



Document title	Outcome of EWG OWR 14-2019
Code	8-2
Category	INF
Agenda Item	8 - Response on the shore and wildlife response
Submission date	3.2.2020
Submitted by	Secretariat
Reference	

Background

The attached document contains the Outcome of the 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 14-2019), which was held as an online meeting on 17 September 2019.

EWG OWR 15-2020 was planned to be held as an online meeting on 27 January 2020 but due to a small number of registered participants and insufficient input from Contacting Parties to the agenda of the meeting the meeting was postponed. New meeting dates will be agreed upon at a later stage.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Outcome of EWG OWR 14-2019.



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Fourteenth Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group
on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 14-2019)

EWG OWR 14-2019

Online meeting, 17.09.2019

Outcome of the 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 14-2019)

Introduction

0.1 The 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 13-2019) was held as an online meeting on 17 September 2019.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives of Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Sweden and Sea Alarm. 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:

- Denmark:

Denmark is planning to renew the National OWR Plan, which has not been progressing during the last one and a half years. The update is expected to start in October 2019. More information will be available tentatively by the next meeting. Denmark participated in the exercise conducted by SHELL. The Ministry of Environment was an observer but not directly involved.

- Estonia:

Estonia had a NGO training on OWR actions, organised by Estonian Fund for Nature. Approximately 20 volunteer group leaders took part (basic course). Another training is planned for late autumn 2019. Within OIL SPILL Interreg project the project partners had a table-top exercise on oilspill response in Latvia, organised by Latvian Maritime Academy. OW issues were discussed at the exercise as well, in Latvia there is a NGO called Drauga Sparns, who has a new bird rehab shelter and is willing to take care of oiled wildlife if needed and trained for that.

- Germany:

Authorities are continuously getting prepared for OWR, defining their tasks and responsibilities during accidents, developing impact assessment procedures and management of affected animals. Some exercises are held annually, in cooperation with volunteer organisations.

In 2019 preparation activities of Schleswig-Holstein were included in two big oil spill response exercises: 1) Combined Exercises Baltic Sea at "Gelting" held on 25 May 2019, 2) Combined Exercises North Sea at "Husum" held on 29 June 2019. The exercises included counting of oiled birds for situation overview, handling of personal protective equipment (PPE) and collecting of oiled birds. A third exercise was planned for summer but had to be postponed to autumn/winter. Another seminar on OWR PPE and OWR hardware/machines is planned for autumn 2019 (no specific date yet).

Exchange between authorities and volunteer organizations on approaches and possibilities is continued. Next meeting of the global project GOWRS (Global Oiled Wildlife Response Systems) will take place in Germany/Cuxhaven, first day (30 September 2019) together with authorities, including an exercise where organisations and authorities will exchange approaches and possible interaction.

- Latvia:

Latvia continues finalizing the National Plan on Oiled Wildlife Response. Economic assessment of different response solutions and legal assessment on the best way to get the plan approved and signed will be performed until the end of June 2020. After that, the Plan should be signed and approved by relevant authorities and NGOs. A table top exercise on proposed communication scheme is planned in February 2020.

- Poland:

No OWR activities have been carried out in Poland since the last meeting. However, on 19 September 2019, WWF and Sea Alarm organize a meeting in Poland to improve procedures for providing assistance to oiled animals.

- Sweden:

No specific activities to report. Separate activities might have taken place organized by, for example, the coast guard or the different municipalities in Sweden.

2.2 The Chair noted that “light” reporting format (log book) applied to exercises could be useful for the EWG OWR.

2.3 The Meeting agreed that the first draft of the exercises reporting format should be developed by the Chair and the Secretariat and submitted to the group intersessionally.

Agenda Item 3 EWG OWR activities

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

3.1 The Meeting took note of the EWG OWR related sections in the [Outcome](#) of the 26th Meeting of the HELCOM Response Working Group (RESPONSE 26-2019) held in Warsaw, Poland on 3-5 June 2019. Particularly, RESPONSE 26-2019 considered and agreed on the Work plan for EWG OWR for the period 2019-2021 (document 3-1).

3.2 The Meeting took note of EWG OWR related sections in the [Outcome](#) of the 56th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation held in Helsinki, Finland, on 18-19 June 2019. Particularly, the Meeting approved the updated Work plan of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) for 2020-2021, as set out in Annex 3 of the Outcome of RESPONSE 26-2019 (document 3-2).

3.3 The Meeting recalled that EWG OWR 13-2019 agreed to revisit the issue of developing an overall strategy as well as communication strategy for mass euthanasia as an OWR tool, in consideration of existing and new practices of protocols of mass euthanasia in the Baltic countries. The Meeting discussed the good practices described in the documents: [Key principles for the care of oiled wildlife](#) and [Good Practice Guide for Oiled Wildlife Response Preparedness](#)

3.4 Germany noted that euthanasia (especially mass euthanasia) is a special topic. Knowledge and experience exchange between the Contracting Parties is very important, particularly, what scenarios could be applied and by whom (competent staff), what kind of techniques and methodologies exist.

3.5 The Chair suggested to hold an unofficial online meeting to discuss euthanasia in form of information workshop in the first quarter of 2020 using an online platform Zoom.com. Germany proposed to choose OWR tools as a general topic for the workshop (focussing on Impact Assessment and Management of affected oiled animals). The Meeting supported the idea of an online workshop in spring 2020.

- 3.6 The Meeting discussed the lists of available equipment stockpiles. A format table was made available for the meeting with an example of EUROWA stockpile. The Contracting Parties were requested to fill in the form/table and submit it to the Secretariat by 10 September 2019 for dissemination to the whole group. No responses have been received by the Secretariat.
- 3.7 The Contracting Parties reaffirmed their interest and agreed to fill in the table till the **end of October 2019** and submit the information to the Secretariat.
- 3.8 The Meeting discussed the involvement of NGOs in national and international emergency cooperation. The Contracting Parties were requested to fill in the form/table and submit to the Secretariat by 10 September for dissemination to the whole group. No responses have been received by the Secretariat.
- 3.9 The Contracting Parties reaffirmed their interest and agreed to fill the table till the **end of October 2019** and submit the information to the Secretariat.
- 3.10 The Meeting discussed the use of Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) developed by Sea Alarm and approved by RESPONSE 25-2018 as a reporting tool for OWR.
- 3.11 The Meeting recalled that EWG OWR 13-2019 agreed to fill in the SAT by the end of 2019 and submit to the Secretariat. No submissions have been received by the Secretariat.
- 3.12 The Contracting Parties agreed to report to the Secretariat using the SAT before **mid-December 2019**.
- 3.13 The Meeting reaffirmed that the final report on the OWR activities should be submitted to the first meeting of HELCOM Response Working Group in 2020 (Response 27-2020).
- 3.14 Germany and Sea Alarm explored a possibility of inviting Ms. Nele Markones to give presentation on monitoring of seabird distributions in the Baltic but her attendance was not possible. Germany was offering to contact Nele Markones to find out more details about missing monitoring data. It came out, e.g., that gaps in data sets between countries could prohibit knowledge on habitation of migrating birds during incidents. It was proposed that Ms. Markones could give her presentation at the online meeting which is planned on OWR tools in spring (see 3.5).
- 3.15 The Meeting discussed the group's Terms of Reference (ToR). The first ToR (2014-2018) has expired and the new one needs to be endorsed undergoing formal HELCOM procedures. The Meeting agreed to forward proposals for the new EWG OWR ToR to the Secretariat before **25 September 2019**, using the text of the previous ToR. The Secretariat will compile comments and proposals and circulate a new draft for final review of the group. If no objections will be received from the Contracting Parties by the deadline, this version will be considered as agreed by EWG OWR and will be submitted by the Secretariat to RESPONSE 27-2020 for approval, with the understanding that the Secretariat could still be allowed to undertake any editorial revision as appropriate.
- 3.16 The Meeting discussed OWR [exercise terminology](#). The Contracting Parties were invited to review the terminology and use it in the national OWR reporting.

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

Documents: 4-1, 4-2

- 4.1 The Meeting discussed organizing a one-day online seminar with lectures on early incident response. Germany and Sea Alarm informed the Meeting about the scenario and practicalities (document 4-2). It was proposed to hold an online seminar including discussion of a table top scenario and cross border issues. Exact dates of the seminar will be announced soon.
- 4.2 The Contracting Parties were requested to fill out the table on page 7 of document 4-2 (the updated Word version will be provided) and submit information to the Chair (with a copy to Germany) at the earliest convenience.
- 4.3 The Meeting supported the idea of holding the online seminar and agreed on informed participation.

4.4 The Secretariat will send out a Doodle poll to find out the date. Further coordination will be carried out via email communication.

Agenda Item 5 Any other business

5.1 The Meeting took note of the Report on a table top exercise organized by Shell in Denmark, with a Baltic scenario (document 4-1) and agreed that interaction between companies and authorities/ decision makers is important. The exercise could have been better communicated to oiled wildlife specialists and authorities; they should be more involved in such activities conducted by private companies.

5.2 Estonia proposed to conduct a seminar/workshop with authorities and NGOs, with key focus on integrated approach to oilspill response. The idea is to find out obstacles within overall oil spill response at various levels that prevent implementing an integrated approach, and to find out what can be done to remove these obstacles. There is a possibility to organise such a seminar/workshop within OIL SPILL project. The suggested time is spring 2020 (Germany proposed to combine the workshop contents with the online seminar on tools on OWR).

5.3 Estonia will provide a detailed proposal to the group and further discussion will continue via email communication.

5.4 The Meeting took note that RESPONSE 26-2019 considered and agreed on the Work plan for EWG OWR for the period 2019-2021. HELCOM HOD 56-2019 approved the updated Work plan of EWG OWR for 2020-2021 (document 5-1).

5.1 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.

5.2 The Meeting agreed that the next meeting of the Group, EWG OWR 15-2020, will be held tentatively in mid-January 2020, and requested the Secretariat to set up a Doodle poll for deciding on the date.

Agenda Item 6 Outcome of the Meeting

Document: 6-1

6.1 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

Representing	Name	Organization	Email
Chair	Hugo Nijkamp	Sea Alarm	nijkamp@sea-alarm.org
Denmark	Caroline Vestergaard Mikkelsen	Danish Environmental Protection Agency	cvmik@mst.dk
Estonia	Agni Kaldma	Ministry of Environment	agni.kaldma@envir.ee
Germany	Uda Tuente	Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME)	utunte@havariekommando.de
Germany	Tobias Zisenis	Schleswig-Holstein's governmental Agency for Coastal Defense, National Park and Marine Conservation, Department for Hazard Control and Harbour Office	Tobias.Zisenis@lkn.landsh.de
Latvia	Laura Mazmaca	State Environmental Service	laura.mazmaca@vvd.gov.lv
Sweden	Nils Mårtenson	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	nils.martenson@naturvardsverket.se
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