

10. EXERCISES AND RELATED GUIDELINES

10.1 TYPES OF EXERCISES

Under the framework of the Helsinki Convention the following types of combatting exercises have been agreed upon:

- Synthetic Exercise (BALEX ALPHA)
- Alarm Exercise (BALEX BRAVO)
- Equipment Exercise (BALEX CHARLIE)
- Operational Exercise (BALEX DELTA)
- State-of-the-art Exercise (BALEX ECHO)

Decisions on the yearly exercise programme including the types of exercises, aims and goals for the exercises, time for the execution and appointment of Lead Countries are taken during the meetings of the Response Group (cf. HELCOM SEA 1/2000, 5/3, Paragraph 4.48).

BALEX BRAVO, CHARLIE, DELTA and ECHO can be executed independently or in combination with each other.

Synthetic Exercise (BALEX ALPHA)

This exercise type is a "paper exercise", the aim of which is to create a base for discussion on matters relating to organization, communication, logistics, etc. in combatting actions involving two or more Baltic Sea Countries.

The exercise will normally take place during the meetings of the Response Group.

The outline of the exercise is preplanned in such a way that the players will be presented with a scenario of a pollution incident giving such facts of the incident that most probably would be at hand in the initial phase.

The situation in the initial phase will be followed by presentations of the situation as it has developed at certain chosen later stages.

After each presentation the players are given the necessary time to consider their national follow-up action in relation to the incident situation.

The national follow-up actions are then presented and discussed before a presentation of the next following chosen stages of the incident situation will take place.

Alarm Exercise (BALEX BRAVO)

The aim of this exercise type is to test the agreed procedures and lines of communication for reporting, requesting and providing assistance, and to get a picture of the current response readiness of the Contracting Parties when called to assist.

The exercise further aims at familiarizing the personnel with the use and national handling of the adopted POLREP reporting form.

It is not the intention with this exercise that combatting equipment and its handling personnel should be activated.

When receiving an exercise POLREP (POLWARN) the participating Contracting Parties should record the time of receipt, time of transmission to the responsible national authority and time of the receipt of POLREP (POLWARN) by the person responsible for initiating further national action.

When receiving an exercise POLREP (POLINF/POLFAC) in addition to the times recorded as for POLREP (POLWARN) the participating Contracting Parties should make a realistic evaluation of the types and the amount of equipment and personnel at their disposal for rendering assistance called for, as well as the time for its arrival at the scene of the accident.

After the termination of each exercise the participating Contracting Parties shall submit a report containing the above mentioned times and evaluations to the Lead Country. The Lead Country should compile this information in a report, for discussion at the following meeting of the Response Group.

The BALEX BRAVO is executed without notice but within a specified period of time.

The BALEX BRAVO can be carried out in turn between two or more Contracting Parties, and the arrangement and the initiation of the exercise are undertaken by representatives of the Parties involved and assisted by the Secretariat, if needed.

Equipment Exercise (BALEX CHARLIE)

The purpose of this exercise is to test the co-operation between the combatting units of the Contracting Parties with respect to both communication and equipment. Involvement of personnel - except those needed for running the equipment - should be very restricted.

The BALEX CHARLIE is carried out between two or more Contracting Parties with bordering Response Regions.

Notice as to the time and event is to be given well in advance of the exercise, and the Contracting Parties not taking part in the exercise and the Secretariat shall be invited to send observers to the exercise.

When planning the date for the execution of the exercise a back-up date should be held in reserve. The participating Parties must be informed as soon as possible and at least three days in advance if the exercise has to be executed on the back-up date or altogether cancelled.

Reports on the exercise should be sent from the Lead Country to the Secretariat for further circulation to other Contracting Parties in order to have the report presented and discussed at the following meeting of the Sea-based Pollution Group.

The BALEX CHARLIE is arranged and executed after direct consultation between the Contracting Parties involved.

Operational Exercise (BALEX DELTA)

The aim of this exercise type is partly to test the alarm procedure, the response capability, and the response time of the Contracting Parties, partly to test and train the staff functions and the co-operation between combatting units (including the combatting equipment) of the Contracting Parties.

The BALEX DELTA is carried out annually, the execution of exercises rotating between the northern and the southern part of the Baltic Sea Area. At the meetings of the Response Group it is decided who should arrange the coming years exercises and what should be the aims of these exercises.

The Lead Country has the overall responsibility to plan and execute the exercise (see further 10.5, section 1).

A report, evaluating the results of the exercise should be sent to the Secretariat for distribution to the Contracting Parties in order to have the report presented and discussed at the following meeting of the Response Group (see further 10.5, section 2).

While participation in the exercise is voluntary, it is recommended that at least the neighbouring countries participate.

State-of-the-art Exercise (BALEX ECHO)

The aim of this exercise is to demonstrate the state-of-the-art of a specific topic, e.g., a type of equipment, a response method, means of communication or scientific tests. Traditional operational combatting activities will not form a part of this type of exercise.

As the aim of BALEX ECHO is to demonstrate the-state-of-the-art, great emphasis should be given to inviting relevant observers from the Contracting Parties.

The exercise should be followed by a "hot wash-up" in order to benefit from the remarks from

the observers. The Lead Country should send a report of the exercise to the Secretariat for further distribution to the Contracting Parties in order to have the report presented and discussed at the following meeting of the Response Group.

10.2 PROCEDURES FOR THE EXERCISES

To identify exercise traffic and to avoid conflict with exercises undertaken within other agreements, the text of all messages (both to and from the Lead Country) shall begin with the words:

"EXERCISE HELCOM"

All messages shall end with the words:

"EXERCISE-EXERCISE-EXERCISE"

At the end of each exercise the Lead Country shall send a final "End of exercise" message to all Participants.

10.3 EXERCISE REPORT

After an exercise the Lead Country shall prepare a brief report (for reports from BALEX DELTA Exercises, see 10.5, section 2).

The report should, as a minimum, cover the following items:

- (1) Preparation of the exercise
 - a short description of how the exercise was prepared and relevant references
- (2) Implementation of the exercise
 - date and period of exercise,
 - a brief description of how the exercise was initiated
- (3) Participating Contracting Parties
 - names of participating Parties with a description of participating units and items from each Party
- (4) Running and finalization of exercise
 - Under this heading a brief description of following items should be given:
 - scenario
 - command
 - communications
 - finalization of exercise

(5) Comments of the Participating Parties

A brief summary of comments received from each participating Party. Only comments on important matters should be mentioned.

(6) Conclusion

- a general conclusion from the Lead Country's point of view on lessons learned
- suggestions and recommendations on how to improve exercises in the future.

Tables, statistics or figures can be added as necessary under each item as annexes at the end of the heading.

10.4 CHECKLIST OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS WHICH COULD ARISE IN AN OPERATIONAL EXERCISE (BALEX CHARLIE OR DELTA)

In general it is up to each participating Party to take care of all formalities itself. But it is advisable that the Lead Country undertakes to make precautions in order to facilitate the granting of all clearance and permissions required.

This checklist is to help the Lead Country arranging an operational exercise and the participating Parties not to forget issues of importance:

- diplomatic clearance
- customs questions
- conditions of work
- insurance of personnel
- civil liability for injuries or damage
- accommodation and meals
- medical treatment
- equipment and repairs
- report to the meeting of the Sea-based Pollution Group
- general program well in advance, including:
 - * exercise condition
 - * briefing/debriefing
 - * operational command
 - * participating units
 - * timetable
 - * pilot regulation
 - * moorage
 - * transports
 - * social events
 - * time zone
 - * exercise command
 - * liaison officer
 - * communication
 - * recommended charts
 - * required diplomatic clearance
 - * hotel reservation
 - * observers
 - * information service

10.5 PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF BALEX DELTA EXERCISES

(1) PLANNING

First announcement and invitation to participation should be sent to the Secretariat for distribution to the Contracting Parties six months in advance of the exercise. This first announcement should:

- inform on the aim, the date, including a back-up date, and place of the exercise; and
- call for participation of ships and observers.

Announcements of participation should be made to the Lead Country four months in advance of the exercise.

Having received the announcements of participation the Lead Country should send out practical information about the exercise. Examples of such information is given in section 10.4. This information should not include details of the exercise scenario.

In general it is up to the Lead Country to plan the exercise scenario. An Exercise Evaluation Team (EET) shall, however, be established, to enable beforehand comments on the exercise scenario, and thus ensure the best benefits of the scheduled exercise. The exercise scenario shall be sent in due time to the members of the EET to enable them to comment thereupon.

The EET normally consists of three members, of which one is from the Lead Country, one from the Contracting Party who arranged the previous exercise, and one from the Contracting Party who will arrange the next exercise.

Although the aim of a BALEX DELTA Exercise is to check and train the operational system as a whole, efforts should also be made to change the tasks of the participating units during the exercise, in order for personnel to gain as much experience as possible from the exercise.

The participating Parties must be informed as soon as possible and at least three days in advance if the exercise has to be executed on the back-up date or altogether cancelled.

(2) EVALUATION

The EET shall, in order to strengthen the operational co-operation between the Contracting Parties, do an unbiased evaluation of the exercise.

This evaluation is to be conducted in two steps; as an intermediate evaluation and as a final evaluation.

For the intermediate evaluation the tasks of the EET are:

- to be present during the exercise; and

- to give an oral presentation of the findings and a preliminary evaluation of the exercise to the participants immediately after the exercise (at the debriefing).

For the final evaluation the task of the EET is:

- to submit a written report of the final evaluation including lessons learnt and proposals for future similar activities to the next meeting of the Response Group.

The members of the EET decide between themselves their individual tasks and their geographical location(s) during the execution of the exercise.

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE AND POSSIBILITIES TO USE VARIOUS MATERIALS
 FOR SIMULATING THE OIL SPILL DURING THE EXERCISES**

MATERIAL	VISIBILITY	BEHAVIOUR	OTHER ADVANTAGES	OTHER DISADVANTAGES
1) Foam 1. Light (high expansion) 2. Medium (medium expansion) 3. Heavy (low expansion) 4. Training foams	Excellent	Drifts too much with the wind.	Relatively cheap, needs no collection. b) Easy to deploy. c) Easy to deploy. d) Easy to deploy.	Lighter foams disappear too soon. All foam types except training foams are more or less poisonous. a) Difficult to deploy especially in windy conditions due to the lightness.
2) Peat	Poor - moderate	Drifts mainly with the wind.	Easy to deploy, relatively cheap, environmentally friendly.	Needs to be collected.
3) Vegetable oils, general 1. Canola oil (from rape seed)	Poor – moderate No experience	Simulates the drifting of mineral oils well. Simulates crude oil especially well when used in water-in-oil emulsion form.	More environmentally friendly than mineral oils. Highly biodegradable, low toxicity.	Needs to be collected. Some vegetable oils are harmful to the nature, stick to the fishing nets, birds, etc. Sometimes a small amount of mineral oil must be added to make the oil visible. Reports about environmental risks of using Canola oil are contradictory.
4) Chemical agents like Rhodamine, etc.	Moderate	Simulates sinking oil and oil that spreads to the whole water column, like orimulsion, well.	The volume of the needed agent is small, needs not to be collected.	Perfect monitoring of the slick needs special equipment. Rhodamine can be used also together with peat, foam, etc. which then simulates the drifting of floating oil.
5) Pop Corn (unsalted)	Excellent	Drifts mainly with the wind.	Largely environmentally friendly.	The use of Pop Corn can be ethically doubtful (food). It is oxygen-consuming material.
6) Paraffin balls	Poor - moderate. In darkness easy to see with searchlight.	Simulates the drifting of mineral oils well.		Needs to be collected and can create mechanical damages in the skimmers. Rather expensive.
7) Paper/carton pieces	Good	Simulates the drifting of mineral oils on water surface perfectly.	Cheap, easy to deploy, environmentally friendly.	Needs to be collected, may sink.
8) Drifters	Excellent	Simulates the drift of the slick well.	Can be used several times. If drifters are equipped with GPS and radio links, the true position of the slick is easily monitored.	Skimmers cannot be tested when using drifters and if real spreading of the oil is simulated, large number of drifters is needed. Modern (GPS + radio link) drifters are expensive.