

GUIDELINES FOR CO-OPERATION IN COMBATING MARINE OIL POLLUTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

*Adopted by the Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention,
Athens, 11 September 1987 (UNEP/IG.74/5)*

The Contracting Parties

Recalling their commitments under the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, hereafter referred to as "the Protocol",

Recalling the need to establish National Contingency Plans for combating oil pollution,

Considering that in the light of experience there is a need for Guidelines to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol and in particular mutual co-operation in the Mediterranean,

Recognizing that such co-operation cannot replace the individual action of each Contracting Party, which is essential in the initial hours following an incident to mitigate the effects of pollution,

Recalling the role of the Regional Oil Combating Centre for the Mediterranean Sea hereafter referred to as "the Centre",

Recommend that the following Guidelines be used to the extent possible and request that these guidelines, as well as the documentation related to their implementation be inserted by the Centre in the "Guide for Pollution Combating in the Mediterranean" which it disseminates:

1. The Parties will report to the Centre at least all spillages or discharges of oil in excess of 100 cubic metres as soon as they have knowledge of them. A Standard Alert Format will be used for this purpose. The format can be found in the "Guide for Pollution Combating in the Mediterranean" that has been disseminated and updated by the Centre.
2. The Parties will acquire individually the necessary facilities to combat oil pollution in their territorial waters, including those means needed to provide initial response in case of major pollution incidents. In determining the minimum level of response capabilities, consideration should be given to the National Contingency Plan and in particular to the most vulnerable and high risk areas.
3. When in case of an incident the requirements for combating pollution exceed the national capabilities and when a Party requests the assistance of other Parties, this assistance may involve equipment, products and specialized personnel. Such assistance will be requested:
 - either through the Centre;
 - or, when bilateral or multilateral agreements exist, directly by the Authorities of the Party requesting assistance (hereafter referred to as "the Requesting Party") from the Authorities of one or several Parties (hereafter referred to as "the Assisting Party"). The Centre will be systematically informed of all requests for assistance and consequent action taken.
4. Whenever assistance is requested, the Requesting Party will be in full charge of response operations. If response teams are put at the disposal of the Requesting Party it will issue instructions to response team leaders who will then be in charge of looking after the details of the operation.
5. The Requesting Party will:

- make its request in a clear and precise manner (quantity, type etc) by indicating for which purposes equipment, products and response personnel will be used;
- appoint an authority to receive the equipment, products and/or personnel and to ensure control of operations from the moment equipment, products and personnel arrive in the country and while these are conveyed to and from the scene of operations;
- make arrangements for the rapid entry of equipment, products and personnel prior to their arrival and ensure that customs formalities are facilitated to the maximum extent. Equipment should be admitted on a temporary basis and products should be admitted free of excise and duties;
- supply all that is needed for the correct operation and maintenance of equipment and provide accommodation and food for response teams;
- ensure that, should ships and aircraft be provided, ships are granted all necessary authorizations and aircraft cleared to fly in the national air space. A flight plan or a flight notification will be filed and accepted as an authorization for aircraft to take off, land ashore or at sea outside regular customs airfields;
- return, once response operations are over, all unused products and ensure that returned equipment is in the best possible working order;
- send a report on the effectiveness of equipment, products and personnel provided, to the appropriate Authorities of the Assisting Party. A copy of the report will be sent to the Centre.

6. The Assisting Party will provide:

- a detailed statement and complete list of all equipment, products and personnel within those listed by the Requesting Party it can provide as well as instructions for use of equipment and products;
- equipment that is in good working order and suitable for the requirements of the Requesting Party;
- only products approved for use in its own territory;
- competent specialized personnel, if possible equipped with own kit needed for their action. Non-specialized personnel should not normally be sent out except perhaps in case of a particularly massive oil pollution.

7. In the absence of bilateral or multilateral agreements, the financial conditions for the operation will be agreed between the Assisting and the Requesting Parties.

8. For regional co-operation to work effectively and rapidly in case of emergency, each Party will update annually the information provided to the Centre in accordance with Article 6 of the Protocol and any other relevant information including:

- the national organization and the competent national authorities in charge of combating marine pollution;
- specific national regulations aimed at preventing accidents likely to cause marine pollution;
- national regulations regarding the use of products and combating techniques;
- bilateral or multilateral agreements on marine pollution signed with other Mediterranean Parties;

- research programmes, experiments and major exercises on the various aspects of marine pollution response;
- purchase of major items of equipment.

This annual updated report will be sent to the Centre by one of the Focal Points of the Centre, designated by each Contracting Party, during the first quarter. If there is no new information, a "nil" report will be sent. A "nil" report for oil spillages and discharges will also be sent if no report has been made pursuant to paragraph 1 above.

9. In order to strengthen the national capabilities to combat pollution, a national programme of training of personnel will be developed and maintained at a proper level. For this purpose the Centre will continue to provide training:

At the regional level:

- (a) General training covering all the aspects of marine pollution control.
- (b) Practical advanced training designed to deal with one single and important aspect of pollution control.

At a national level:

- (c) Pollution combating training adapted to the specific requirements of a Party, on its request.