. The Meeting took note of the information from the Chair on the results of HELCOM BALEX DELTA Exercise 2018, which was held in Karlskrona, Sweden, on 27-30 August 2018 and one day closing seminar in frames of the exercise. Wildlife response was not an integrated part of the field exercise. It was part of a national table top exercise, but the results of that exercise are not available as yet.

3.9. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of SHORE Network 2 Meeting which was held on August 30 in Karlskrona, Sweden (document 3-5). It was emphasized that OWR activities should be well integrated in shoreline response coordination but also in the at-sea coordination. The Chair of EWG-OWR participates in the SHORE Network, and Sea Alarm advocates the need of a holistic approach to oil spill management instead of fragmented planning and response management.

3.10. The Meeting agreed that presentation on baseline data collection on seabird distributions in the Baltic Sea by Ms. Nele Markones may be arranged at the next meeting. Sea Alarm emphasizes the

importance of having up to date insight in the at-sea concentrations of seabirds, as a result of international monitoring programmes. Current programmes have considerable gaps, which may undermine the effectiveness of an oiled wildlife response.

3.11. The Meeting discussed OWR [exercise terminology](#) (document 3-3, published on the Work space). The CPs are requested to familiarise themselves with the terminology and use this to plan for national and international oiled wildlife exercises. They can be held as stand-alone exercises or as integrated components of oil spill response exercises.

3.12. The Meeting considered and adopted modifications to Chapter 11 of the HELCOM Response Manual Volume I, as suggested by SEA Alarm (document 3-4), and agreed to submit a revised Chapter to HELCOM RESPONSE 25-2018.

Agenda Item 4 Training and information activities to support work of EWG OWR

4.1 The Meeting discussed the possibility of organizing a one day online seminar (tentatively, spring 2019) with lectures on euthanasia, and/or early incident response. Germany and Sea Alarm will further discuss the issue and submit concrete proposal on organizing a seminar before the next meeting.

Agenda Item 5 Any other business

Documents: 5-1, 5-2

5.1 The Contracting Parties checked and updated the list of contacts for EWG OWR (document 5-1) as contained in **Annex 2**, to be published on the HELCOM Meeting Portal when consent from all contacts has been received for its publication.

5.2 The Meeting took note of the information by the Secretariat on the Update of HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (document 5-2).

5.3 A general description of EWG OWR can be found on the [HELCOM web page](#). EWG OWR meetings and meeting documents are found in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#) under [upcoming meetings](#) (documents have restricted access) and [past meetings](#) (documents are publicly available). A [workspace](#) is available for EWG OWR contacts ([sign in](#) required) for sharing documents.

Agenda Item 6 Next Meeting

6.1 The Meeting agreed that the next meeting of the Group (EWG OWR 13-2018) will be held tentatively in March 2019, and requested the Secretariat to set up a Doodle poll for deciding on the date.

Agenda Item 7 Outcome of the Meeting

Document: 7-1

7.1 The Outcome of the Meeting has been finalized by the Secretariat and made available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with the meeting documents.

Annex 1. List of participants

List of participants

| Representing | Name | Organization | Email |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| Chair | Hugo Nijkamp | Sea Alarm | nijkamp@sea-alarm.org |
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