

Report from the EPPR working group to the SAO meeting in Washington 18-19 November 1999

1. Introduction

Since the last SAO meeting in Anchorage the EPPR working group has had its annual meeting in Svalbard in early September 1999. Delegates from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United States and the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat participated in the meeting.

1. Status of the EPPR projects

Circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic

This project continues with the goal to produce a series of maps covering the circumpolar area that highlight the areas of highest risk of an oil spill and those areas where sensitive natural resources or subsistence communities exist. Data from AMAP and CAFF has been obtained and is now being worked through. The countries have a time limit until 1 March 2000 for sending their data. With this time frame there will be an end product available for the Ministerial meeting in autumn 2000.

Analysis of Agreements and Arrangements

This project is to be finalised. At the next EPPR meeting it will be discussed which follow-up measures will be taken to fill the gaps the analysis points out.

Source control management and prevention strategies for high risks in the Arctic

As existing environmental management systems do not especially take into account the Arctic conditions it is something the EPPR working group feels as an important field to develop. The proposal is to conduct a demonstration project in Severonickel Processing Plant on chlorine accident prevention but it is still subject to confirmation by the Russian authorities.

The EPPR web site

The EPPR working group now has a web site, www.ims.uaf.edu:8000/EPPR/. Certain national pages are still under development but will be provided within some months.

Revision of the Rules of Procedure / Operating Guidelines

New operating guidelines are being developed in co-operation with the other working groups and the Arctic Council Secretariat. There will be a revised draft proposal at the next EPPR meeting based on comments and discussions within the group, with other working group chairs and with the Arctic Council Secretariat.

SCAT - Development of a standardised approach to shoreline cleanup assessment technology

This project has been proposed by Canada and was discussed at the Svalbard meeting. The outcome of the discussions were that Canada and the United States will arrange a workshop on the issue. Based on the outcome of the workshop,

Canada will prepare a more detailed project proposal for consideration at the next EPPR working group meeting.

3. Other EPPR issues

EPPR-PAME

At the last EPPR working group meeting there were discussions regarding overlapping in the field of prevention of pollution. It was stated that non-accidental pollution is not part of the EPPR working group activities and should therefore be part of activities in PAME but on the other hand accidents and accidental pollution are EPPR activity areas. The EPPR meeting asked the chair to, in co-operation with the PAME chair Mr. Karau, prepare a discussion paper which would define the areas of possible overlap in the activities of the two groups. The paper should also discuss options for co-operation and sharing of responsibilities in ongoing and future projects.

EPPR-ACAP

The role of EPPR in ACAP was considered and the outcome was that EPPR can contribute in ACAP in issues related to prevention of accidental pollution involving heavy metals and radioactive substances, which are two of the priority groups of substances in ACAP. This was presented by a US delegate at the ACAP Workshop.

4. Next meeting

The EPPR working group will hold its next meeting in Iceland in June 2000.

The SAOs are kindly asked to take note of this report and comment on the EPPR activities as they feel best.