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Background

RESPONSE 26-2019 discussed and agreed on prolongation of the Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) mandate for an additional three-year period 2019-2021 (para 8.7 of the Outcome). HOD 56-2019 approved the prolongation of the mandate of EWG OWR until the end of 2021 (para 3.6 of the Outcome).

The 14th Meeting of the EWG OWR discussed the group's Terms of Reference (ToR). The first ToR (2014-2018) had expired and the new one needs to be endorsed undergoing formal HELCOM procedures.

The attached document contains the new ToR of the EWG OWR which has been developed in consultation with the Contracting Parties.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider and approve the ToR of EWG OWR for the period 2019-2021.

Terms of Reference for HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) 2019-2021¹

1. Background

In 2010 the Contracting Parties adopted HELCOM Recommendation 31E/6 on integrated wildlife response planning in the Baltic Sea Area. It recommends the Contracting Parties to apply Guidelines for their wildlife response planning attached to the Recommendation, and requests the Contracting Parties to develop a wildlife response plan integrated into oil pollution contingency plans either on a national or sub-national/local level and exchange the details about its contents with other Contracting Parties.

The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting agreed to develop and adopt national wildlife response plans by 2016 and agreed to strengthen the work on OWR under HELCOM Response Working Group (WG) through a targeted expert working group and by enhancing cooperation with NGOs and the private sector, inter alia in order to accommodate the involvement of volunteers.

The work of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) is carried out under the supervision of HELCOM RESPONSE and is based on this framework terms of reference

2. Tasks and working mode of the EWG OWR

The EWG OWR will aim to strengthen the cooperation between HELCOM Contracting Parties in the field of oiled wildlife response. It will act as a forum for the exchange of information on progress and best practices, and facilitate the creation of joint standards and cross-border cooperation in oiled wildlife response. It will also, where possible, facilitate the training of national experts and exchange of training materials.

As a sub-group reporting to HELCOM Response WG, the EWG OWR has the following tasks:

1. To facilitate the development of national oiled wildlife response plans in cooperation with other authorities and NGOs;
2. To arrange regular (at least once a year) meetings involving all members of the group, allowing for training and information sessions that would provide added value to the national processes;
3. To produce using the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) approved by RESPONSE 25-2018 as a reporting tool for OWR, at the end of each calendar year, annual reports covering the OWR activities in the Contracting Parties and submit it to HELCOM Response WG for adoption. Based on the results from the reports to provide necessary support and encouragement to countries where OWR activities are less developed.
4. To arrange training and information exchange activities to support and promote work of EWG OWR
5. To contribute to involvement of NGOs and private sector in OWR activities.
6. Other tasks according to the group's needs and vision

Working mode:

To ensure resource efficiency, the group will arrange online meetings and work via correspondence and using the HELCOM Workspace. These meetings shall take place at least once a year but can be arranged more often if necessary. When necessary, face-to-face meetings shall be organized back-to-back with other HELCOM Response WG related events.

The Chair may invite relevant experts to attend online meetings with presentations on specific topics.

¹ HOD 56-2019 approved the prolongation of the mandate of EWG OWR until the end of 2021

The group (Chair) will report to HELCOM Response WG on progress made.

Prolongation of the EWG OWR should be considered at the end of the period of its mandate and based on the results of the work progress.

3. Members of the EWG OWR

Each Contracting Party shall nominate at least one representative of the appropriate state body (government or agency) to the Group. The Contracting Parties may choose to nominate further members as they see appropriate.