Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference - 20 January 2015, Porto

Towards coordinated preparedness and response to spills of oil and hazardous materials in the Atlantic regions (11.00-12.00)

In line with one of the objectives of Atlantic Action Plan's priority 2, ARCOPOL projects are a successful example of regional collaboration to improve capabilities to cope with maritime incidents in the Atlantic area. To capitalize on this work, the "Atlantic Technological Platform for oil and HNS spill preparedness, response and mitigation" aims to become a sustainable public-private collaborative structure to promote stakeholders' interactions, exchange of knowledge, and the development of innovative initiatives to address key challenges. The aim of this workshop is to present new ideas to bring together existing initiatives in a sustainable way for the Atlantic sea basin.

Organiser: Centro Tecnológico del Mar-CETMAR Foundation

1. Patricia Pérez (CETMAR)
2. Damien Périssé (CPMR)
3. José Chambel (HIDROMOD)
4. Mike Griew (SkyTec Ireland)
5. Andrew Kibble (PHE)

1. Key messages

Significant progress has been made in improving preparedness and response capabilities through initiatives such as ARCOPOL in Atlantic Regions. However, the increasing maritime transport of HNS (Hazardous and Noxious Substances) and containers, and the expansion of traffic and new routes represent a challenge that requires further collaborative work.

In this scenario, the workshop identified three key areas for further improvement:

1. The capitalization of the outcomes of past and on-going projects and initiatives through the creation of interactive public-private platforms and forums such as ARCOPOL Platform (www.arcopol.eu). These can promote and foster stakeholder engagement and information exchange between industry, government, public and private sectors and so address new and emerging challenges to maritime security and the blue economy.

2. The mitigation of the wider environmental, health and societal impacts of maritime pollution events through the development of integrated and transferable recovery tool kits to help communities return to normality. The recovery and sustainability of coastal communities following maritime incidents depends on three critical interlinked areas: people, environment and the economy.

3. The continued development of better open access risk assessment tools and forecast technologies to aid pollution detection and monitoring, and increase the evidence base for planning, preparedness, response and recovery.

All these topics should be addressed from a business-oriented perspective, protecting and supporting economic activities linked to the marine and coastal ecosystem.

2. Summary

Workshop Introduction

Marisa Fernández, ARCOPOL project leader, introduced the workshop highlighting ARCOPOL project family as a very good example of regional collaboration to improve capabilities to cope with oil and HNS spills in the Atlantic area. As a result of collaborative work among the Atlantic regions, ARCOPOL produced tangible results that have been transferred to responders and can be a very good starting point to identify new ideas and projects. A key outcome has been ARCOPOL Platform, a collaborative forum created to centralize information and resources, and to promote stakeholders' interactions and the development of innovative initiatives. After presenting the speakers, she made stress on the key objective of this workshop: to identify key challenges and new ideas that can lead to new collaborative projects to fulfil objective 1 of priority 2 of the Atlantic Action Plan.

DAMIEN PÉRISSÉ (CRPM)

Maritime safety is a core priority for the regions. Actions have been developed at EU level, from Erika packages to more recent initiatives (e.g. Directive on the safety of offshore platforms, initiatives about the coordination of Coast-Guard functions, European flag). Emphasis is made on the need for a continuous action at international and EU levels to address new challenges associated to maritime transport. Examples of challenges in the Atlantic maritime regions include:

- Human factor and link with Vasco da Gama project (developing a maritime Erasmus).
- New risks (e.g. containerships, chemical pollution).
- Coordination of emergency interventions and pollution spill management.
- Need to keep on developing knowledge on ecological damages resulting from pollutions.

The need and interest of establishing links and synergies between work in the Atlantic and work in other sea-basins is highlighted.

PATRICIA PEREZ (CETMAR)

The final objective of ARCOPOL projects is to reinforce the preparedness and capabilities to respond to oil and HNS spills in the Atlantic area. Since 2009, ARCOPOL projects have delivered more than 160 outputs in the form of guides, reports, applications, videos, e-learning courses, etc. which are available online. All these results are a good starting point to develop new ideas to implement the Atlantic Action Plan.

Nowadays partners continue working on contingency planning, HNS, modelling and decision support tools, environmental monitoring, and training and awareness. Within each topic, and in addition to upgrading the guides and tools developed and transferring them to the end users, Working Groups (WG) are being brought together. These WG will integrate experts and competent organisations and will aim at both identifying future challenges on their specific field and at developing initiatives to

address them. To facilitate the interaction among all interested stakeholders, the project website offers the "ARCOPOL Platform". Following a free of charge registration, all members can find information on other members' capabilities, participate on WG activities, and download relevant documentation. Furthermore, this Platform can be a valuable tool for the preparation of new projects aligned with the Atlantic Action Plan.

JOSE CHAMBEL LEITAO (HIDROMOD)

Previous collaborative projects (EROCIPS, ARCOPOL, EASYCO, RAIA, etc) have approached operational oceanography applied to maritime safety and are a solid ground to build upon, but new developments to address changing and emerging risks are needed as acknowledged in the Atlantic Action Plan. Developments have to be business oriented in order to support and protect maritime economic activities and to create jobs and business opportunities for SMEs with new products and services. Collaborative work is required to develop tools for short and long term evaluation of risk change, common concepts for shared risk (taking into account regional specificities), disseminated capacity to use forecast technologies and common formats for data and information sharing. Improved HNS knowledge (establishment of databases, transport processes and toxicity & behaviour after spillage) remain as a high priority, given the increasing volume of seaborne transported chemicals.

Potential partnership may include Ports, Shipping and Oil companies, Industries, Public administration, Coastguards, Universities and local communities. As potential funding, the Atlantic Area Transnational Programme 2014-2020 has been identified.

ANDREW KIBBLE (PHE)

Maritime incidents involving oils and HNS may result in widespread environmental contamination, impacting upon eco-systems and human health alike. Much focus has been placed on planning and responding to such events but less work has been done on helping communities and the environment recover. Recovery and "return to normality" is a crucial aspect of any incident response.

The presentation focused on the need to minimise the environmental and health consequences of maritime incidents through the development of a holistic and integrated recovery tool kit, applicable internationally and enabling sustainable recovery of communities. A number of areas were highlighted including the development of standard protocols for evaluation of recovery options, risk prioritisation, global surveillance for early alerting and to identify good practice and methods for communication and social engagement. The benefit of such future work will include establishing greater trust between stakeholders, greater community resilience, improved community confidence in remediation and recovery and a quicker return to normality. This project consortium, tentatively termed RESCUE (Recovery Shoreline CommUnity Engagement), has had expressions of interest from partners from the UK, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and France. Potential funding programmes include Atlantic Area Transnational Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 and Horizon 2020.

Mike Griew (SKY TECH)

In the framework of ARCOPOL, the use of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS) suitable for shipboard operations has been reviewed and a flight program has been developed to explore and demonstrate utility of low-cost SUAS technology (airframes, sensors, post-processing software) for

use in pollution management and to spotlight expose limitations. Key issues for further collaborative work have been identified. This include:

- Improve drone versatility by combining lifting fans with secondary lift generation systems, by improving human-machine remote control interfaces and by developing GPS-assist precision navigation systems.
- Development of a SUAS-friendly chemical sensor/sensor pod and water/solid sample retrieval system.
- Development of a SUAS-friendly remotely configurable digital camera system.
- Development of multi-node, multi-spectral, wireless relay system for rapid mobilization of shipboard UAS control/data links

The following issues have been identified to encourage aircraft/sensor technology development investment and SUAS service provider SME involvement:

- Quantify likely budgets for UAS support in pollution response.
- Itemise key skills/knowledge/experience expected of RPAS operators participating in pollution response.
- Reduce training and administrative burdens that may prevent data end-users, from embracing unmanned aircraft technology by establishing National Aerial Work Permission schemes, or a Europe-wide scheme.

Potential partnership should include specialized SMEs, governmental agencies, as well as academic partners.

3. Questions and answers

Questions during and after the workshop included interest and support in the development of recovery toolkits and the use of flexible and adaptable networks and IT platforms to disseminate guidance, tools and good practice across the Atlantic Area.

In addition, during the workshop José Manuel Díaz Pérez, Training manager at the Centro de Seguridad Maritima Integral Jovellanos (Spain) asked Mike Griew about the potential use of drones in SAR (Salvage and Rescue) operations. Mike Griew answered positively and added that, in terms of the challenges to face when using this technology in SAR, they would be the same as those mentioned on his presentation. He made a point on the difficulties on flying drones due to the actual navigation regulation, and added that probably this obstacle should be addressed at European level.

4. Follow up

A number of working areas for further collaborative projects have been identified. For instance, a consortium approach to develop and implement a holistic and integrated maritime recovery toolkit for the Atlantic Area was proposed. This project consortium, tentatively termed RESCUE (Recovery

Shoreline CommUnity Engagement), has had expressions of interest from partners from the UK, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and France. Partners from the North Atlantic (Canada) have also expressed an interest in the project and its potential outcomes.

In the frame of ARCOPOL project different actions will be implemented in order to articulate proposals, build partnerships, and identify funding programmes. ARCOPOL Platform has been offered as an instrument to support the development of further initiatives of collaborative work addressed to objective 1 of priority 2 of the Atlantic Action plan, as it provides the opportunity to identify ideas/partners/funding, etc. ARCOPOL partnership will keep fluent communication with the Atlantic Stakeholders Platform team and Focal Points in order to inform/exchange on further initiatives/projects that may arise.

5. Next Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference

Yes, we would be interested in reporting back on the progress made since the 1st Atlantic Stakeholder Conference.