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**DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM
FOR PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO
ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

LIFE TCY 99/INT/017/SYR

NATIONAL TRAINING COURSE ON COASTAL SENSITIVITY MAPPING

Damascus, Syria, 17 – 18 August 2003

REPORT

Compiled by

Ian May, GIS Developer, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

INTRODUCTION

The national training course on coastal sensitivity mapping for preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution was held at the premises of the IT Department of the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs (MSEA) on the 17th and 18th of August 2003. The course was conducted by Mr. Ian May from UNEP-WCMC (UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre) with the assistance of Ms. Caryn Anderson from the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF), under the supervision of REMPEC and in cooperation with Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Syria.

The Course was organised as one of the training activities planned within the framework of the LIFE Third Countries project for the development of the national system for preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution in the Syrian Arab Republic (TCY99/INT/017/SYR). The project is financed by the European Community through its LIFE Third Countries financial instrument and is coordinated by the IMO/UNEP Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC).

It was decided that the training course would be split into a morning of lectures followed by a practical exercise in the afternoon to build on the knowledge the participants gained in the morning and to develop their skills in creating a coastal sensitivity map series. The intention at the end of the course was that the participants would be able to create an initial coastal sensitivity map series, comprising the data to be included in the maps and the designing of the final outputs.

After the training course was completed Mr. Ian May remained in Syria for a further 2 days to provide technical assistance to begin the initial stages of the data collation and map production with the GIS developers of the IT Department.

ORGANISATION OF THE TRAINING COURSE

The Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, as the competent Syrian national authority, was responsible for the selection and invitation of participants. The Syrian administration's responsibilities also included making the necessary arrangements for the smooth running of the training course, including *inter alia* the provision of a conference room including coffee breaks and the necessary audio-visual equipment.

The training course was held in the offices of the IT Department of the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Damascus. The venue was adequate for the purposes of the training course with enough space for all the participants to fully partake in the lectures as well as the group exercises. Ample drinks and refreshments were provided throughout the course.

ROLES OF EXTERNAL ORGANISING PARTIES

1. REMPEC (The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea).

REMPEC organised the Course, in close co-operation with the competent Syrian national authorities and was responsible in particular for:

- Identification and selection of lecturers
 - Liaison with the competent Syrian national authorities regarding:
 - the dates and venue of the Training Course;
 - the identification of appropriate trainees for the Training Course in co-operation with the host country;
 - All official contacts between REMPEC and the national authorities;
 - Participating in the overall design of the Training Course programme and taking the final decision regarding the approval of the programme.
 - Providing a REMPEC representative to act as a liaison officer and Course co-ordinator.
 - Providing daily subsistence allowance (DSA) for the participants on the Course.
2. UNEP-WCMC (United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre).

UNEP-WCMC acted under the supervision of REMPEC and provided the following services for the preparation and delivery of the Course:

- Preparation of the programme and the content of the Course, in close co-operation with REMPEC.
- Providing an instructor to lecture on Sensitivity Mapping at the Course.

- Making necessary travel arrangements for the instructors.
- Providing each trainee with a copy of the Course Manual, in addition to supplying four copies for REMPEC files (Total 19 copies).
- Preparing Course certificates.
- Preparing the Final Report on the Course.

3. ITOPF (International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited).

ITOPF acted under the supervision of UNEP-WCMC and provided specific knowledge on the effects of oil spills on the marine environment. This included the sources, causes, fates and impacts of spilt oil as well as an overview of international agreements and laws relating to oil spills in the marine environment.

The costs of preparing the written materials and equipment, as well as the fees, travel costs and DSA of lecturers were paid from the budget of the project TCY99/INT/017/SYR and effected through the contract between REMPEC and UNEP-WCMC.

The training course was conducted in English.

A total of fifteen (15) participants attended the national training course. Organisations that sent representatives included MSEA IT Department, Environmental Directorate Lattakia (MSEA), Environmental Directorate Tartous (MSEA), Chemical Safety and Waste Management Department of MSEA and the General Directorate of Ports, Lattakia.

The list of participants is given in Annex 1.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRAINING COURSE

The training course was opened with a brief introduction from Eng. Fouad EL-O'K from the Chemical Safety and Waste Management Department of the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, who gave a brief background to how the course fitted into the framework of the EC LIFE project and why it was important for successful pollution response.

The objective of the first day of the course was to give the participants an overview of the importance of sensitivity mapping in relation to marine pollution events and to encourage them to think about the users, the level of response and the types of information that will be included. Ms. Caryn Anderson (ITOPF) provided a lecture on the sources, causes, fate and effects of oil in the marine environment to give the participants of the course who were not necessarily familiar with marine pollution events a broad understanding of how the coastal resources could be affected.

The objective of the second day of training was to provide the participants with an overview of how to collate the data into a single map that will be easy to understand by the users. The first lecture explained basic map layouts and important items to include as well as how to fully reference data sources and ensure the quality of the final maps.

In the second lecture of the day the participants were taught how to present the data so that it was easily understandable and provided as much information as possible without becoming confusing. In the practical exercise, the participants created a list of the maps they intended to produce in relation to the areas that they thought were of high risk to pollution. They also created a list of the data they thought could be included in these maps and in additional supporting text drawing on the information sources they identified on the first day.

The full course outline can be found in Annex 2.

CONCLUSIONS

The course was aimed at those individuals working in the collection, management and display of data relating to environmental sensitivity. These included IT professionals within the MSEA, and the General Directorate of Ports who would be expected to provide and manage data that would be entered in the sensitivity maps.

By designing the course to contain exercises as well as lectures the participants had the opportunity to gain a full understanding of the concepts involved in creating a sensitivity map series and initialise the first stages in collection and incorporation of data. The lectures gave the participants a good background knowledge in the uses of sensitivity maps as well as how to design them, what should be included and how the information should be displayed. The group activities gave the participants an opportunity to discuss the problems and issues surrounding Sensitivity Mapping with the experts from UNEP-WCMC and ITOPF to allow them to move forward in the creation of their own map series.

The participants were already familiar with the basics of GIS although part of the course was put together to include how to create a meaningful map and how to present the data in a way that is easy to understand by the target audience. From the feedback received, the participants seemed to have learnt a great deal regarding the structure and uses of a sensitivity map series. This knowledge combined with their existing training in GIS technologies will allow them to put together their own sensitivity map series.

I feel that the course was a great success, by combining the theoretical reasons for creating a Sensitivity Map series with the practical issues involved the participants were given a full understanding of how and why these maps are created. To improve on the grounding that the participants received through the course further training in the collection and management of GIS data could be offered to make sure that the information that goes into the maps is of the best quality possible.

ANNEX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Occupation	Related Office
Ramez KASSAR	Head of IT Dept.	IT Dept. – MSEA, Damascus
Lara DOUGHOZ	GIS developer	IT Dept. – MSEA, Damascus
Khaled ZAHRA	GIS developer	IT Dept. – MSEA, Damascus
Diala EL NEMAH	GIS developer	IT Dept – MSEA, Damascus
Shaka AI SOLEMAN	Engineer	Chemical Safety and Waste Management Dept. – MSEA, Damascus
Adib AL MASRI	Chemical Dep.	Chemical Safety and Waste Management Dept. – MSEA, Damascus
Wael JDIED	Engineer	Environmental Directorate - Lattakia (MSEA)
Adel HABIB	Engineer	Environmental Directorate - Lattakia (MSEA)
Siba AL-KHAIER	Engineer	Environmental Directorate - Lattakia (MSEA)
Roula MAHMOUD	Engineer	Environmental Directorate - Tartous (MSEA)
Rana HANNA	Engineer	Environmental Directorate - Tartous (MSEA)
Jabra SAADE	Engineer	Environmental Directorate - Tartous (MSEA)
Ghefar BARAKAT	Head of IT Unit	General Directorates of Ports Lattakia
Esmail NADDAF	Engineer	General Directorates of Ports Lattakia
Wasiem Saeed	Engineer	General Directorates of Ports Lattakia

Certificate numbers:

- 2212 Shaka AI SOLEMAN
- 2213 Waseem SAEED
- 2214 Esmail NADDAF
- 2215 Ghefar BARAKAT
- 2216 Jabra SAADE
- 2217 Rana HANNA (Ms)
- 2218 Roula MAHMOUD (Ms)
- 2219 Siba AL KHAIER (Ms)
- 2220 Adel HABIB
- 2221 Wael JDIED
- 2222 Adib AL MASRI
- 2223 Diala AL NEMAH (Ms)
- 2224 Khaled ZAHRA
- 2225 Lara DOUGHOZ (Ms)
- 2226 Ramez KASSAR

ANNEX 2

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1

- Introductions and explanation of what the course is aiming to achieve (Ian May)
- Sources, causes, fate and effects of marine oil spills (Caryn Anderson)
- What is Coastal Sensitivity Mapping and why do we need it?
Things to consider when designing a Coastal Sensitivity Map Series (Ian May)
- Practical Exercise (Ian May and Caryn Anderson)
 - Identify the Users
 - Identify Areas of the Syrian Coast in terms of the likelihood of a pollution event occurring there and the level of emergency
 - Identify possible Information Sources paying particular attention to GIS datasets.

Day2

- Map Requirements and Data Quality (Ian May)
- Symbolology (Ian May)
- Conclusions (Ian May)
- Practical Exercise. (Ian May)
 - Create a list of the Maps you would produce identifying their scale, extent and possible target audience
 - Identify the data you would like to include for your specific users on the specific areas including possible data sources and any supporting information you may need to include with the series although not on the maps.

ANNEX 3

LIST OF LECTURERS

Mr. Ian MAY
GIS Developer

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