



ENHANCING OIL SPILL RESPONSE CAPABILITY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION 2019–2021

Photo: Joonas Brandt/Finnish Red Cross

OIL SPILL PROJECT IS UNDER WAY

The overall objective of the OIL SPILL project is to strengthen the oil spill response capability in the Baltic Sea Region at the levels of key responsible Ministries, operative Competent Authorities, key NGOs, relevant Universities and the petrochemical industry. Fostering cooperation between Competent Authorities and volunteers in oil spill response is one of the main objectives of the project.

The project aims to benchmark best practices, clarify key legal issues, build up training schemes, and organise relevant training events, such as using simulators and performing cross-border exercises.

OIL SPILL has 13 Project Partners in six countries on the Baltic Sea coast: in Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Denmark, Latvia and Lithuania. The project duration is 30 months (January 2019 – June 2021) with a total budget of 2.0 M€, which is partly funded by the EU's Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

The official kick-off of OIL SPILL was in February 2019.



Photo: Esko Keski-Oja

PROJECT EVENTS

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|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan 2019 | Project started |
| Feb 2019 | Kick-off in Turku, Finland |
| Apr 2019 | WP2 Meeting in Helsinki, Finland |
| May 2019 | The Finnish Association of Fire Officers joins the project as an Associated Organisation |
| Jun 2019 | OIL SPILL presented to HELCOM in Warsaw, Poland
WP2 Workshop in Tallinn, Estonia |
| Aug 2019 | Tabletop Exercise in Mērsrags, Latvia
OIL SPILL presented at the Europe Forum |
| Oct 2019 | New Communication Manager appointed
WP3 Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark
Discussion event in Oulu, Finland |

KICK-OFF IN TURKU, FEBRUARY 2019



All 13 Project Partners were represented in the kick-off meeting in Turku on 13–14 February 2019. Approximately thirty participants took part in the event.

On the first day, Partners introduced themselves and gave informative presentations about their activities and on-going projects. The next day, focus was on practical matters related to project administration, finances and communication.

PROJECT PARTNERS

University of Turku, Lead Partner (FI)
Ministry of Environment of Estonia (EE)
Southwest Finland Emergency Services (FI)
Danish Civil Protection League (DK)
Finnish Red Cross (FI)
Tallinn University of Technology (EE)
Fire and Rescue Department of Lithuania (LT)
Östra Götaland Fire and Rescue Service (SE)
Lithuanian Red Cross Society (LT)
Klaipėda University (LT)
Neste Corporation (FI)
Finnish Environment Institute (FI)
Latvian Maritime Academy (LV)



ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

FEU—Federation of the European Union
Fire Officer Associations (LU)
State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia (LV)
WWF Finland (FI)
Pro Bird Germany (DE)
Rogaland Brann og Redning IKS (NO)
Estonian Fund for Nature (EE)
The Finnish Association of Fire Officers (FI)

CONTACT

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WP2 WORKSHOP IN TALLINN, JUNE 2019

Partners associated with the Work Package 2, Joint Exercises and Communication in Emergencies, met at the Tallinn University of Technology on 13–14 June 2019. First, the participants introduced their organisation's oil spill response procedures, which was followed by a workshop led by Ministry of Environment of Estonia.

Discussions concerned mapping the current practices in legislation, oil spill contingency planning and response coordination. Topics such as common oil spill response procedures in shallow waters and coastal areas and mandatory requirements for complying with EU legislation were covered. In addition, a work plan and a timetable for executing the tasks were created.



Photo: Tallinn University of Technology

WP3 MEETING IN COPENHAGEN, OCTOBER 2019



Photo: Jarmo Malmsten

Work Package 3 and its Group of Activities 3.1. concern planning and organising joint, cross-border exercises and short-term staff exchange between Project Partners.

Representatives from Southwest Finland Emergency Services, Danish Civil Protection League, Fire and Rescue Department of Lithuania, Östra Götaland Fire and Rescue Service and University of Turku gathered in Copenhagen on 9 October 2019. They reviewed and discussed the current and forthcoming events and ongoing preparations.

DISCUSSION EVENT IN OULU, OCTOBER

A discussion event between local authorities and NGOs was organised in Oulu, Finland, by the OIL SPILL project on 9 October. The topics of conversation concerned the tasks suitable for volunteers in oil spill combatting operations and how to organise this work.

NEW COMMUNICATION MANAGER

In October 2019, Minna-Liina Ojala succeeded Mikko Harteela in OIL SPILL Communications. She is excited to improve her skills in publicity work. Project Partners are encouraged to inform her about OIL SPILL events and provide her with the communication material. This information can be sent by using the Communication Act Form or via e-mail.

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TABLETOP EXERCISE IN PORT OF MĒRSRAGS, AUGUST 2019

In the vicinity of Riga, Latvia, in the municipality of Mērsrags, a tabletop exercise simulating an oil spill from a tanker bursting its tank was organised by the Latvian Maritime Academy on 14 August 2019.

The exercise has its real-life counterpart in the MV Prestige accident, where the 26-year-old structurally deficient tanker burst a tank and subsequently sank in November 2002. The released oil polluted thousands of kilometres of coastline and more than one thousand beaches on the Spanish, French and Portuguese coast, and also caused great harm to the local fishing industry.



Photo: Lauri Ojala

Aims of the exercise were to execute a risk assessment of a Prestige-like accident in Riga Bay, raise awareness of necessary resources and procedures needed for effective oil spill response and promote and involve NGOs in the project.



Photo: Lauri Ojala

NEXT OIL SPILL EXERCISE: "KONRAD" IN ÖSTERGÖRTLAND (SWEDEN), 11–12 NOVEMBER 2019

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