



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

10th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.32/9/1
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Agenda Item 9

**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (MTWG)**

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document gives an update on the progress made by the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) since the 9th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

Action to be taken: [Paragraph 46 to 50](#)

Related documents: [REMPEC/WG.30/6/1](#)
[REMPEC/WG.30/6/2](#)
[REMPEC/WG.32/8/1](#)

Background

1. The Meeting of Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) held in 2000 agreed on the establishment of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) aimed at facilitating the exchange of technical data and other scientific information on preparedness and response issues related to marine pollution emergencies and concurred with the guidelines for the method of work of the Working Group (“Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group”).

2. The need for such a Regional Forum was strengthened by a decision of the Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8, Annex IV, Appendix 1, Monaco 14-17 November 2001), where it was agreed that REMPEC should develop and maintain close working relationships with other Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan and with the “specialized regional organisms” which play a coordinating role as set forth in the Mediterranean Action Plan, particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.

3. The Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (hereinafter referred to as “the Strategy”), which was adopted in 2005 by the [Fourteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention](#) (UNEP (DEC)/MED IG.16/3, Portoroz, Slovenia, 8-11 November 2005), also addresses the issue of co-operation with other Organizations. In particular, Specific Objective 17 of the Strategy states that Contracting Parties shall encourage:

- their respective scientific and technical institutions, as well as the industry, to actively participate in R&D activities and programmes related to accidental marine pollution prevention, preparedness and response;

- their respective national institutions and industry to present the results of their R&D activities and programmes in international fora.

4. Moreover, the activities carried out within the MTWG also facilitate the implementation of the following Specific Objectives of the Strategy:

- Specific Objective 17: Participation of the regional scientific and technical institutions in R&D activities and facilitation of transfer of technology.
- Specific Objective 18: To improve decision-making process through development and introduction of technical and decision support tools
- Specific Objective 20: To revise existing and develop new recommendations, principles and guidelines, aimed at facilitating international cooperation and mutual assistance, within the framework of Prevention and Emergency Protocol.

MTWG's Work Programme and decisions of the Ninth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC

5. In April 2009, the Ninth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC endorsed the Secretariat's proposal to include, in the future programme of work of the MTWG (2010-2011):

- the revision of the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region, adopted by the [Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention](#) (UNEP (OCA)/MED IG.3/5, Appendix I, Antalya, Turkey 15 October 1993), as well as
- the initialisation of the revision of the Mediterranean Integrated Decision Support Information System (MIDSIS-TROCS) Version 2.0.

6. In compliance with the amended Guidelines of the MTWG, the Contracting Parties designated appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the two activities of the MTWG Work Programme 2010-2011, as follows:

- 15 nominations for the revision of the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region.
- 15 nominations for the revision of the Mediterranean Integrated Decision Support Information System (MIDSIS-TROCS) Version 2.0.

7. It is recalled that the previous programme of work (2008-2009) consisted in developing Guidelines on Shorelines Assessment, a Decision Support Tool on Waste Management; and technical Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques.

8. In this respect, the Meeting agreed to request the Secretariat to integrate the final version of the Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment in the Centre's Regional Information System (RIS) and to disseminate it to the Contracting Parties. The Meeting was informed that, following the finalization of the document, a pilot training course would be organised by REMPEC during the biennium 2010-2011.

9. The Meeting acknowledged the work carried by the MTWG on the draft Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool and the work still to be carried out, and encouraged the MTWG nominees to provide comments on the Draft Decision Tool.

10. The Meeting took note of the progress made on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques.

Cooperation between the Regional Forum (MTWG) and the International Forum (IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group)

11. It is recalled that following the decision of the Eight Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, the MTWG Programme of work (2008-2009) was submitted to the Sixth Meeting of the IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group (TG). Following the proposal of the Secretariat, the Fifty-Sixth Session of IMO's

Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) agreed to support the MTWG in the implementation of its Programme of work (2008-2009).

Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment

12. It is recalled that the Secretariat in collaboration with the MTWG completed the project in two phases:

- Phase I: Comparative Study on existing oiled shoreline assessment guidelines, hereafter referred as "Comparative Study";
- Phase II: "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment".

13. As requested by the Contracting Parties ([vide paragraph 8](#)):

- the Secretariat integrated the final version of the Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment in English and French as well as the Comparative Study in the Centre's website in the sections [Information resources/Regional Guidelines and Manuals/Preparedness and Response](#), and [Information resources/Publications](#)
- The Secretariat published the Guidelines in both official languages and disseminated it to the Contracting Parties.

14. A training programme on shoreline assessment based on existing programmes available in countries outside the Mediterranean region (e.g. Canada, New Zealand) has been developed in order to facilitate the process of integration of the systematic shoreline assessment in the national response procedure and therefore increase the efficiency of the response. A pilot sub-regional training course called "Train the Trainer Course on Oiled Shoreline Assessment" was organised by REMPEC between 12th and 14th October 2010 in Tunis. Representatives of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia attended, as well as representatives of the regional oil industry. After theoretical training, the thirty-five (35) participants conducted field surveys.

15. In the framework of the Spanish support to international bodies, in 2010, the Spanish Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs provided voluntary contributions to the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) in view of expanding the regional assessment methodology to the Eastern Mediterranean region through the organisation of "Train the Trainer Course on Oiled Shoreline Assessment" for Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, in 2011.

16. It should be further noted that the Secretariat has been contacted by the Regional Organization for Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden "PERSGA" who expressed its interest in disseminating in its area of competence, the Guidelines developed by the MTWG. The document is currently being translated into Arabic with minor adjustment to include regional specificities (e.g. mangrove, corals, etc...). In addition, in the framework of the Global Initiative aimed at fostering cooperation between the governments and the oil industry, the Secretariat requested the support of MOIG for the publication of the Arabic version of the Guidelines to be disseminated to the Arab speaking countries. Finally, in view of the above mentioned training course to be delivered in 2011 for Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, the Secretariat requested the assistance of MOIG for the translation of the training material in Arabic and English. At the time of writing the present document, the Secretariat was awaiting confirmation from MOIG.

Mediterranean Waste Management Decision Support Tool

17. Following the decision of the Eighth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Secretariat completed the project, detailed as follows:

- **Phase I:** "Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Study" aimed at developing and disseminating to the Mediterranean coastal States a questionnaire related to the respective national waste management policy. The questionnaire covered technical, logistic, financial and legal aspects of the management of oily waste.
- **Phase II:** Draft a Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool, hereafter referred as the "*Draft Decision Support Tool*". This document has been designed to assist the countries in drafting or updating their oil spill waste management

plan. It also provides support for the selection of the best environmental practical option for the treatment and final disposal of oil spill waste and for the review of their regulatory framework, if necessary.

- **Phase III:** On the basis of the outcome of Phase II, an electronic version of the “*Decision Support Tool*” has been developed to facilitate and guide Mediterranean coastal States in developing/improving their national waste management strategy and in defining the most appropriate waste stream for a given type of waste, according to the country’s capacity and legislation.

18. Before the Ninth Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, in the framework of Phase II, the “Draft Decision Support Tool” was submitted to the MTWG and to the OPRC Focal Points for comments. The document was amended accordingly and submitted to the IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group for its consideration and input. The final version of the *Decision Support Tool* developed in Phase II is reproduced in **Annex I** in the English language only. In view of differentiating the hard copy from the electronic version, it is proposed to rename the hard copy “*Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Guidelines*”.

19. As referred in [paragraph 11](#) of the present document, the IMO OPRC-HNS TG technically supported the development of the *Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Guidelines*. Given the difficulties faced by many countries in dealing with oily waste and debris and the need for guidance on the matter, the IMO OPRC-HNS TG agreed, when revising the draft proposal of the MTWG, that the document was sufficiently non-region specific and was developed at an appropriate level to be easily and usefully adapted as an international tool.

20. During the tenth Meeting of the IMO OPRC-HNS TG (TG10), the Group agreed to develop international guidelines for waste management based on the Mediterranean version developed by the MTWG. In this regards, the Secretariat offered to take the work forward.

21. At its Eleventh Meeting, IMO OPRC-HNS TG, having considered the document submitted by REMPEC, containing the finalized Draft Oil Waste Management Decision Support Tool and noting that it incorporated all the comments provided at TG 10, as well as those provided intersessionally, agreed on the final draft text and referred it to MEPC 62 for approval. The Group, in considering the information presented by REMPEC on the accompanying electronic tool as an internet-based resource tool developed for the Mediterranean region, noted that it could potentially serve as the basis for extending the use of the tool to other regions.

22. Following the recommendations of the MTWG and the OPRC-HNS TG, the Secretariat implemented Phase III of the project. Taking into account the volume of information included in the document, the electronic application resulting from Phase III facilitates and guides Mediterranean coastal States in developing/improving their national waste management strategy. The tool is available in the Centre’s website in section Tools/Operational Tools or through the following link <http://www.rempec.org/rempecwaste>.

23. OPRC Focal Points have been recently provided with usernames and passwords to access the specific section created for each Mediterranean coastal State, enabling the input of national data in the database in view of the development or improvement of their respective national waste management strategy.

24. Data provided by the MTWG members in the first phase of the project has been added by the Secretariat into the specific section of their respective country.

25. A National Pilot Training Course aimed at providing theoretical information on oily waste management and at learning how to use the tool will be organized in 2011 in one of the countries who actively contributed to the development of the tool since the first phase of the project. As a follow-up, similar training is proposed in the Programme of Work for 2012-2013.

26. The Secretariat requested the support of MOIG for the translation of the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool into French. At the time of writing the present document, the Secretariat was awaiting confirmation from MOIG.

Sunken Oil

27. As mentioned in [paragraph 11](#) of the present document, the Fifty-Sixth Session of MEPC agreed to include in the programme of work of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, the development of technical Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques.

28. At its seventh session, the IMO OPRC-HNS TG had considered the results of the literature review on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques submitted by Italy (MEPC/OPRC-HNS/TG 7/3/7) and an outline identifying a series of topics that would serve as the basis for further elaboration leading to the development of a guideline.

29. At its tenth session, the Group had considered the results of the United Kingdom Maritime and Coast Guard Agency (UK MCA) Research Project on tracking and predicting the behaviour of submerged and sunken oils and development of oil recovery techniques and had reviewed the possibilities for combining the results of this work with the work initiated by Italy on the development of the technical guidelines on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques. The Group agreed to establish a correspondence group under the leadership of the United Kingdom, in view of utilizing the various pieces of information and establishing a work plan for the development of the guideline in order to submit a report on this work to the Group at TG 11.

30. The MTWG was invited to provide comments on the document drafted by UK. Comments received from the MTWG were forwarded to the correspondence group for its consideration.

31. Subsequently, at TG11, the IMO OPRC-HNS TG considered the document submitted by UK, which set out an initial draft of the guideline, as developed in the intersessional period and asked the correspondence group under the leadership of the United Kingdom to:

- further develop the Guideline as operational guidance, based on the comments received by the Group, limiting any references to oil in sunken wrecks to a minimum; and
- to submit a revised draft to the Group for consideration at TG 12.

Revision of the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region

32. Considering the developments in the field of dispersants since the last revision of the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region in October 1998, the Ninth Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points endorsed the revision of the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region, as part of the programme of work of the MTWG (2010-2011).

33. With a view to facilitating the implementation of this activity and to assist the MTWG in reaching the objective highlighted in the following, a short-term consultant from the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (Cedre) has been recruited by REMPEC.

34. The objective of the revision of the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region is to provide Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention an updated reference document reflecting best practices in the field of dispersant use. The Guidelines should provide practical technical and legal guidance to the Mediterranean coastal States when considering the use of dispersants in their national response strategy.

35. The proposed revised "Guidelines" are divided into four independent parts addressing different issues. Each part has been developed with a specific objective and is aimed at different end-users:

- **Part I (Introduction)** is a description of the document's context. It should be noted that the content of this part remains unchanged as compared to the version adopted by the Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP (OCA)/MED IG.3/5, Appendix I, Antalya, Turkey, 15 October 1993).

- **Part II (Basic Information on Dispersants and their Application)** contains general information on dispersants and their application. Part II is aimed at providing background information on the matter to any person interested in the subject.
- **Part III (Outline for a National Policy on the use of Dispersant: Proposed Template National Policy)** has been developed with a view to assisting coastal States in the revision/development of their national policy on the use of dispersant. It has been developed as a template which can be followed by the authorities in charge of the development/maintenance of the national policy on the use of dispersants and can also be used for the implementation of national or local contingency plan for dispersant.
- **Part IV: (Operational & Technical Sheets)** provides a set of practical sheets which point out the different operational issues when using dispersants. Part IV has been developed for operational users with a view to providing them with the required knowledge for efficient dispersant application.

36. Taking into consideration the constant development in the region with respect to dispersant use policy and dispersant stockpiles, it has been decided to remove the related Annexes of the current version as their content has been migrated on REMPEC's website country profiles which were developed to facilitate the exchange of communication in the region and to keep information updated.

37. Following the sinking of the Deepwater Horizon rig and the ensuing spill in the Gulf of Mexico (vide document REMPEC/WG.32/8/1), the Centre was requested to identify response equipment; including dispersants which could be made available to the US authorities. The replies received show that the current country profile should be extended in order to specify the types of equipment and the respective quantities available. In this respect, it was proposed to take the opportunity of the establishment of the MTWG for the revision of the above mentioned Guidelines to review the situation in each country as far as dispersant use policy and available means is concerned. In view of facilitating the proposed inventory, the Centre has drafted a template letter to be disseminated to ports, oil industry or any entity in the respective country which own dispersant product and equipment. Only six (6) countries replied to this inventory.

38. The Draft Guidelines were submitted to the MTWG and to the oil industry through MOIG and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) in the framework of the Global Initiative, for comments.

39. The final draft Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region, attached in **Annex II**, take into consideration the comments provided and are submitted to the Meeting for its consideration.

Update of MIDSIS TROCS

40. According to the decision of the Ninth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the MTWG was mandated to initiate the revision of the Mediterranean Integrated Decision Support Information System (MIDSIS-TROCS) version 2.0 in its programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.

41. MIDSIS-TROCS is a decision support system based on TROCS 2001 database, which was developed by REMPEC in collaboration with Malta University Services (MUS), for the use of REMPEC's Operational Focal Points.

42. In view of the implementation of this project, a Steering Committee, composed of IMO, CEDRE, Transport Canada, the International Tanker Owner Pollution Federation Ltd (ITOPF), and REMPEC as Secretariat and project manager, was established to oversee the revision of the tool.

43. The project is being implemented in a three phase approach:

- **Phase I: Definition of the structure of the new version and identification/revision of its functionalities:** This phase was completed by the Steering Committee with the assistance of Transport Canada, ITOPF, IOPC Funds during the 1st Steering Committee Meeting for the Revision of MIDSIS-TROCS Version 2.0 which was held in London on March 16th and 18th 2010. During this meeting, members of the Steering Committee identified a number of functionalities for the new tool which will serve as the basis for the development of the following Phase II and Phase III.

- **Phase II: Update of data:** This phase includes the update of all data included in the current version of the tool: Physical/chemical data, Additional data, Transportation data, Reactivity, Chemical data, Marine pollution data and Decision Trees.
- **Phase III: IT development of the tool MIDSIS-TROCS 3.0:** During this phase a revised tool will be developed, the interface will be designed, updated data will be included, and the revised application will be transferred to REMPEC's website.

44. Following a tender issued in October 2010, REMPEC selected the Canadian Company E2Consulting for the implementation of the project which is expected to be completed by August 2011. A presentation of the tool in development will be made during the Meeting by the Secretariat for its consideration.

45. In September 2011, upon submission of the first version of MIDSIS-TROCS 3.0 by E2 Consulting, members of the MTWG nominated by their respective Governments will be invited to provide their comments on the tool in view of its finalization.

The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to:

46. **With regard to the "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment":**

- **take note** of the work carried out by the MTWG for the development of the "Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment"; and
- **request Contracting Parties to integrate** the systematic shoreline assessment in the national response procedure.

47. **Concerning the Mediterranean Waste Management Decision Support Tool:**

- **take note** of the work carried out by the MTWG on the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool and prospective work to be carried out;
- **endorse** the *Mediterranean Waste Management Decision Support Tool* reproduced in Annex I and renamed it as *Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Guidelines*;
- **request the Secretariat to integrate** the "*Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Guidelines*" in the Centre's Regional Information System (RIS) in its Section D related to Operational guides and technical documents and to disseminate it to the Contracting Parties;
- **endorse** the online Mediterranean Waste Management Decision Support Tool; and
- **encourage** OPRC Focal Points to use the tool and supervise the input of national data in view of the development or improvement of their respective national waste management strategy.

48. **Regarding the Guidelines on Sunken Oil Assessment and Removal Techniques:**

- **take note** of the work being carried out on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques; and
- **continue supporting** this initiative by providing comments through the Secretariat on the work carried out at the international level.

49. **With regard to Revision of the Dispersant Guidelines adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:**

- **take note** of the work carried out by the MTWG for the revision of the Dispersant Guidelines adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;
- **provide** comments on the proposed final draft Guidelines reproduced in Annex II. In particular, should the Meeting of Focal Point decide to review Part I of the Guidelines

which was adopted by the Contracting Parties in 1993, the forthcoming Contracting Parties Meeting should be informed accordingly;

- **endorse** the Guidelines following the inclusion of comments; and
- **request the Secretariat to replace** the existing “Mediterranean Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean Region” adopted in 1998 with the final revised version and to disseminate it to the Contracting Parties.

50. **Concerning the revision of MIDSIS TROCS version 2.0:**

- **take note** of the work carried out by the MTWG on the revision of MIDSIS TROCS Version 2.0;
- **encourage** the MTWG nominees to provide comments on the first version of MIDSIS TROCS Version 3.0 for its finalization;
- **request the Secretariat to integrate** the final version of MIDSIS TROCS version 3.0 in the Centre’s Regional Information System (RIS) in its Section C related to Databanks and information resources and to disseminate it to the Contracting Parties;
- **assist the Secretariat** in maintaining updated information on Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) incidents by providing reports on HNS response following incidents; and
- **request the Secretariat to liaise** with the relevant national and international bodies to continue maintaining the database on HNS incidents.