
**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.45/12/1

Date: 30 April 2019

Malta, 11-13 June 2019

Original: English

Agenda Item 12

MEDITERRANEAN TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (MTWG) AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides an update on the progress made by the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) since the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC and proposes future activities to be integrated to the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2020-2021.

Actions to be taken: Paragraph 34

Related documents: UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, REMPEC/WG.37/9, REMPEC/WG.37/12, REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, REMPEC/WG.37/14/2, REMPEC/WG.41/8, REMPEC/WG.41/9, REMPEC/WG.41/13, REMPEC/WG.41/INF.3, REMPEC/WG.43/4, PPR 6/15/2 PPR 5/INF.3, REMPEC/WG.43.9

Background

1 The Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), (Malta, 25-28 October 2000), agreed to establish the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) aimed at facilitating the exchange of technical data and scientific information in the subject area of preparedness and response in relation to marine pollution emergencies. The Meeting adopted the Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group¹, further reviewed and adopted by the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 15- 17 June 2015), which provided the method of work for the MTWG.

2 Based on the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) and its Protocols (COP 12), (Monaco, 14-17 November 2001), the need for such regional forum (i.e. MTWG) was strengthened as it was agreed that REMPEC should develop and maintain close working relationships with other Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and with the “specialised regional organisms” which play a coordinating role as set forth in UNEP/MAP, particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.

3 The Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 19) (Greece, 9-12 February 2016), adopted the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021)² hereinafter referred to

¹ REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, Annex II

² UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/4

as the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), which addresses issues related to the activities carried out within the MTWG in the following Specific Objectives:

- .1 Specific Objective 18: To encourage the participation of the regional scientific and technical institutions in research and development activities and to facilitate transfer of technology.
- .2 Specific Objective 19: To improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of decision-making process in case of marine pollution incidents through the development and introduction of technical and decision support tools; and
- .3 Specific Objective 21: To revise the existing recommendations, principles and guidelines, and to develop new ones aimed at facilitating international cooperation and mutual assistance within the framework of 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol.

Programme of Work of the MTWG for the biennium 2018-2019

4 The Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 23-25 May 2017), considered document REMPEC/WG.41/13 providing an update on the progress made by the MTWG since the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 15-17 June 2015) and the proposed future activities to be integrated to the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2018-2019.

5 Having noted the information provided on the update of the Guide for risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime accidents, the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC agreed to:

- .1 roll over into the biennium 2018-2019, this task scheduled within the framework of the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016-2017;
- .2 establish an OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group under the MTWG to support the process of the update of the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents; and
- .3 designate, through the REMPEC OPRC Focal Points, the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group.

6 In light of the overview provided on the cooperation between the MTWG and the other technical fora, the Meeting agreed to also include the following tasks to be implemented through the established OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group:

- .1 to contribute to the Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol and to submit to the Fifth Session of the PPR Sub-Committee, the Draft Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents, as amended by the Meeting, for its consideration; and
- .2 to contribute to a joint inter-regional effort aiming at updating response manuals for HNS spills considering the latest developments in the field of response to chemical spills, through the possible production of a joint manual based on existing guides and tools on HNS response.

7 Highlighting the valuable source of information contained in the Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS), and noting that the REMPEC OPRC Focal Points were encouraged to assist the Secretariat in maintaining updated information on HNS incidents by providing reports on HNS response following incidents, the Meeting:

- .1 questioned the need to review the tool; and
- .2 requested the Secretariat to address this issue through the MTWG and report the outcome of its evaluation to the next Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC.

Progress Report on the implementation of the Programme of Work of the MTWG for the biennium 2018-2019

OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group

8 Pursuant to the decision of the Twelfth Meeting, related to the establishment of an OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group under the MTWG to carry out the tasks of its programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019, and further the Circular letters No 7/2017 and No 12/2017 dated 30 August and 21 November 2017, respectively, 13 out of 22 Contracting Parties designated, their national entities and/or officials as contact points for the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group.

9 The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocol, which have not done it yet, are invited to nominate their national entities and/or officials as contact points for the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group.

10 To build on and facilitate the work of the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group, REMPEC organised the Regional Workshop on Response to Spill Incidents involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) (MEDEXPOL 2018) (Valletta, Malta, 20-21 June 2018). As outlined in the report of the Workshop reproduced in document REMPEC/WG.45/INF.14, participants to MEDEXPOL 2018:

- .1 examined and agreed upon the draft updated “Guidelines on Risk of Gaseous Releases resulting from Marine Incidents”,
- .2 agreed on the way forward for a joint inter-regional effort, between the Secretariat of the Bonn Agreement, the Secretariat of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) and REMPEC, aiming at updating their respective response manuals for Hazardous and Noxious Substances spills through the possible production of a Joint Inter-Regional Manual; and
- .3 provided an overview of achievements and undergoing works on guidelines and tools related to HNS and discussed their complementarity and the way forward for future developments to address identified challenges.

11 Although the MTWG shall be maintained as a correspondence group, according to “Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group”, the outcome of workshops such as MEDEXPOL 2018 organised by REMPEC in view to reviewing the work of the MTWG, demonstrates the added value of these events. The Secretariat proposes to consider replicating such practice, as necessary, aligning the programme of work of the MTWG with capacity building activities scheduled within the programme of work of REMPEC.

The Guide for risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime accidents

12 It is recalled that the Guide for risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime accidents published by REMPEC in 1996, provides emergency-planning personnel with informative background on the issues related to releases of gases, and is intended for the response personnel, in particular decision-makers, who have a basic maritime and technical background. The document deals with aspects of the chemistry of gases pertaining to their carriage at sea, container systems for packaged gases, layouts of gas carriers, international regulations governing the transportation of gases by sea, hazardous properties of gases, behaviour of airborne gas releases, and response measures for gas releases.

13 To provide technical support to the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group, the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (Cedre), was hired by the Secretariat of the MTWG:

- .1 to provide a detailed and exhaustive overview of developments which occurred since 1996 related to the topics addressed within the Guide;
- .2 to identify parts of the Guide requiring an update and define new parts to be added to reflect the current situation;
- .3 to propose a first draft of the revised Guide including the required amendments of the text, diagrams, photos and other illustrations; and

- .4 to amend the first draft of the revised Guide taking into consideration the comments and amendments provided by REMPEC and the MTWG through OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group.

14 The OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group was regularly consulted during the above-mentioned process, and actively contributed by providing comments and by suggesting amendments.

15 In the context of the consultation process, REMPEC organised MEDEXPOL 2018, which was attended by thirty-six (36) participants representing sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey) as well as Regional and International Organisations: IMO, The International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), Transport Canada, the Centro Tecnológico del Mar (CETMAR), the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF), Bonn Agreement and HELCOM.

16 The workshop examined the draft Guide presented in document REMPEC/WG.43/4 and agreed upon the Draft Guidelines for Risks of Gaseous Releases resulting from Maritime Accidents, as amended by the workshop, which is submitted to the present Meeting for adoption under document REMPEC/WG.45/12/2.

The Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol

17 In line with the recommendations of COP 12 and in accordance with the 2015 Guidelines for the MTWG, the MTWG is considered as a regional forum through which the Contracting Parties can contribute to or benefit from the relevant work carried out at a global and European level (e.g. IMO's Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR)).

18 In this context, during the period under review, the Secretariat of the MTWG provided the contribution and comments received from the Mediterranean coastal States, through the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group, as well as the input of REMPEC, to the correspondence group established by PPR on the Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol, under the coordination of Norway.

19 On behalf of the MTWG, the Centre presented in the plenary of the Fifth session of the IMO PPR (UK, 5-9 February 2018), the Draft Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents, submitted as an information document PPR5/INF3. The drafting Group on OPRC HNS Guidelines concluded that elements of the Mediterranean Guide would serve as a valuable reference in the development of the Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and OPRC-HNS Protocol.

20 As indicated in document REMPEC/WG.45/6/1 submitted by IMO, the Sixth Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) (18-22 February 2019) agreed upon the draft "Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol" and submitted it for the approval to the seventy-fourth session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 74) (13-17 May 2019).

21 As detailed in document REMPEC/WG.45/8, the Centre successfully mobilised financial resources, in the framework of the two-year (2019-2020) Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil & HNS Pollution Cooperation (West MOPoCo) Project co-funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission (DG ECHO), to develop a Beta version of the electronic version of the operational part of the Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents³. To ensure systematic and smooth communication during an emergency situation through usage of the forms reproduced in Annex I, Annex II and Annex III of the said Guide, the Secretariat proposes to task the MTWG to contribute, through OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group, to the testing and enhancing of the above-mentioned Beta version during the biennium 2020-2021.

³ UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/23, Decision IG.23/11

Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual

22 Further to the required consultations by the Secretariat of the Bonn Agreement, the Secretariat of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) and REMPEC with their respective technical working group, the three Secretariats explored the possibility of joining efforts and resources to produce a joint response manual for HNS spill manual based on existing guides and tools on HNS response.

23 In the framework of this cooperation, the development of the Joint Inter Regional HNS Response Manual was included in the West MOPoCo Project proposal submitted in April 2018.

24 To address objectives 2 and 3 of MEDEXPOL 2018 referred to in paragraph 10 of the present document, the Workshop considered the following existing HNS response guidelines, tools and training material, or under development, by the organisations and institutions attending the event:

- .1 IMO: Guide on Practical Methods for the Implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol, and the updating of the OPRC-HNS Model Course;
- .2 REMPEC: Theory and practice of foams in chemical spill response (1992), the Significance of a material safety data sheet (2001), Personal protective equipment and monitoring devices for maritime chemical emergencies (2003), the Practical Guide for Marine Chemical Spills (2000), the draft Guide for Risks of Gaseous releases resulting from Maritime Accidents (2018) and the Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS);
- .3 Bonn Agreement: Chapter 26 of Bonn Agreement Counter Pollution Manual related to HNS spill management, the HNS-MS tool;
- .4 HELCOM: HELCOM Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution within the framework of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention), Volume 2, December 2002;
- .5 European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA): The Marine Chemical Information Sheets (MAR-CIS) decision support tool through the web portal application of EMSA;
- .6 Transport Canada: The Operational Guide on Preparedness and Response to Accidental Spills of Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) on Water; and
- .7 Centro Tecnológico del Mar (CETMAR): The HNS Knowledge Tool developed within the project enhancing HNS preparedness and response through training and exercise (MARINER).

25 In light of the comparative analysis between the above guidelines and tools introduced at the Workshop and reproduced in the Annex IV of the Report of MEDEXPOL 2018, the Workshop agreed upon a set of conclusions and recommendations reproduced in Annex V to the said Workshop report, including follow-up on the development of a Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual on the basis of the Accidental water pollution by HNS guide (Transport Canada, Cedre, 2017) offering a comprehensive overview of effective HNS spill management (including media concern and post-spill monitoring for instance) integrating relevant information from:

- .1 the Guide for the Marine Chemical Spills (REMPEC, 2000), especially decision trees, which are of high interest to support decision-making,
- .2 the Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution (HELCOM, 2002), in particular the approach to describe monitoring, sampling and techniques for the different behaviours of chemicals (evaporators, floaters, dissolver, sinker, reactive, etc.) or lost packages (under different conditions) as well as the techniques and concepts (including modelling) which are presented through possibilities and limitations, with cross-references to incident review, and
- .3 regional specific elements to be annexed to the guide as a supplement.

26 In the context of the West MOPoCo Project, further detailed in the information document REMPEC/WG.45/INF/19, Cedre, the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) and ITOF met on 18 April 2019, to prepare the outline of the Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual, which is submitted to the present Meeting under document REMPEC/WG.45/12/3, for comment.

27 A summary of the outcomes of MEDEXPOL 2018, submitted as document PPR 6/15/2, were presented to the Sixth Session of Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 6) (London, UK, 18-22 February 2019). Considering the information provided by REMPEC, the Sub-Committee:

- .1 invited interested Member States to propose a new output on the development of an HNS Response Manual;
- .2 requested the Secretariat to update the IMO Model Introductory Course on the Response to HNS in the Marine Environment – Manager Level;
- .3 noted the need to consider ways of increasing the number of capacity-building activities related to HNS preparedness and response, through IMO's ITCP, the different Regional Seas Programmes or relevant industry initiatives; and
- .4 noted the need to consider ways of exchanging experiences on responding to pollution incidents, including by regular reporting to the Sub-Committee, to enhance knowledge of responding to spill incidents, potentially supporting additional ratification to the OPRC-HNS Protocol and the HNS Convention.

28 Subsequently, the Government of Turkey, submitted document MEPC 74/14/3 to MEPC 74, proposing a new output to develop an operational guide compiling good practices on preparedness and response to spills of Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), drawing from years of experience in this field, from Member States and organizations, including the latest technologies.

29 In light of these developments, the Secretariat proposes to request the MTWG, to contribute during the biennium 2020-2021, through OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group, to the development of the Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual and provide input as required to future sessions of the PPR Sub-Committee to develop the operational guide above mentioned.

The Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS)

30 The Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS is a compilation of information originating from the different sources (IMO, HELCOM (HELCOM Response Manual, Volume 2), Bonn Agreement, CEDRE, Transport Canada (CANUTEC), Environment Canada, Emergency Services College, Finland, Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA), Nordic Council of Ministers and the Finnish Ministry of Interior, North Sea Directorate, Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), Society of International Gas Tanker and Terminal Operators Ltd. (SIGTTO), Swedish Coast Guard and United States Coast Guard) which REMPEC had assembled to reflect the state-of-the-art knowledge for responding to marine chemical emergencies.

31 Considering the development of the Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual, the content of MIDSIS-TROCS will require to be adjusted to the said manual. In this regard, MIDSIS-TROCS will be updated in the framework of the West MOPoCo Project.

Identified needs for further guidance documentation

32 During the deliberation of MEDEXPOL 2018, the participants identified the need for further guidance documentation. In its recommendations, the Workshop requested the Secretariat, to inform the MTWG and the Thirteenth Focal Points Meeting of REMPEC about the outcome of the workshop in particular the need for further guidance documentation on:

- sub-marine pipeline,
- specific guidelines for specific chemicals, and

- response to air contamination as a result of chemical incidents at sea, including combustion of products, to address safety and monitoring issues to be considered during search and rescue operations and response operations.

33 The Meeting is invited to identify the most relevant guidance documentation listed above and to task the MTWG to develop it, through the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group, within the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2020-2021.

Actions requested by the Meeting

34 The Meeting is invited to:

- .1 **take note** of the information provided by the Secretariat in the present document; and
- .2 **consider** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat to be integrated to the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2018-2019, as laid down in paragraphs 9, 11, 21, 29 and 33 of the present document.