



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

Webinar to enhance regional cooperation in responding to marine
Oil and HNS pollution in the Mediterranean (MEDEXPOL 2020)

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Agenda Item 6

SYNTHESIS OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE ASSESSMENTS OF THE NATIONAL OIL SPILL RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMMES OF THE WEST MOPOCO COUNTRIES

Note by SGMer and ITOFF

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: The document provides a summary of the main outcomes of the self-assessments of the National Oil Spill Response Preparedness Programmes of Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia conducted in the framework of the West MOPoCo project (2019-2020) using the Readiness evaluation tool for oil spills.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 4

Related documents: REMPEC/WG.45/16, REMPEC/WG.47/INF.6

Introduction

1 As part of the Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil & HNS Pollution Cooperation Project (West MOPoCo), and following the Sub-regional Workshop on the use of the readiness evaluation Tool for oil spills and its accompanying Manual (Malta, 24-26 April 2019), which report is reproduced in the document REMPEC/WG.47/INF.6, the seven partnering countries (Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia) have carried out a self-assessment of their national oil spill response (OSR) preparedness programmes. To note, an **OSR preparedness programme** in this context encompasses the **National Contingency Plan (NCP)** as well as spill management aspects, competent authorities, equipment, spill and spill response history, training and exercises, and other related components of oil spill preparedness and response capability. The readiness evaluation Tool for oil spills and its accompanying Manual, used in the Caribbean, were chosen to assist the above-mentioned governments to self-assess the level of their OSR preparedness programmes.

2 The Tool is an electronic application offering a checklist-type approach for a specific OSR programme evaluation and the Manual provides the background for OSR programme assessment and explains the terminology used, the approach to the assessment process and the concept for a Global Improvement Program. These tools build on the 2008 IOSC guidelines.

3 The Tool and Manual were used during multi-stakeholder workshops by national authorities in seven countries Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain & Tunisia in the framework of the West MOPoCo project, leading to the first harmonised assessment of the level of preparedness to oil spills in the Western Mediterranean region. The outcome of the assessment process is reproduced in the **Annex** to the present document.

4 The outcome is a scoring summary which yields conclusions for the scope and level assessed and a Global Performance Analysis (GPA) report, which includes a) a quantitative conclusion for each category GPA as well as for the overall programme (Overall Global Assessment Score) and b) a qualitative conclusion for the overall programme which highlights where critical criteria were partially completed or not completed Global Improvement Program (GIP) and lists the recommendations put forward by the participants.

Action requested by the meeting

- 5 **The Meeting is invited to take note** of the information provided in the present document.

Annex

Outcomes of the self-assessments of the National Oil Spill Response Preparedness Programmes of Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia using the Readiness evaluation tool for oil spills

Outcomes of the self-assessments of the National Oil Spill Response Preparedness Programmes of Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia using the Readiness evaluation tool for Oil spills

Introduction

1 Following training during the Sub-regional Workshop on the use of the readiness evaluation Tool for oil spills (the Tool) and its accompanying Manual (Malta, 24-26 April 2019), the seven Beneficiary countries of the West MOPoCo project Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain & Tunisia carried out the self-assessment of their National OSR preparedness programmes during a series of national workshops.

2 The Tool and its accompanying Manual were used during multi-stakeholder workshops by national authorities in the respective countries in the framework of the West MOPoCo. The workshops findings lead to the first harmonised assessment of the level of preparedness to oil spills not only in the Western Mediterranean region, but also in the whole Mediterranean.

Presentation of the Tool and Manual

3 The Tool lists 68 criteria embedded in 10 categories (A. Legislation, Regulations & Agreements, B. Oil Spill Contingency Planning, C. Response Coordination, D. Health, Safety & Security, E. Operational Response, F. Tracking, Assessment, Information Management, G. Logistics, H. Financial and Administrative Considerations, I. Training & Exercises, J. Sustainability & Improvement). Those criteria form the core of the OSR programmes assessment.

4 The Tool offers three levels of detail (A, B, C). For the West MOPoCo project, it was agreed to focus on the thorough assessment of the first level, Level A. At Level A an OSR preparedness programme must address 22 critical criteria to be considered complete and a programme should not be assessed at a higher level of competency until it has achieved a Global Overall Global Assessment Score > 90%.

5 As per the Manual's guidelines, an OSR Programme has achieved Level A competency when the responsible government entity meets the following criteria:

- a. "Has a response capacity commensurate to the scope of its contingency plan
- b. Has a Plan which meets, at a minimum, the applicable regulatory requirements
- c. Has performed a basic oil spill risk analysis and identified key sensitive areas
- d. Has a contingency plan that clearly states the response strategies to be used in a safe manner
- e. Has a contingency plan which addressed logistical requirements and realistic response times based on adequate communications and reporting
- f. Has an elementary waste management plan (temporary storage, transport, tracking and disposal options)
- g. Has a spill response management structure which is contractible and expandable according to the needs of a response
- h. Holds regular training of its response personnel and exercises of its contingency plan
- i. Has financial mechanisms in place to provide emergency funds to initiate response and procedures to receive claims
- j. Reviews and updates its contingency plan and implements recommended improvements following critiques of exercises and actual response"

6 The outcome of the assessment process is a scoring summary, which yields conclusions for the scope and level assessed and a Global Performance Analysis (GPA) report, which includes:

- a. a quantitative conclusion for each category (Global Performance Analysis) as well as for the overall programme (Overall Global Assessment Score) and
- b. a qualitative conclusion for the overall programme which highlights where critical criteria were partially completed or not completed (Global Improvement Program) and lists the recommendations put forward by the participants.

National assessment workshops

7 The seven Beneficiary countries carried out their self-assessment during a series of national workshops. Each workshop's findings were summarised in a report based on a template developed by ITOFF.

8 Calendar of activities:

- Malta: Valletta, 8-10 October 2019, organised by TM with the support of ITOFF and REMPEC
- France: Brest, 21 October 2019, organised by Cedre and SGMer
- Italy: Rome, 30 October 2019, organised by ISPRA
- Spain: Madrid, 19 December 2019, organised by Min. Fomento
- Morocco: Rabat, 14-16 January 2020, organized by MEME with the support of ITOFF
- Tunisia: Tunis, 5-6 February 2020, organised by NEPA with the support of ITOFF
- Algeria: Algiers, 10-12 March 2020, organised by CNL with the support of ITOFF

9 National workshops followed different formats according to countries' preferences and OSR organisation. Some workshops gathered larger group of participants, representing various government agencies involved in spill preparedness and response (allowing for wider discussions), while others focussed on a smaller number of stakeholders. The workshop's outcomes will be further disseminated to national stakeholders and the improvement programmes consolidated through follow-up national workshops under the West MOPoCo project.

Main findings

10 The majority of countries assessed their national OSR preparedness programme as per Level A criteria. Only France and Spain, having previously completed Level A, carried out an assessment according to Level B and Level C respectively. The assessments revealed that the level of OSR preparedness programme is heterogeneous across the sub-region.

Topic areas	Countries' Scores (Level A)						
Legislation, Regulations, Agreements	100%	88%	88%	63%	75%	100%	100%
Oil Spill Contingency Planning	91%	91%	32%	70%	44%	65%	95.5%
Response Coordination	100%	100%	50%	90%	65%	100%	100%
Health, Safety & Security	100%	100%	33%	67%	50%	100%	100%
Operational Response	100%	81%	31%	68%	44%	94%	97%

Tracking, Assessment & Information Management	100%	100%	50%	67%	83%	100%	100%
Logistics	90%	92%	17%	67%	33%	100%	87.5%
Financial & Administrative Considerations	100%	83%	67%	34%	33%	100%	100%
Training & Exercises	94%	69%	31%	79%	56%	69%	100%
Sustainability & Improvements	90%	100%	50%	63%	92%	67%	100%

11 **Legislation, Regulations, Agreements:** Most Western Mediterranean countries have legislation in place supporting their OSR programme. Similarly, all West MOPoCo countries are signatory to the main international conventions relating to pollution prevention and preparedness, with the transposition into national law still being in progress for two countries. However, several countries are still missing operational plans, which are essential for the establishment of an effective National Contingency Programme. Furthermore, roles and responsibilities of the different departments and administrations in the event of an oil spill still need to be clarified.

12 **Oil Spill Contingency Planning:** The coherence and connection between the various local, sectoral, regional and national emergency plans, as well as the shoreline response strategy, can be improved in several countries. Another issue identified in the sub-region remains the regularity of the revision and updating of the plans, in particular the update of key contacts, vulnerability maps and risk assessments. Response strategies vary from one country to another according to its legislation and the organisation of its NCP. Most NCP do not go into as much detail with regard to response strategies as recommended by the Manual (such as shoreline protection and clean-up plan, policies addressing in-situ burning or dispersant use). In the Western Mediterranean, information regarding OSR planning is generally available, although sometimes not centralised in a single document.

13 **Response Coordination:** Most West MOPoCo countries meet all Level A critical criteria in the category Response coordination. Areas of improvement for some countries include procedures for alert communication and communicating with the media and local authorities, the clarification of roles and responsibilities, the development of a plan for community education and training and callout procedures for external parties.

14 **Health, Safety & Security:** All countries have standards and norms in place, however for countries still missing an operational plan these need to be referenced and responsibilities clearly attributed.

15 **Operational Response:** Policies to prevent and minimise potential sources of pollution are still needed for most countries, e.g. on places of refuge, mobilisation mechanisms, waste management, restoration and post-spill monitoring. Inventories of available equipment may also help to assess needs in equipment. Some policy areas (e.g. wildlife protection and recovery) are not always covered at the national level but are part of regional plans.

16 **Tracking, Assessment & Information Management:** Most West MOPoCo countries OSR programmes meet the critical criteria identified by the Manual, however roles and responsibilities are not fully defined and/or formalised for some countries.

17 **Logistics:** The assessment highlighted that most OSR Programmes indicated a lack of logistics, with improvements needed in the identification of suppliers, the logistics to support responders during an incident (food, transport, medical facilities) also the time needed to deploy the various resources. Customs represent another area of improvement in the region; there is a need to clarify procedures and to define customs and immigration policy to streamline transport of personnel and equipment across country borders.

18 **Financial & Administrative Considerations:** Funds to support OSR are available in most countries, however not all countries have dedicated emergency funds. Improvements can also be made to procedures for receiving claims for compensation, claim reviews and settlement processes.

19 **Training & Exercises:** All Western Mediterranean countries conduct exercises on a regular basis. However, few countries have developed clear training strategies as recommended by the Manual, with gaps in: targeting all institutions involved in oil spill preparedness and response, systematically keeping records of exercises and personnel trained, having lists of courses available on a regular basis and a standard approach for exercise evaluations or external evaluations.

20 **Sustainability & Improvements:** This aspect of OSR planning does not represent an issue for most Western Mediterranean countries.

Feedback on the tool

21 Most Beneficiary countries considered the Tool useful to analyse national contingency plans due to the structured processes it provides. Overall, the Tool and its accompanying manual met the needs of the Beneficiaries. Participants agreed in recognizing the value and flexibility of the Manual and Tool application combined with the 2008 IOSC Guideline. Purposed categories and criteria seem to cover the breadth and depth of topics on oil spill preparedness and readiness capabilities, intended for national administration in charge of emergency response.

22 ITOPF, as facilitator of several national assessments, has identified the following advantages:

- a. The Tool and Manual provide a comprehensive list of fixed criteria enabling not only a self-assessment but also a comparison of National Contingency Plans.
- b. The workshop format encouraged detailed discussions amongst multiple governmental agencies about the majority of aspects of their OSR preparedness programme.

23 The following areas of improvement have been identified:

- a. Redundancy in the questions and the applicability of some criteria. Few of the criteria contained in the Manual seem not perfectly applicable to national situations.
- b. The distinction between the different levels (A, B and C) is sometimes difficult to make. The thresholds for these levels could be clarified in a future revision of the tool.
- c. The Tool in its current version does not provide an option to indicate that certain response techniques were discussed but discarded as unsuitable (such as in-situ burning or dispersant use).
- d. Some criteria, such as B12 and E1, are too similar.
- e. Within the category Oil Spill Contingency Planning, some elements suggested by the IOSC Appendix "A" could be explained more clearly (such as Post-Spill Monitoring, In-Situ Burning Policy, Net Environmental Benefit Analysis, Sensitivity Mapping).

24 Noting that the Tool and Manual only cover oil spill response preparedness programmes, the development of a similar tool for HNS preparedness is strongly recommended.

Conclusions and Recommendations

25 Using the readiness evaluation Tool for oil spills in the framework of the West MOPoCo project has shown overall that the tool generates useful insights for national OSR planning and preparedness. This covers not only the National Contingency Plans but all components of the national systems/programmes for the preparedness and planification for response to Oil spills. The **Consortium recommends its use in other countries.**

26 In addition to the indications contained in the Manual, the **following recommendations for the successful organisation of national assessment workshops** have been defined:

- a. The involvement of all relevant national government authorities is crucial for the successful use of the tool and development of an accurate Global Improvement Programme.

- b. The services of an external consultant are recommended to facilitate the workshop since they are neutral in their stance and can act as mediators if required.

27 The following next steps are recommended to **insure the lasting impact of the assessment workshop and improvement of the national OSR preparedness programme**:

- a. Follow-up of the Global Improvement Plan is essential, with clearly defined timelines and task attribution to favour ownership of the improvement programme and to keep the momentum created by the workshop.
- b. The improvement of the NCP by the relevant department, followed by its dissemination to all stakeholders and testing through exercises and review and assessment (e.g. with a follow-up Readiness evaluation workshop to reach the next level of assessment).
- c. Political and financial commitments are key for the successful implementation of the improvement programme.

28 From the national assessments conducted with the assistance of ITOPF, the following **main recommendations to improve the level of OSR planning and preparedness** in the Western Mediterranean have been identified:

- a. Enhancing the level of detailed and in-depth knowledge of the plan amongst stakeholders.
- b. Developing an operational plan, including:
 - i. The definition of response strategies (e.g. Waste management plans)
 - ii. Updated risk and vulnerability analyses (e.g. IUCN Redlist)
 - iii. Exercises and training strategies and registers
 - iv. Integration of sectoral/local/regional/multilateral plans
 - v. Specific emergency funding and dedicated resources/budget for OSR administrations
 - vi. Lists and updates of state and private equipment available and logistics suppliers
- c. Gathering all relevant information on OSR preparedness programme in a single document, in order to facilitate the easy access to and transmission of information on key roles when changing staff, essential.
- d. Defining specific frequencies for each type of exercise (alert, crisis management, tabletop scenario, deployment, etc.) and each level of training (OPRC I, II and III...) with the establishment of a schedule in the NERP.
- e. Improving communication with other administrations.
- f. Securing adequate funding for the national contingency plan.
- g. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.