



Inspectie Leefomgeving en Transport
Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu



World Health
Organization



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

18-19 September 2013

Project under the Assistance Programme

“Risk assessment and Enforcement of Cross-border Obligations (RIECO)”

Workshop Summary report

Introduction

This report summarises the outcome of a workshop within the Project on Risk assessments and Enforcement of Cross-border Obligations (RIECO), hosted by the Republic of Moldova in Vadul lui Voda on 18 and 19 September 2013. The workshop was held to discuss and verify the outcomes of the web survey conducted earlier during this year, designed to identify the availability and implementation of best practices regarding industrial accident preparedness and response and to explore the needs for guidance and recommendations for preparedness and response to (cross-border) industrial accidents, including for cross-border cooperation and the need of creating a network of experts in industrial accident preparedness and response in the participating countries.

The workshop was attended by 34 participants from Non EU countries (Albania, Armenia, Azeirbaidjan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Kyrgystan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine), experts from The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Croatia, the World Health Organization (WHO) and from the secretariat of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA Secretariat). The workshop was also attended by the UN Resident Coordinator officer in the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Jakob Schemel.

Opening of workshop

The workshop started with a welcome from Mr. Gavril Gilca, Head of the Environmental Quality Monitoring Department of the State Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of Moldova and Mr. Chris Dijkens, Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention. Mr. Jakob Schemel, UN Resident Coordinator office in Chisinau, welcomed the event and wished the participants a successful workshop. The project leader, Ms. Svetlana Stirbu from the State Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of Moldova also introduced the history and background of the RIECO project workshop, the objectives and the expected outcomes and deliverables from the project.

International experts highlighted in the plenary session presentations the importance of preparedness and response to industrial accidents and the impact such accidents can have on human health and the environment. This was illustrated by based on a real case study which included all relevant elements of preparedness and response, in particular the importance of (state of the art) risk assessment. Experts from the TEIA Secretariat and WHO presented the international policy and legislation on industrial

accidents and cross-border cooperation. The participants were provided with the necessary background information and good practices were highlighted.

Results of the web survey, conducted prior the workshop, were presented and compared with the results of a similar project, carried out in the EU from 2010 – 2012, the Cross-border Exposure characterisation for Risk Assessment in Chemical Incidents (CERACI) project. The presentations concluded with a list of basic requirements and good practices for preparedness and response and for risk assessment that provided background information for discussions in the breakout and plenary sessions that followed.

The focus of the second plenary session was on the structure of a response organization and how participating countries can deliver an adequate response, including the (risk) assessment of the impact of a release of chemicals during an industrial accident on human health and the environment. Good practices were shared with the participants. The relevance of the nexus between risk assessment and capacity building was presented by the means of a case study. In addition, one of the participating countries shared its experience in this area.

Experts highlighted the importance of training and exercises and shared ideas and good practices on this topic with the participants. In addition, the aspects of 'evaluation' were introduced to emphasize the importance of lessons learned. The presentations were followed by a moderated discussion.

Discussions on specific aspects

During the workshop, after each plenary session, participants were invited to join small groups and to discuss key topics and good practices. Discussions were facilitated by international experts and representatives of the TEIA Secretariat and WHO. A plenary report of the results of the breakout sessions was followed by a group discussion.

Conclusions of the workshop and the way forward

The final discussion was led by Mr. Chris Dijkens and Ms Svetlana Stirbu. The chair summarised the outcomes of the plenary discussions and the discussions in breakout groups and invited participants to share their views on how the project outcomes and deliverables could be used for capacity building within the countries. During the discussion, participants expressed the need for a guidance that would contain references to the currently available information and shared a variety of recommendations related to all elements of preparedness and response to industrial accidents.

The main conclusions from the workshop were:

- Participants emphasized the need for enhanced capacity building in the area of risk assessment and cross-border cooperation within the stages of industrial accidents preparedness and response. In particular training (theory and practise) for a variety of experts who need to be available and operational in response situations needs to have attention.
- Participants expressed interest in receiving further information in the area of risk assessment and cross-border cooperation, including the preparation of a guidance that would act as a “signpost” to highlight information on available best practice.
- There is a need to further strengthen the bi- and multilateral cooperation in the area of industrial accidents preparedness and response.

- There is a need to harmonize and standardize techniques and methods for assessment, modelling and mapping and to make these internationally available through a central point.
- Experts from national competent authorities, active in the area of industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response, public health and environment protection need to increase the level of coordination and cooperation in order to efficiently utilize all available resources.
- There is a need for a collaboration platform, where existing information in this area could be made available to UNECE Member States, especially those from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.
- Participants emphasized the need for development of interactive online tools in the area of risk assessment and cross-border cooperation for the UNECE member states.

Possible steps forward:

Participants of the workshop agreed on the following steps forward:

- Development of guidance material and recommendations for exposure and risk assessment of (cross-border) industrial accidents and cross-border cooperation.
- As a possible follow-up to the project, to study the possibility for developing interactive online tools in the area of for risk assessment and cross-border cooperation and for creating an internet based platform, where existing information in this area could be made available to the UNECE member states, especially EECCA countries.
- To involve representatives of relevant national competent authorities in further training activities on key requirements of the Convention and the International Health Regulations of the WHO through national and/or regional workshops.