

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

REMPEC/WG.18/11
20 July 2000

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Malta, 25 - 28 October 2000

Agenda Item 11

REVISION OF THE REGIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (RIS)

Note by REMPEC

1. Timely and efficient response to a pollution incident largely depends on easy access to reliable information and on the knowledge of the nature of the problems, methods and techniques for dealing with marine pollution emergencies.
2. Since its inception in 1976, one of the main activities of the Centre has been to inform the Contracting Parties to the Emergency Protocol to the Barcelona Convention (technical, operation, organizational, administrative and legal issues) concerning preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution.
3. The Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (Athens, 7 - 11 September, 1987 - UNEP/IG.74/5) decided to extend the mandate of the Centre to harmful substances. New objectives and functions of the Centre related to both oil and other harmful substances by the Sixth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were subsequently approved (Athens, 3 - 6 October 1989 - UNEP(OCA)/MED.IG.1/5). Since 1989, the information disseminated by the Centre has covered aspects of accidental pollution originating from both oil and other harmful substances.
4. In order to provide the Contracting Parties with the information required to prepare and initiate response operations, as well as to facilitate mutual assistance for both oil and harmful substances' pollution events, REMPEC had developed a Regional Information System (RIS) structured in four parts:
 - (a) basic documents (Part A);
 - (b) lists and inventories (Part B);
 - (c) databanks, simulation models and decision support systems (Part C);
 - (d) operational guides and technical documents (Part D).

5. With the exception of Part A, each part consists of a number of sections.

6. At each previous Meeting of Focal Points, the Centre had described the activities undertaken in the preparation of the various sections, as well as the current status of RIS for the biennium under review by the Meeting (REMPEC/WG.5/12, REMPEC/WG.10/17, REMPEC/WG.14/17, REMPEC/WG.16/14).

7. At the last Meeting of Focal Points, some modifications were agreed to the list of sections making up Part D of the RIS (REMPEC/WG.16/5/3, REMPEC/WG.16/14). To date, the RIS consists as follows:

PART A: BASIC DOCUMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES CONCERNING ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

PART B: LISTS AND INVENTORIES

SECTION 1 Directory of competent national authorities in charge of accidental marine pollution preparedness, response and mutual assistance and other relevant information.

SECTION 2 Inventory of Centres of Expertise and Centres of Resources which can be, under certain conditions, put at the disposal of a State, which so requests, in cases of emergency.

SECTION 3 Catalogue of response equipment and products.

SECTION 4 Directory of companies offering services in the Mediterranean in case of emergency.

PART C: DATABANKS, FORECASTING MODELS AND DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS

SECTION 1 Description of the Centre's databank on hazardous substances and information services provided by the Centre.

SECTION 2 Description of the Centre's simulation models and information services which can be provided by the Centre.

SECTION 3 Description of the Centre's decision support system and information services which can be provided by the Centre.

SECTION 4 List of alerts and accidents in the Mediterranean.

SECTION 5 Directory of Mediterranean Ports.

SECTION 6 Standardized classification system for chemicals accidentally spilled at sea.

SECTION 7 Directory of Mediterranean Meteorological Centres.

SECTION 8 Database on the transport of chemical substances - TROCS.

PART D: OPERATIONAL GUIDES AND TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

SECTION 1 Guide for combating accidental marine pollution in the Mediterranean.

SECTION 2 Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region.

SECTION 3 Concise dictionary of marine anti-pollution terms.

SECTION 4	The significance of a Material Safety Data Sheet.
SECTION 5	Personal protective equipment and monitoring devices for maritime chemical emergencies.
SECTION 6	The TROCS database and its use in response to lost packages washed ashore.
SECTION 7	Theory and practice of foams in chemical spill response.
SECTION 8	Case studies describing hazardous material spills.
SECTION 9	Risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime incidents.
SECTION 10	Impact of spilled hazardous substances on human life and the marine environment.
SECTION 11	Remote sensing techniques applicable to spilled hazardous substances in the marine environment.
SECTION 12	Practical guide for marine chemical spills.

Proceedings of certain meetings, workshops and seminars organized by the Centre have also been included in the RIS as reference documents. Only one such document, in English only, is currently available:

- Proceedings of the 1989 Workshop on combating accidental pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by harmful substances.

8. In the preparation of the various sections, in particular those belonging to Part D - Operational Guides and Technical Documents, the preparation of a specific technical document was very much dependant on the reference material the Centre was able to collect on the subject. Since the Centre relies heavily on the acquisition of source material at limited or no financial cost, no priority has been given to the preparation of a document over another, other than the limitation of having enough reference material in hand to prepare the document.

9. Since it was first presented in 1989 (ROCC/WG.1/5), with the exception of the minor modifications made to Part D of the RIS mentioned in paragraph 7 above, there has not been a thorough review of the current list of sections making up the four Parts of the RIS. The Meeting might wish to consider that in view of the work carried out to date by the Centre on the RIS and the current state-of-the-art in preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution for oil and other harmful substances existing at the global and reached at the regional and national levels, there might be a need to reorganize the RIS as well as reconsider the contents of the different Parts so that it might better serve the Contracting Parties to prepare and initiate response operations as well as facilitate mutual assistance.

10. Taking into account the aforementioned, at [Annex I](#) is a description of the current status of the RIS, proposed modifications to the RIS and brief explanations for the proposed modifications, whilst for easy reference, [Annex II](#) contains the proposed modified list of the RIS, both of which have been prepared by the Centre to assist the deliberations of the Meeting.

Action requested of the Meeting of Focal Points

11. The Meeting is invited:

- (a) to take note of the progress to date;
- (b) to give guidance and suggestions on the reorganization of the RIS.

ANNEX I**Status of Regional Information System, Proposed Modifications and Explanations for the Modifications
(oil and hazardous substances)**

TITLE	LANGUAGE	STATUS	EXPLANATIONS/REMARKS
PART A: BASIC DOCUMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES CONCERNING ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE	Bilingual.	Updated July 2000.	It is regularly brought up to date in keeping with the decisions of the Meetings of Contracting Parties. Propose to RETAIN.
PART B: LIST AND INVENTORIES			Title could be changed to "Directories and Inventories" which is a more accurate reflection of the current and proposed list.
SECTION 1: Directory of competent national authorities in charge of accidental marine pollution preparedness, response and mutual assistance and other relevant information.	Bilingual.	Updated March 1999.	Propose to RETAIN.
SECTION 2: Inventory of Centres of Expertise and Centres of Resources, which can be put, under certain conditions, at the disposal of a State, which so requests, in cases of emergency.	Bilingual.	Updated February 1999.	Propose to RETAIN.
SECTION 3: Catalogue of response equipment and products.	Bilingual.	Updated January 1989.	The catalogue, focusing on oil response equipment and products, has been superseded by others prepared by organizations and agencies better positioned to prepare such a catalogue. Propose to DELETE.
SECTION 4: Directory of companies offering services in the Mediterranean in case of emergency.	Bilingual.	Updated February 1999.	Propose to RETAIN.

TITLE	LANGUAGE	STATUS	EXPLANATIONS/REMARKS
PART C: DATABANKS, FORECASTING MODELS AND DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS			Title of Part C could be changed to "Databanks and Information Services" in light of the changes proposed hereunder to the list of Sections making up Part C.
SECTION 1: Description of the Centre's databank on hazardous substances and information services provided by the Centre.	Bilingual.	Updated July 1992.	Propose to RETAIN with a possible update to reflect current holdings at the Centre.
SECTION 2: Description of the Centre's simulation models and information services which can be provided by the Centre.			Propose to DELETE since the information had been incorporated in Part C/Section 1.
SECTION 3: Description of the Centre's decision support system and information services which can be prepared by the Centre.			Propose to DELETE since the information has been incorporated in Part C/Section 1.
SECTION 4: List of alerts and accidents in the Mediterranean.	Bilingual.	Updated March 1996. (An appendix exists for the period 1997 - 1999).	Propose to change name to "Alerts and Accidents in the Mediterranean". Propose to RETAIN.
SECTION 5: Directory of Mediterranean Ports.	English only.	Preliminary version published in July 1992.	This document was intended to provide national authorities with a profile of ports operating in the Mediterranean and from which information regarding cargoes onboard a ship could be obtained in case of emergency. For the most part, the information was extracted from Lloyd's Ports of the World, 1991 edition. Other international agencies prepare similar directories having a wider geographical scope, and have better access to updated information and are therefore better positioned than the Centre to prepare such a directory. Propose to DELETE.

TITLE	LANGUAGE	STATUS	EXPLANATIONS/REMARKS
SECTION 6: Standardized classification systems for chemicals accidentally spilled at sea.	English only.	Published May 1991.	In view of the technical content of the publication, it would be more appropriate if it is moved to Part D – Operational Guides and Technical Documents. To RETAIN but move to Part D of RIS.
SECTION 7: Directory of Mediterranean Meteorological Centres.	English only.	Published October 1992.	In view of the content of the publication, it would be more appropriate if it is moved to Part B - Directories and Inventories. To RETAIN but move to Part B of RIS.
SECTION 8: Database on the Transport of Chemical Substances - TROCS.	Bilingual.	Updated May 1999.	To RETAIN.
PART D: OPERATIONAL GUIDES AND TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS			
SECTION 1: Guide for combating accidental Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean.	Bilingual.	Updated January 1995 (E). Updated May 1995 (F).	To RETAIN.
SECTION 2: Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region.	Bilingual.	Published October 1998.	To RETAIN.
SECTION 3: Concise dictionary of Marine Anti-pollution Terms.	Bilingual.	Published October 1988.	To RETAIN.
SECTION 4: The significance of a Material Safety Data Sheet.	Bilingual.	Published March 1991.	To RETAIN.
SECTION 5: Personal protective equipment and monitoring devices for maritime chemical emergencies.	English only.	Published April 1995.	French version in the process of being translated. Should be available by December 2000. To RETAIN.
SECTION 6: The TROCS database and its use in response to lost packages washed ashore.	English only.	Published December 1992.	To RETAIN.

TITLE	LANGUAGE	STATUS	EXPLANATIONS/REMARKS
SECTION 7: Theory and practice of foams in chemical spill response.	Bilingual.	Published May 1992.	To RETAIN.
SECTION 8: Case studies describing hazardous material spills.			<p>There is a considerable overlap with the contents of this document and the next version of TROCS since a new feature in the next version of the database consists of linking reports of accidents involving chemical substances to the individual chemicals in the database.</p> <p>To DELETE.</p>
SECTION 9: Risk of gaseous releases from maritime incidents.	Bilingual.	Published May 1996.	To RETAIN.
Risk of gaseous releases resulting from maritime incidents - Supplement.			<p>This is a supplement to the previous document and will essentially consist of a series of footprints for the spreading of gases which may assist as a screening tool for the initial assessment of emergency situations (REMPEC/WG.14/3/3). Footprints will be produced for a selection of gases. The gases chosen will be those which are listed in Chapter 19 of the IMO's IGC Code. Still to be prepared and forms part of the 2000/2001 Workplan.</p> <p>To RETAIN.</p>
SECTION 10: Impact of spilled hazardous substances of human life and the marine environment.			<p>Still to be prepared and forms part of the 2000/2001 Workplan.</p> <p>To RETAIN.</p>

TITLE	LANGUAGE	STATUS	EXPLANATIONS/REMARKS
SECTION 11: Remote sensing techniques applicable to spilled hazardous substances in the marine environment.			<p>Remote sensing techniques for the detection of bulk chemicals spilled at sea are still in their infancy although they could be useful for locating packages. At this time, there may not be enough information available to prepare a technical publication.</p> <p>To DELETE.</p> <p><i>Note: The "Centro di Telerilevamento Mediterraneo (CTM)" was recognized in 1993 as a Regional Activity Centre for Environment Remote Sensing (RAC/ERS). It conducts studies and remote-sensing observations of the Mediterranean environment and provides technical assistance to all Mediterranean coastal States and for the development of co-operation among remote-sensing organizations in the basin.</i></p>
SECTION 11 _{bis} : Compendium of notes on preparedness and response to maritime pollution emergencies involving hazardous substances.			<p>New proposal to add this publication which will be a collection of notes based on the publications of the RIS and other occasional papers which could be used as background information for training courses.</p> <p>TO ADD.</p>
SECTION 12: Practical guide for marine chemical spills.	Bilingual.	Updated January 2000.	To RETAIN.
Practical guide for marine chemical spills (Basic Calculations) - Supplement.			<p>Forms part of the 2000/2001 Workplan. Still to be prepared.</p> <p>To RETAIN.</p>

TITLE	LANGUAGE	STATUS	EXPLANATIONS/REMARKS
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS: Proceedings of the 1989 Workshop on combating accidental pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by harmful substances	English only.	Published in June 1990.	Since the document is a reference document, it might not be appropriate to retain in the list of the RIS. To DELETE.
Proceedings of the 1990 Seminar on Financial Questions, Liability and Compensation for consequences of accidents causing pollution by oil and other harmful substances.			Has never been published and since the document is a reference document, it might not be appropriate to retain in the list of the RIS. Some papers presented at the seminar are not applicable to the regimes for compensation currently in operation today. To DELETE.

Annex II

**Proposed Modified List of the Regional Information System
(oil and other harmful substances)**

PART A: BASIC DOCUMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES CONCERNING ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

PART B: DIRECTORIES AND INVENTORIES

SECTION 1 Directory of competent national authorities in charge of accidental marine pollution preparedness, response and mutual assistance and other relevant information.

SECTION 2 Inventory of Centres of Expertise and Centres of Resources which can be, under certain conditions, put at the disposal of a State, which so requests, in cases of emergency.

SECTION 3 Directory of Mediterranean Meteorological Centres.

SECTION 4 Directory of companies offering services in the Mediterranean in case of emergency.

PART C: DATABANKS, AND INFORMATION SERVICES

SECTION 1 Description of the Centre's databank on hazardous substances and information services provided by the Centre.

SECTION 2 Alerts and Accidents in the Mediterranean.

SECTION 3 Database on the transport of chemical substances – TROCS.

PART D: OPERATIONAL GUIDES AND TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

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SECTION 4 The significance of a Material Safety Data Sheet.

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SECTION 6 The TROCS database and its use in response to lost packages washed ashore.

SECTION 7 Theory and practice of foams in chemical spill response.

SECTION 8 Standardised classification system for chemicals accidentally spilt at sea.

- SECTION 9 Risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime incidents.
Risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime incidents – Supplement.
- SECTION 10 Impact of spilled hazardous substances on human life and the marine environment.
- SECTION 11 Compendium of notes on preparedness and response to maritime pollution emergencies involving hazardous substances.
- SECTION 12 Practical guide for marine chemical spills.
Practical guide for marine chemical spills – Supplement.