



**Workshop Report (Draft)**

Communications during a Tier 3  
Marine Pollution Incident

Lisbon, 18 October 2007

## Workshop Report on Communications During a Tier 3 Marine Pollution Incident

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### Background

The European Maritime Safety Agency under its Work Programme 2007, has established a Consultative Technical Group (CTG) for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response, composed of Member State pollution response experts. The main objective of the CTG is to provide a platform at European level between Member States for improving preparedness for and response to marine pollution. The forum is used for the exchange of views and opinions and defining current and future priority actions to be addressed by the CTG. The first meeting of the CTG was held at EMSA premises in Lisbon, Portugal on 30 May 2007.

Following the adoption of a Rolling Work Programme by the CTG, it was agreed to undertake 5 priority actions in 2007. One of these actions was to hold a workshop on Communications during a Tier 3 marine pollution incident. EMSA was requested to set up a workshop on this issue with Member States, industry and other relevant players.

Following this request EMSA undertook all necessary activities, in particular organising the Workshop on Communications during a Tier 3 incident, held on 18 October 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal.

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### Workshop Objectives

The workshop addresses the following main objectives:

- To consider important issues and themes for communications during a major (Tier 3) pollution incident;
- To look at best practice, areas for improvement, available tools and resources for communications based on experience from past pollution incidents;
- To involve all players (government, industry and media) during a major pollution incident exchanging opinions on different perspectives on improving communications links between them;
- To identify areas of good practice, to define recommendations and follow-up actions for EMSA that will be provided to CTG meeting for proceedings.

In addition to the European Member State participants, a variety of organisations were invited to the workshop, including oil and shipping industry associations, European Commission communications specialists, the International Maritime Organisation and representatives from the media.

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## Workshop Structure and Content

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The Workshop Agenda and a Discussion Paper were distributed to the participants.

According to the agenda the workshop included five sessions:

- Session 1 – Communications during an incident – government perspective,
- Session 2 – Communications during an incident – industry perspective,
- Session 3 – Communications during an incident – media/public perspective,
- Session 4 – Working Group Session and reports,
- Session 5 – Conclusions of the workshop.

The discussion paper covers the basic areas of communications during a major pollution incident - communications at operational level, at decision-making and strategic level, at political and international level as well as communications with the media and public. The importance of contingency planning is also highlighted in the document.

The participants were divided into three working groups for the break-out session. Each group was allocated a different task / question, looking at the three different perspectives: government, industry and media. All groups were also asked to select a rapporteur and report back to the plenary session for further discussion.

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## Workshop Programme

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The workshop was opened and chaired by Leendert Bal, EMSA Head of Unit for Pollution Preparedness and Detection.

The presentations of the first session covered communications during an incident from the government perspective:

- UK Government during *Napoli* incident, presented by Mark Clark, Public Relations Manager, UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency and
- Danish Government during *Fu Shan Hai*, presented by Peter Soeberg Poulsen, Commander, Admiral Danish Fleet HQ.

The second session was addressed to communications from the industry perspective during major incidents:

- Communications between industry & government, presented by Chris Morris, IPIECA and Tosh Moller, ITOPF and
- Private Response Company communicating with the government and the media. The case of the *Sea Diamond* presented by Dr. Vassilios Mamaloukas-Frangoulis, Environmental Protection Engineering S.A., Greece

The third session dealt with the media/public perspectives in terms of communications during a Tier 3 marine pollution incident:

- Television / Radio / Newspapers during the *Prestige*, presented by Pablo Gonzalez, La Voz de Galicia) and
- The use of Internet to communicate with media and public during an incident, presented by Christophe Rousseau, Deputy Manager, CEDRE.

A lot of information and expertise was exchanged regarding real incidents and lessons learned during the plenary sessions. Discussions conducted after the presentations covered a number of common themes and issues:

- Importance of contingency planning, including communications plans,
- Importance of initial communications, maintenance of regular communications during an emergency,
- Need for accurate information, using simple messages and understandable language,
- Responsibility of the government, industry and media,
- Improve coordination as well as clarify roles and responsibilities of each party,
- Need for guidelines and good practice in the area of communications,
- Need for training for communications experts,
- Importance of internet to allow the public to voice their opinion, use of communications and press releases/meetings.

The working group questions / tasks covered a wide range of issues and feedback from each Working Group was reported back to the Plenary Session.

Working Group 1 questions were directed to areas for improvement and areas of best practice in terms of government communications during the notification phase and operational/response phase of an incident. Some communications examples from past incidents were discussed, including within the Government administration in a single country; between international governments; and between Regional Agreements.

Working group 1 emphasised the areas for improvement during the notification phase: communications procedures to be part of contingency planning; conducting training & exercises within an administration including communications with the media and public; past experiences from government, industry and press to be used; a possible guidance document at European level (also for the operational phase of an incident) to be created; establishment of contact points in neighbouring countries and further work on language challenges when addressing international media.

As areas for improvement / best practice during the operational phase, the following issues were mentioned: the need for coordination of communications of external assistance to the country affected; enhancing the use of MIC reports; using easy/simple flowcharts in contingency plans; using lessons learned at both regional and national levels.

Working Group 2 tasks covered the same aspect of the problem, but from an industrial point of view – consideration of communications: between the government and the industry; between government and contractors, ship managers/owners, salvors, etc.

This Group emphasised the importance of information sources for pollutant characteristics (particularly HNS) and setting of clear communication procedures between government and other entities during the pre-spill phase, links with experts and response organisations of potential relevance in an incident, as well as training and frequent exercises to ensure that communication procedures work efficiently.

The group underlined that during the notification phase, the goal for communication is to facilitate decision-making and to improve the efficiency of the response operation to prevent or reduce pollution damage. It was also recognised that the Governments will take the lead in spill response for good reason, but two-way communication should be maintained.

The necessity for good and transparent communications of all government and industry entities involved was stressed during both the notification and operational/response phases. The importance of feedback from contractors and operators of oil industry facilities, the need for better contact with the ship owner in an incident was also recognised as essential.

Special attention, during the response phase, should be given to the improvement of communications with salvors; to the transmission of information from surveillance aircraft to response vessels; and the need to explore the scope for co-ordinated media contact to minimise likelihood of conflicting messages from government and industry.

Working Group 3 questions were focussed on contingency planning processes, summarising ideas for some essential elements that should be a part of a communications strategy & plan, including the information flow between the Government and media/public/NGOs.

The third group selected some general strategy issues relating to the importance of communications: regardless of differing processes for decision-making in each country, communications must be planned and established properly; technical experts should take the lead when necessary but Press Officers are also invaluable for background briefings; to publish set times for Press Conferences and updates; regular meetings with public and specialist groups to be held and priority to be given to local media. Special attention, from the media point of view, was given to contingency planning, international co-operation, regular training and managing public expectations.

The group also recognised some specific issues: the public should be informed if dispersants are being used and the choice of a place of refuge must be explained. When wildlife response is being undertaken, there is a need for pre-selection of centres with experience, who should also be involved in the planning process.

All groups stated the importance of using of different communication tools, especially the Internet during all phases of the emergency and also as an area for further improvement. The use of secure parts of websites for transmitting confidential information was also suggested. A common opinion was shared regarding the use of the internet as a tool and the benefit of networks to spread best practices & enhance communications – i.e. CTG, Regional Agreement (RA) meetings, Inter-Secretariat RA meetings, etc. Lastly, the importance of some other communications issues were emphasised, including providing pre-prepared Webpage templates, hotlines for the general public and specialized hotlines for journalists.

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## Workshop Conclusions

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The following general observations were made and common themes raised:

- Anticipate not improvise – communications plan,
- Be proactive in communication,
- Good communication builds trust & public confidence,
- Official / trained spokespersons for public and media, including those involved in the response operation
- Organise proactive communication actions towards the public,
- Prepare special reports/press releases by communications experts to both public and media,
- Importance of internet to inform the public and to provide a platform for opinions,
- On national level – improved coordination between administrations and clear roles & responsibilities,
- Communicate accurate and verified information to the media / cannot “control” the media,
- Early / Regular communication with the media is necessary,
- Use clear / simple / understandable language,
- Good communications during the notification phase of the incident is important,
- Include all stakeholders in oil spill events (“Working Together”) - allow them to participate in meetings or organise specific communications / press meetings.

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## Possible Follow-Up Activities

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- EMSA could develop a short guidance document/report:
  - on good/best practice for communications during accidental marine pollution in Europe;
  - Include sections/perspectives for public, media, NGO’s, industry;
  - Include 2-3 case studies to illustrate general principles;
  - Participants should be encouraged to contribute to the Report.
- Such a document could be presented and further discussed during another Workshop or CTG meeting.

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## Attachments

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|--------------------------|---|
| (1) Workshop Agenda      | (4) Working Group Instructions and participants |
| (2) List of participants |   |
| (3) Discussion paper     | (5) Working group feedback                      |

Workshop presentations can be found in the Restricted CTG area of the EMSA website, for which a username and password are required. For those who do not have access, electronic versions of the presentations can be provided upon request by sending an email to the CTG Secretariat.

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**Workshop on Communications  
During a Tier 3 Marine Pollution Incident**

**Lisbon, 18 October 2007**

**Final Agenda**

**08:30 – 09:00**      **Registration & coffee**  
**09:00 – 09:15**      **Introduction & Objectives** (Mr. Leendert Bal, Head of Unit Pollution Preparedness and Detection, EMSA)

**Session 1 – Communications during an incident – government perspective**

**09:15 – 09:45**      **UK Government during *Napoli* incident** (Mark Clark, Public Relations Manager, UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency)  
**09:45 – 10:15**      **Danish Government during *Fu Shan Hai*** (Peter Soeberg Poulsen, Commander, Admiral Danish Fleet HQ)  
**10:15 – 10:35**      **Discussion**  
**10:35 – 11:00**      **Coffee break**

**Session 2 – Communications during an incident – industry perspective**

**11:00 – 11:30**      **Communications between industry & government** (Chris Morris, IPIECA and Tosh Moller, ITOPIF)  
**11:30 - 12:00**      **Communications between responders/contractors & government** (Dr Vassilios Mamaloukas-Frangoulis, Head of Marine Environment Dept., Environmental Protection Engineering, Greece).  
**12:00 – 12:30**      **Discussion**

12:30 – 13:45      Lunch

**Session 3 – Communications during an incident – Media / Public perspective**

- 13:45 – 14:15      **Television / Radio /Newspapers during the *Prestige*** (Pablo Gonzalez, *La Voz de Galicia*)
- 14:15 – 14:45      **The use of Internet to communicate with media and public during an incident** (Christophe Rousseau, Deputy Manager, CEDRE)
- 14:45 – 15:05      **Discussion**

**Session 4 : Break-out / Working Groups**

- 15:05 – 15:15      **Introduction/Instructions to Working Groups**
- 15:15 – 16:45      **Working Group Discussions**
- 16:45 – 17:15      **Coffee Break**
- 17:15 – 17:45      **Rapporteurs Report back to plenary** (3 rapporteurs, each 10 min)
- 17:45 – 18:15      **Discussion**
- 18:15 – 18:30      **Wrap-up, Way Forward and conclusions** (Leendert Bal, Head of Unit Pollution Preparedness and Detection, EMSA)



Communications Workshop 18-10-07 Attendance List

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Communications Workshop 18-10-07 Attendance List

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**Workshop on Communications  
During a Tier 3 Marine Pollution Incident**

**Lisbon, 18 October 2007**

**Discussion Paper**

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**A. Introduction**

Good communications during a major (Tier 3) pollution incident is paramount to make the response operations a success. Communications is important at all levels whether within a government administration or with other key players who are involved in the response such as oil spill response companies/contractors, shipping owners/managers, industry, volunteers, etc. Furthermore, managing communications with the media and the public and providing a fast, accurate and truthful report in the early stages of the incident can ensure that correct information is published rather than a miscommunication or misinterpretation of the facts.

There are many different types and channels of communication during a marine pollution incident, which differ in their characteristics and specific requirements. Communications during an incident can be divided into those at an operational level; decisional/strategic level; political/international level; and communications with the media and public. These are described further in this paper. Furthermore, the main objectives of the EMSA workshop will be detailed including how it will be structured and what questions may be addressed during discussion and working group sessions.

## **B. Communications at an operational level**

As the government administrations, maritime safety agencies or coast guards normally direct the response operations during a Tier 3 marine pollution incident, they will be in constant contact with other ministries and government departments as well as with external companies, ship managers/owners, contractors, media, etc. At an initial operational level communications is very important during the notification phase and the activation of the contingency plan. There may also be several plans which are activated on a central government, regional or local level. During this phase it is crucial that information is gathered on the incident including the:

- place, time , nature and extent of the pollution
- identification of the vessel
- identification of the owner/operator and his representatives and insurers
- condition of the vessel
- identification of the cargo and its state
- intentions and/or actions of the master
- intentions and/or actions of the owner or his representative
- intentions and/or actions of the salvor, if any.

This information is often obtained via the following contacts: master of the vessel, the shipowner, the last port of call, the next port of call and the salvor.

For a fast response including fast communication response, it is essential that all the involved players know their roles and responsibilities such that further notifications are made to the interested or relevant parties and that the response teams are put in place. Time is of the essence meaning that quick and efficient communications is necessary in these initial stages of the incident. The relevant people that need to be contacted according to the national contingency plan can be notified through pagers, telephone, text messages, fax, desktop alerts, email, etc. A secure website (with password access) could also be used to simultaneously distribute confidential information to a response team. The quality of the communications between the various personnel will ensure that all the necessary equipment and personnel are mobilized.

Once the response teams are set up, frequently there is an interface with the oil spill response contractors or companies which can, in certain European countries, assist or work for the government administrations. Smooth communications is essential to ensure that the government administration's wishes are well interpreted and that the response companies undertake the cleanup operations in the correct way.

Communications will take place at all levels during the response from the on-scene commanders/coordinators to each of the individual response teams. Communications between the on-scene commander and the on-site response teams should be performed via special, dedicated short-range radio frequencies, in order that communications cannot be intercepted. Furthermore, during the response operations there is always a link between the response teams at sea and operational coordination/control centres ashore. Much of these communications will be done by radio, telephone and/or by other means.

### **C. Communications at a decisional or strategic level**

At a decisional/strategic level, there are several different routes of communication such as between the different competent authorities (according to the provisions and procedures of the National Contingency Plan). Different ministries are often responsible for different parts of the response operations making it often a challenge to manage the entire operation. This is detailed in the national and regional plans where there is a clear divide between the Civil Protection/Ministries of Environment or other who cover the response on land and the Coast Guard/Navy/Maritime Safety Agencies who are responsible for the response at sea. It is therefore crucial that the communications are practical and smooth to ensure that operations are conducted as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In some countries, there may also be a link between the central government and the operational coordination and decision centres within each region of the country. This will be detailed in the national and regional contingency plans but it is essential for exercises to take place to test these channels of communication. Depending on where the spill has taken place, the central or regional governments will have contacts with the salvage companies and/or oil & shipping industry. During a major pollution incident, the salvage, oil, and shipping industries may be an integral part of the wider response teams, meaning they will have an important role to play in the communications process and will deal with decision makers within the government.

There will also be communications links between the government authorities and representatives of the vessels involved (shipowners/managers, cargo owners, P&I club, insurers, lawyers, agents etc). The relevant staff responsible in the government should have their roles, responsibilities and tasks clearly defined in the national or regional contingency plan to ensure that communications with these players runs smoothly and that the appropriate information is obtained from them and communicated to them.

### **D. Communications at a political and international level**

On a political level in some countries there may be communication between the central government or high level politicians including the President or Prime Minister and competent Ministers or government representatives. As mentioned earlier, since responsibilities and competencies for response on land and at sea often lie with different ministries, there will also be significant links between different government departments, agencies and/or ministries during the crisis. All of these links or reporting procedures should be planned prior to the response and detailed in the national and/or regional contingency plan.

In terms of external and international parties or players, the government or selected spokespersons or government representatives will be communicating with:

- Authorities in neighbouring countries to inform them if their interests are affected or likely to be affected by the pollution
- the 24 hour Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) at the European Commission to inform all parties/neighbouring countries whose interests are affected or likely to be affected by the pollution
- the EC MIC to ask for possible assistance (personnel or equipment) from other countries and /or EMSA

- authorities in neighbouring countries to request assistance according to the Regional Agreement procedures
- the Regional Agreements to inform all parties/countries whose interests are affected or likely to be affected by the pollution
- any other international organization (i.e. IMO, UNESCO, UN Humanitarian Aid, etc.) who may be organising or coordinating international assistance for the incident.

Communications can often be improved between Member States through the increased updating of the country information on the Community Information System (CIS)<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, frequent attendance at national and regional exercises, workshops, meetings, seminars, etc. ensures that contacts and networks are established prior to marine pollution incidents. This ensures that communication links are much smoother during an actual large marine pollution incident because the relevant people already know each other and are able to contact each other easily to request assistance or cooperation.

## **E. Communications with the media and public**

Responsible agencies and government authorities often criticise the news media (e.g. newspapers, television, radio, magazines, etc.) during and after a major pollution incident as being too aggressive or inaccurate in their reporting. It has been said that "Reporters are human, and rudeness and spite toward them can do more damage to your pollution response image than any lack of equipment and personnel ever could"<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore crucial to have the right attitude towards the media and prepare and integrate an agreed procedure into the relevant national and regional contingency plans long before an incident occurs. This will ensure that the result in magazines, television and radio broadcasts, etc. gives a more accurate reflection of the actions, operations and events during the spill response.

Each country will coordinate and organise communication with the media and public in a different way but often there is a dedicated spokesperson, press officer/authorised official or team who is responsible both for dealing with the media and public and monitoring anything that is published or broadcast. This spokesperson or team will be trained to deal with the media and the public and will follow a well established procedure as to what information is communicated. It is essential that information presented to the public and media is clear and detailed with facts on the incident itself and on the response operations. As a result, it is important that the on-scene commander/co-ordinator is in regular contact with the communications officials, in order to brief them on the incident status and ensure published information is accurate. In return, the communications officials should keep the on-scene commander updated on the attitude the media and public are taking toward the incident and the nature and extent of their enquiries.

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/marin/cis/cis\\_index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/marin/cis/cis_index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Milbury, Jim. 1997 . Feeding the Media Frenzy without getting bit. 1997 International Oil Spill Conference Proceedings. US Coast Guard Honolulu, Hawaii.

It is often suggested that joint press releases are made through coordination on a local, area or regional level such that conflicting messages are not presented. For the public, it is beneficial to organise local meetings in town halls, fisherman associations, etc. so that the public at risk or affected by the pollution in the local communities (e.g. coastal population, fisherman, volunteers, etc.) are well informed and to give them a chance to voice their concerns. It is important for the government representatives to act in a professional and diplomatic manner such that information is well conveyed to the wider public and media.

Due to the large public and media interest in marine pollution incidents, the Internet is often used to communicate details of the incident and the response. On the Internet information travels very fast and reaches millions of readers across the world within minutes. An oil spill website or a specific area on the pollution incident on a government administration/agency website can be a valuable tool in communicating accurate information to the media and public. Due to the speed that both the media and public publish information on the Internet, there is a need for government administrations to have a webmaster capable of updating the site on a regular basis making it a real emergency information portal for the incident. The sites should contain information on the incident as well as press releases with important and detailed information on the response operations. This will assist and perhaps avoid incorrect information being published by both media and public citizen groups. This obviously cannot be avoided however proactive communication with both the media and public can at least assist and improve the situation. Much of this information is then reused and modified by many other organisations who then publish this information on their websites.

#### **F. Contingency Plans**

As mentioned repeatedly in the previous sections, it is essential that communications between various players are well detailed in the national, regional and local contingency plans. The level of detail needed will depend on the scope of the plan, however as a general indication a carefully planned media and public response strategy or procedure should include:

- Clear roles, responsibilities and tasks
- Defined procedure for creating, approving and delivering press conferences and press statements
- Communication flowcharts
- Communications equipment requirements
- Action cards
- Contact details for all those concerned/involved

After a spill response operation, it is important to evaluate the communication plans to see how they were implemented and update and revise them as necessary. As with all aspects of contingency planning, it is also beneficial to test communications strategies, procedures and equipment during exercises. The communications aspect can be integrated into any type of exercise, whether it be a tabletop, notification, practical or full scale incident management exercise.

## **G. EMSA workshop**

The EMSA workshop is titled: "Communications during a Tier 3 Marine Pollution Incident" and will address the following objectives:

- To consider the important issues and themes for communications during a major (Tier 3) pollution incident.
- To look at best practice, areas for improvement and available tools and resources for communications based on experience from past pollution incidents.
- To involve all players during a major pollution incident (government, industry and media), exchanging opinions on the different perspectives on improving communications links between these players.
- To define recommendations and follow-up actions for EMSA and CTG participants on this subject and perhaps to identify areas of good practice for communications during a Tier 3 marine pollution incident.

The workshop will have three different sessions with speakers covering the government, industry and media/public perspectives on communications during a large marine pollution incident. Furthermore, a number of representatives from industry and media will be invited to participate in the workshop. The sections below explain why each of these perspectives are needed to ensure workshop discussions are successful.

### Why should industry attend?

- During a major pollution incident, the oil and pollution response industries may be an integral part of the wider response team, meaning they will have an important role to play in the communications process. Three different perspectives should be considered:
  - Representatives from the oil industry (through an appropriate association) will be invited to speak at the workshop in order to share their experiences in communicating with governments, pollution response contractors/private companies and media during past pollution incidents.
  - Representatives from the pollution response industry (contractors/private response companies) will be invited to speak at the workshop in order to show their experiences in communicating with governments, oil industry and media during past pollution incidents.
  - Other representatives from industry organisations with links to shipping or pollution response will be invited to attend the workshop to try and maintain a balance of different perspectives in the working group and plenary discussions.

### Why should the media attend?

- Media representatives will be invited to speak during the workshop for the purpose of sharing their knowledge and experience on communications and how to deal with the media during a pollution incident.



- It must be emphasised that media representatives will not attend this workshop in their capacity as journalists but as experts in communication, therefore publications on the workshop should not detail discussions.

Some questions to consider:

- How can communication prior to, and during, a marine pollution incident be enhanced between government, industry, the public, EMSA, the Commission, the media and any other players?
- What are some of the current tools and resources for improving this communication?
- Who are the main players and how do the communication focal points from each player interface during a major emergency?
- Are there different considerations with regards to communications during the initial notification stages and the later response phase of a pollution incident?
- What sensitive issues with regard to marine pollution response may the media/public request information on?

## **H. Summary / Conclusions**

- Good communications during a Tier 3 pollution incident are crucial for successful response operations, through many different levels and channels of communication, whether within a government administration or with other key players.
- Communications during an incident can be divided into those at an operational level; decisional/strategic level; political/international level; and communications with the media and public – each with different circumstances and objectives.
- Through its defined objectives, the EMSA workshop aims to explore all levels of communications and different perspectives from the different players involved, including government, industry and media/public.
- The workshop will also help to define recommendations and follow-up actions for EMSA and CTG participants on this subject and perhaps identify areas of good practice for communications during a Tier 3 marine pollution incident.

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**Workshop on Communications  
During a Tier 3 Marine Pollution Incident**

**Lisbon, 18 October 2007**

**Working Group Session**  
**Instructions and Questions/Tasks**

**Instructions**

- You will all be divided into working groups according to Annex 1.
- Each group will meet in a different room and will have a laptop.
- Choose a Rapporteur for your group who will report back at the end of the working group discussion period to the entire workshop group.
- Within your working group it is suggested that you discuss the question related to your working group for the first hour and 15 minutes and then use the last 15 minutes to summarise the points and assist the rapporteur to put together some short slides to illustrate your answer.
- The rapporteur should therefore have a short summary.
- Ensure that the feedback is typed up on slides such that these can be presented back to the Workshop group.

## **Questions**

### **Working Group 1**

1. What are the areas for improvement and areas of best practice in terms of government communications during the **notification phase** and **operational/response phase** of an incident?

You may use examples from past incidents and consider communications:

- a. within a government administration and between one country's various emergency services, departments, and Ministries
- b. between international governments
- c. between Regional Agreements

### **Working Group 2**

2. List areas for improvement and areas of best practice in terms of communications with industry during the **notification phase** and **operational/response phase** and of an incident.

You may consider communications:

- a. between government and industry
- b. between government and contractors, ship managers/owners, salvors, etc.
- c. between the different locations i.e. different channels and radio frequencies used by the Response Command Centre, response vessels, emergency services, aerial surveillance aircraft, shoreline response centres, fire fighting brigades, police, etc.

**Working Group 3**

3. What kind of essential elements should be part of a **communications strategy & plan** for a given oil spill incident. Assume that you are a government authority and that you have to develop this plan prior to an incident occurring.

The plan may take into account the required communications tools & equipment and channels for flow of information between:

- a. Government and media
- b. Government and public
- c. Government and NGOs

You could also reflect on the following points which you may have to report on:

- o Fishery / Tourist Resort closures
- o Health and Safety of responders
- o Use of dispersants and their effect on the marine environment
- o Wildlife response
- o Deliberate beaching of a vessel with the aim of minimising the amount of pollutant released into the environment

**Annex 1 – Working Groups**

<p><b><u>Working Group 1 – Room 09/01</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. France 1</li> <li>2. Ireland 1</li> <li>3. Finland 1</li> <li>4. Lithuania</li> <li>5. Netherlands 2</li> <li>6. Bulgaria</li> <li>7. Greece</li> <li>8. Portugal 1</li> <li>9. Slovenia 1</li> <li>10. Spain 2</li> <li>11. Turkey 2</li> <li>12. REMPEC</li> <li>13. IMO</li> <li>14. IPIECA</li> <li>15. EPE</li> <li>16. Publico</li> <li>17. Andy Stimpson, EMSA</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Working Group 2 – Room 07/10</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Romania</li> <li>2. Iceland</li> <li>3. Ireland 2</li> <li>4. Poland</li> <li>5. Spain 1</li> <li>6. France 2</li> <li>7. Turkey 1</li> <li>8. Croatia</li> <li>9. Latvia</li> <li>10. Sweden</li> <li>11. Portugal 2</li> <li>12. ITOPF</li> <li>13. BIMCO</li> <li>14. ECSA</li> <li>15. European Commission DG TREN</li> <li>16. La Voz de Galicia</li> <li>17. Louis Baumard, EMSA</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Working Group 3 – Room 01/19</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Germany</li> <li>2. Netherlands 1</li> <li>3. Denmark</li> <li>4. Norway</li> <li>5. Slovenia 2</li> <li>6. Finland 2</li> <li>7. Ireland 3</li> <li>8. Estonia</li> <li>9. Cyprus</li> <li>10. Malta</li> <li>11. Spain 3</li> <li>12. UK</li> <li>13. Latvia</li> <li>14. Lisbon Agreement</li> <li>15. CONCAWE</li> <li>16. Lloyds List</li> <li>17. Independent Media Consultant (J. Wills)</li> </ol>	

# Group 1

## Feedback

# Areas for improvement / best practice – notification phase

- Include communications procedures in contingency planning
- Training & exercises for communications within administration & with media, public, between organisations, etc.
- Challenge with language
- Establish clear contact pts. in neighbouring countries
- Importance of the Internet
  - keep adding new information
  - Quick source to communicate your point of view
  - Use internally within a government -exercise



# Areas for improvement / best practice – notification phase

- Use of email / mobiles & logging communication
- Verification of information which will be published or communicated internally
- Quick notification to intergovernmental bodies
- Use past experiences from government, industry, press, etc. to create possible guidance document on European level (also for operational phase)

# Areas for improvement / best practice – operational phase

- Need for coordination of communications on external assistance to country affected
- Use of internet to communicate what actions being taken for response
- Enhanced use of MIC reports
- Regular exercises / meetings for governments to know each other before a real emergency & to better cooperate during actual operations
- Clear roles & responsibilities within government authorities / administrations to better communicate during response

# Areas for improvement / best practice – operational phase

- Use easy/simple flowcharts in contingency plans
- Benefit of networks to spread best practices & enhance communications – i.e. CTG, RA mtgs, Inter-Secretariat RA mtgs, etc.
- Use of internet tool to share RA best practice
- Use lessons learned on a regional level at a national level –don't dilute the message !

# **Working Group No.2**

## **Pre-spill Phase**

1. Information sources for pollutant characteristics (particularly HNS)
2. Links with experts and facilities of potential relevance in an incident
3. Training and frequent exercises is the way to ensure that communication procedures actually work (personnel changes are rapid)
4. 'Cross-fertilization' in training programmes creates opportunities for sharing experience of different organisations
5. Clarify communication procedures between government and other entities in the planning phase

# Working Group No.2

## Notification Phase

1. Goal for communication is to facilitate decision-making, and to improve the efficiency of the response operation to prevent or reduce pollution damage,
2. Governments take the lead in spill response for good reason
3. Notifying operators of sensitive facilities.
  - a. Aquaculture; water intakes
4. Two-way communication (obligation on both parties to maintain dialogue as an incident develops).
5. Feedback from contractors, operators of sensitive facilities, etc.
6. Transparency of all government and industry entities involved
  - a. Need for better contact with the ship owner in an incident

# **Working Group No.2**

## **Operational / Response Phase**

1. Communication with salvors can be improved to ensure better coordination of actions and to allow contingency arrangements to be put in place
2. The transmission of information from surveillance aircraft to response vessels
3. Greater use of websites for disseminating non-confidential information. Use of secure parts of the websites for confidential information.
4. Explore scope for co-ordinated media contact so as to minimise likelihood of conflicting messages from government and industry

## **CTG MPPR**

### **Workshop on Communications**

### **During a Tier 3**

### **Marine Pollution Incident**

### **Working Group 3**



## General strategy

- Differing processes for decision-making in each country but you have to communicate
- Technical experts taking the lead when necessary
- Use Press officers to background brief
- Set times for Press Conferences and updates
- Regular meetings with public and specialist groups
- Identify and keep stakeholder list up to date and briefed with core script and Q&A's
- Plan for language differences
- Priority for local media
- Matching resources to potential demand
- Regular training
- Managing public's expectations



## General strategy

- Pre-prepared webpages
- Hotlines for general public
- Specialist lines for journalists
- Clear and understandable messages in plain language
- "Warning and informing" Leaflet production
- Try to avoid blame until has been proved or investigation complete
- Automatic SMS updates
- Learn from the past
- International co-operation
  
- HAVE A NATIONAL PLAN

## Specific Issues

- Wildlife response
  - Pre-select centres with experience and involve in planning process
- Dispersants
  - If being used, inform the public
- Places of Refuge
  - Explain choice