



Barents Joint Manual

Approved by the JC the 1st December 2017

Cooperation within the field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region



Revised December 2017

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1. Introduction

The Barents Joint Manual is referred to in Article 5 of the Agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response. It has been compiled for use in emergency situations as defined by the Agreement, in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, when there is a need of cross border exchange of information, and/or emergency assistance.

The Manual is an operational tool for the Joint Committee and the points of contact, as established in accordance with articles 4 and 5 of the Agreement. Users will also include any other involved regional rescue authorities/leaders and alarm centres, as the case may be.

The Manual provides guidance and instructions for the implementation of the Agreement. Its key purpose is to:

- Establish clear and expedient procedures for early warning, notification, information and contact in emergency situations between the designated points of contact in each of the four countries within the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (cf. Article 6 of the Agreement).
- Establish procedures for requesting and committing emergency assistance across borders in the Region (cf. Article 7 of the Agreement).
- Establish procedures for facilitating border crossing of emergency response teams and resources (cf. Articles 8, 9 and 10 of the Agreement)
- Provide other information of relevance to the objective of strengthening cooperation on emergency prevention, preparedness and response in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

2. Joint Committee

Article 4 of the Agreement establishes a Joint Committee of the state competent authorities of the Contracting Parties. For the purpose of this manual, the Contracting Parties will be called Countries.

The chairmanship of the Joint Committee shall rotate in the following order:

2016 Sweden

2017 Finland

2018 Norway

2019 Russia, etc. in alphabetical order.

The Joint Committee shall meet annually or when necessary to plan and coordinate collaboration and to evaluate the application of the Agreement.

The Chair is responsible for organizing the meetings. The tasks also include the maintenance of the Manual. The main responsibility for its updating rests with the chair of the Joint Committee. The Manual should be updated annually in order to be a useful operational tool for all intended users. Any changes in the telephone and the telefax numbers, as well as the e-mail addresses, must be reported to the chair of the Joint Committee and updated immediately. The manual is a living document and should be updated and adopted at every Joint Committee meeting.

3. Operational information

3.1. *National and regional points of contact*

Points of contact for the implementation of cooperation have been established in accordance with Article 5 of the Agreement.

The points of contact maintain uninterrupted, 24-hour per day preparedness with respect to notification and transmission of requests for emergency assistance.

National Points of Contacts are listed in **Attachment 1**.

3.2. *Notification of emergencies*

Notification of emergencies in accordance with the Agreement shall take place in the following way:

- Notification shall be sent by telefax or mail to one or more of the other points of contact, preferably in the attached format (attachment 2), describing the nature, character and location of the emergency, and other relevant information. The notification shall be sent in English or in the respective national language with an English translation attached.
- Procedures concerning nuclear emergencies shall be in compliance with the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, as well as bilateral agreements in this field between the Countries.

3.3. *Request for assistance*

Request for assistance in an emergency, in accordance with the Agreement, shall take place in the following way:

- Requests shall be sent by telefax or mail to one or more of the other points of contact, preferably in the attached format (**Attachment 2**), with detailed information of the place, time, character and scale of the emergency and, if possible and appropriate, the estimated duration of the required emergency response operation. The request shall contain information on the kind (type, amount) of emergency teams and resources needed.

- The telefax transmission should be followed up by a telephone call, just to ensure that the request is actually received and understood. Afterwards, and if possible, and appropriate, by e-mail.
- Upon receipt of the request, the Country to whom an assistance request has been submitted, shall promptly decide whether or not it is in a position to render assistance and inform the Requesting Country accordingly. If the Country to whom an assistance request has been submitted, decides to render assistance, it shall promptly inform the Requesting Country of its available emergency response teams and resources, including the scope, timeframe and proposed terms of the assistance that can be rendered.
- The Countries should thereafter agree on the terms of the assistance and any operational details necessary to facilitate the movement of the assisting Country's emergency response teams and resources into the emergency area. The requesting Country should inform the assisting Country of its formal acceptance of the assistance offered.
- Procedures related to aeronautical and maritime emergencies shall be in compliance with the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR Manual) developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- Procedures relating to nuclear accidents or radiological emergencies should be in compliance with the Convention on assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency, as well as bilateral agreements in this field between the Contracting Countries.

3.4 SITREPS

In order to update assisting Countries with urgent essential information during a SAR operation, the requesting Country should provide each assisting Country with Situation Reports (SITREPS) on a regular basis.

The SITREP shall contain basic information on operational status, including number of missing persons, injuries, weather conditions etc. (**Attachment 3**)

3.5 Risks and types of operations

The Barents region is increasingly being used for natural resources extraction, transport, tourism and other economic purposes.

The region is characterized by long and strenuous distances between economic centres, sparsely populated rural communities, limited rescue personnel and equipment, and restricted means for transport and hospital resources available in case of larger accidents.

Moreover the emergency services in the region may be hampered by severe weather conditions and during winter months also darkness and extreme cold.

Risk scenarios for major accidents, natural disasters, and man-made emergencies show many similarities in the Barents Region and may occur both at land and at sea.

The emergencies calling for cross-border cooperation vary and include daily routine emergencies, major accidents and large scale disasters affecting one or several countries in the region. Examples could be major fires in urban or rural areas, dam failures, environmental hazards due to climate change, CBRNE-related accidents, land-slides, major traffic accidents etc.

Regardless of type of incident, countries need to have proper administrative and operative arrangements in place to be able to assist each other if the need arise.

The Contracting Countries have at their disposal for emergency response operations in the Region, a variety of SAR-capacities, response teams, assistance resources and other special capacities. All of these capacities may be located geographically far from any emergency area. The points of contact in each country will have an overview of the resources available.

3.6 Border-crossing of emergency response teams

In order to ensure a quick and simple border crossing and movement into the emergency area by the accepted response teams, the following procedures should be followed:

- The assisting Country shall, unless otherwise agreed, send to the Point of Contact a certificate describing the mission of the emergency response team in question and a list of its personnel. The list shall contain the name, title/function, place and date of birth, citizenship, and type and number of the travel document of each member of the team.
- The requesting Country shall inform the assisting Country of its acceptance of the team's services and of the information given, and provide the necessary information to facilitate the entry of the team into the emergency area.
- The members of the response teams, while crossing the border and while in the territory of the requesting Country, shall carry a travel document (passport or other identification document) containing a photograph, and the name, citizenship, place and date of birth of the holder.

- If government or military personnel requiring a special entry and exit permit has been accepted as part of a response team, the border shall not be crossed before the necessary diplomatic or other special clearance has been issued.
- In order to facilitate the most simplified and flexible procedures, other arrangements may be entered into concerning the movement over specific border crossing points or within neighbouring areas.

3.7 Border-crossing of emergency response resources

In order to ensure the most simplified border-crossing procedures possible to emergency response resources of an assisting Country, the following requirements shall be met after the requesting Country has formally accepted the assistance offered:

- The assisting Country should send to the Point of Contact a certificate describing the mission and a complete list of emergency response resources to be moved into the emergency area. Such resources may include, but not be limited to equipment, vehicles, machinery, aircraft and helicopters, vessels, supplies, relief materiel, means of radio communication and other materiel as well as services.
- The requesting Country shall inform the assisting country of its acceptance of the resources offered and of the information given, and provide the necessary information to facilitate the entry of the resources into the emergency area, including information of special customs forms or other necessary formalities to be completed.
- If government or military vessels, aircrafts and vehicles, requiring a special entry and exit permit, have been accepted as part of the assistance resources, the border should not be crossed before the necessary diplomatic or other special clearance has been issued.
- In order to facilitate the most simplified and flexible procedures, other arrangements may be agreed upon relating to the movement over specific border crossing points or within neighbouring areas.

3.8 Languages

Notifications, requests for assistance, SITREPS and other correspondence relating to an emergency, shall be conducted in either the English language, or in the respective national language with a translation into English attached.

Each point of contact shall on short notice be able to provide such interpretation services as may be necessary, in order to receive and send messages as appropriate.

During emergency response operations, the requesting Country shall to the extent necessary and possible, provide the response teams of the assisting Countries with competent interpreters.

4. Emergency preparedness activities

Activities undertaken under this Joint Manual should be guided by the following **overall purpose**:

To enhance the effectiveness of organizations, as well as develop individual skills, in order to facilitate cross-border cooperation and improve emergency response operations in the Barents Region.

According to Article 4 in the Agreement, the Joint Committee shall give directives, as well function as a steering group, for activities undertaken under this Joint Manual.

While planning an activity under this agreement, participating actors should use earlier experiences - from evaluations, real accidents, reports, etc. – as well as findings from new research and other sources.

The content of activities should focus on the main aspects of this Joint Manual:

- alarming procedures and routines
- the ability to give and receive international assistance
- legal and administrative issues concerning border crossing procedures
- information management and sharing of common situational awareness
- skills development for rescue services in themes specific for the Barents region

4.1 Types of activities

Following is a list and grouping of activities which can be used in the joint Barents emergency preparedness process. Several of these activities may be implemented in a single larger event or carried out separately, according to assessment of needs by the Joint Committee. Within the scope of this Joint Manual, an ambition is to recurrently carry out a “Barents Rescue Event” which can include a mix of the activities described in 4.1.1. – 4.1.5 (See also Appendix 1, Joint Committee Strategic Planning and Barents Rescue Event Cycle, which provides an example of how future activities and events can be distributed over a 3 year period).

4.1.1. Policy development

High level joint effort to develop and advocate the policies, strategies and common understanding of dealing with risks in the north is important. This is a constant obligation and task of the Joint Committee as well as other standing mutual organizations.

Such efforts may further be promoted as an integrated part in a Barents Rescue Event or other High level meetings and Conferences.

4.1.2 Information & knowledge exchange

The risk-exposure in this region is continuously evolving and similarly are the methods & techniques in dealing with emergencies being constantly developed. Also the emergency response capacities within the region keep changing. Shared knowledge on best practices, new methods & techniques as well as information of response capacities in dealing with northern risks is useful in developing of optimal response plans.

The information & knowledge exchange may be carried out by lectures, presentations on incidents and emergency operations as well as by disseminating the information of the capacities to relevant neighbouring organizations.

4.1.3. Training (individual skills development)

The risks and threats in the north are common so there is a place for joint training. Bearing in mind the costs and other challenges in traveling within the region, focus should be on themes specific for the Barents region (example cold climate) and where joint training activities creates an added value for the competence development of rescue services which could not be achieved by each individual country.

Training can be done through class room activities, field training and sharing of good practices. Possibilities to share e-learning methods for distant learning should be an option. Another option could be shorter exchange of employees between organizations (a train-the-trainer concept)

4.1.4. Exercises

Exercises as an activity should primarily focus on areas which facilitate the implementation of the Agreement as well as the main aspects of the Joint Manual. Any exercise activity need to begin with identifying a purpose and objectives, being based on findings on which aspects of the manual that needs to be improved. Exercises shall not include training according to 4.1.3

Since such activities can be handled more cost-efficiently outside the exercise format. The results from exercises shall in a systematic way be used to formulate action plans identifying areas where improvements are necessary.

For the purpose of fulfilment of the intentions of this Joint Manual, table-top exercises is probably a preferred exercise format, but simulation as well as field exercises can still be useful if supported by identified purpose and objectives.

4.1.5. Networking

The overall situational awareness of the northern emergency response reality will be greatly enhanced through networking of individuals and organizations. This will promote the awareness of the capabilities and way of work of the neighbours and expedite the communication and decision making during a real emergency. This is a methodological issue rather than an activity in itself. Networking though needs to be

carefully facilitated, and given enough time to create necessary opportunities, and should be part of any joint Barents Rescue activity.

4.2 Target groups

The target groups for the emergency preparedness activities within the region can consist of all possible actors in the chain that take part or have a role in developing the emergency preparedness. The target groups include, among others, the following possible stakeholders: Governments and Ministries; regional political or administrative bodies; central, regional and local public administrative agencies; emergency rescue services, private and voluntary sector organizations.

Selection of target groups should reflect the content of any activity that the Joint Committee decides should be developed.

5. Attachments

List of attachments:

Attachment 1 - National Points of Contacts

Attachment 2 - Telefax notification – requests for assistance scheme

Attachment 3 - SITREP

Attachment 4 - BEAC Communications Test Schedule