

FUTURE BARENTS RESCUE EXERCISES

A REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON RESCUE
COOPERATION IN THE BARENTS REGION



The present situation

The Barents Rescue exercises started in 2001 and have their basis/foundation in the Barents Agreement on rescue cooperation in the arctic region. The exercise has been held bi annually containing a full-scale exercise with multinational first-responders handling various emergency situations.

Each exercise is planned and conducted according to the BEAC exercise planning guide. This is a comprehensive manual designed, with basis from NATO's PfP exercise manual, to have a common platform for planning joint full-scale exercises. This is one factor that leads the planning into a fixed path with an extensive planning process and a full-scale exercise. The planning process before the exercise is by all participants considered to be the most important part of the process. It is in the planning phase the planners get together and actually plan and improve the cooperation between the countries.

It is also a fact that approx 20% of the budget is spent on the planning phase and approx 80% on the actual field exercise. It is also imminent to bear in mind that 80% of the learning comes from the planning phase and 20% from the execution phase of a field training exercise. This seems to underline that the nations are spending money on a type of exercise that is not giving value for money.

This fact, and the fact that we actually tend to jump straight from one evaluation conference to the initial planning conference for the next exercise, without having the time or process to seriously assess the evaluation results and to implement the lessons learned from the previous exercise, before we start planning the next.

The tasks from the Joint Committee (JC)

The task given from the JC was to investigate the different scenarios in the BEAC region that fulfilled the following criteria:

Each nation should describe scenarios, in their own country's part of the Barents region, that have such large, wide societal and cross sectorial consequences that national emergency recourses were inadequate, and therefore the need of international assistance was to be highly expected. These scenarios should then make the basis for future exercises, as well as a basis of a Barents Rescue exercise calendar.

The group should also propose relevant exercise types and forms, suitable for the respective scenario.

Members of the group have been:

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The process of investigating the risks.

Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia have performed a focused investigation among their main national actors, within the concerned rescue and crises preparedness services and authorities asking them the above mentioned scenario questions. The answers originate from national risk and vulnerability studies, forming an updated common BEAC rescue risk table.

The results from the investigation

From Norway the following incidents came as a common result:

1. Great landslides in the Lyngen areas in Troms County
2. Ship collision in coastal waters off the coast of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark counties
3. Tourist-Helicopter accident i.e. in the three country border area
4. Offshore, large petroleum industry related incident

From Sweden:

1. Hydro-electric power dam-failure
2. Air accidents
3. Mine-related accidents

Large scale environmental accidents

4. Extensive disruptions in electricity-/telecommunications

From Finland:

1. Large incidents related to the tourist traffic
2. Large forest fires
3. Air related accidents

From Russia:

1. Hydro-electric power dams
2. Nuclear Power plant
3. Large transportation accidents
4. Forest fires
5. Ship accidents, pollution related.

Regarding the nr 1 and 2 from Russia, the probability for this to happen is very low due to heavy safety measures, but if it happens the consequences may be large.

The desired situation

The desired situation within the rescue services is of course to develop and maintain all the desired capabilities needed in order to save lives, protect the environment and assets for the population in

the Barents region. The risk analysis' done in the region, the political framework given for the rescue services and the multilateral agreements are the basis for defining the desired capabilities for the rescue services in the region.

There are a mutual understanding within the working group, that there are some capabilities within the rescue services that needs to be improved, the exercises are therefore of vital importance. By identifying the lack of capabilities, we can easily define the aims and objectives of all our future exercises in a more efficient and easy way.

The JC's role

The expert working group on exercises identify the need for a stronger leadership/ownership, from the Joint Committee, related to the exercises. Today each country is totally autonomous in the preparations for each exercise. We fully recognize that the host nation needs to cooperate with the other countries in the planning and execution phases.

We suggest that the JC shall act as a steering committee for future exercises, in order to focus on the agreements, the overall exercise aims and objectives and that all countries are contributing in the process. This will also strengthen JC's ownership to the exercises. The JC should be the forum for keeping track of the learning process after each exercise

The different exercise types:

Generally the planning phase of the exercise is the most important part. It is the planning phase that gives organizational learning and the platform for the organizations to learn.

Alarmex

Alarming or warning exercises are exercise types that aims to test and verify the warning chain internally in stricken nation but also to the dedicates POC's in the other countries. Each nation which receives a warning or notification of a major incident in the Barents region should send the warning or notification through appropriate national lines of command. The alarmex is very easy to plan and not expensive to conduct. The alarmex gives therefore good value for money and should always be combined with other exercise types when not conducted alone.

Tabletop exercise (TTX)

The tabletop exercise or discussion exercise is a very easy exercise to plan and conduct. It consists of an exercise audience and a moderator. The main structure of the TTX is that the moderator will present a challenge or a situation to the audience and asks: What do you do now? Then the exercise audience is expected to discuss what are their own and other participant's role and responsibilities. Then the questions are: What actions to be taken on short and long terms. A TTX is often accompanied with media injects to highlight the discussion topics or to help the participants to stay focused.. The TTX requires a modest planning phase, in which representatives from all the training audience must be present. The conduct of the exercise requires small or moderate recourses. A tabletop exercise has its major focus the decision makers and not the organizations behind, and therefore not ideal to train organizational staffs etc.

Command Post Exercise (CPX)

A CPX is a type of exercise which main goal is to give added value to the participating organizations and is done in their respective premises. A directing staff (DISTAFF) is needed to conduct the play. In this type of exercise it is common to have a cross sectorial scenario. The scenario must be well developed and the planning phase of the exercise must have representatives from all participants in

the exercise. There will be a distaff which introduces events into the game, in addition to media injects. A CPX is more complex than a TTX and involves often two or three levels of management organizations. A CPX invites to "Players action" to a large extent according to the players normal routines and plans according to the situation.

The CPX concept involves the participating organizations to a large extent in the planning phase and the participating organizations are represented in the distaff. The CPX is slightly more resource demanding than the TTX but gives very good value for money.

Full Scale Exercise (FTX)

The full scale exercise requires training of first responders in the field. One or more scenario-or incident sites must be prepared for the participants. The main focus in such a exercise is to train the first responders' primary task, to save lives, but also to exercise management and coordination of responding teams from different nations. A FTX requires a long and complex planning phase, where all operational and tactical exercise goals are to be transformed to injects in the FTX. This type of exercise is considered to give good outcome for the first responders, moderate outcome for the incident coordinators and low outcome for the organizations involved in the scenario.

The full scale exercise is considered to give low value for money

Proposal

The Working Group on Exercises propose, with basis in the above mentioned items, the following:

1. We must further focus on exercises that develop multilateral civil protection skills against well defined desirable management/operational abilities and capabilities in our respective national rescue services/civil protection resources, on all levels, in the Barents region.
2. Exercises overall aims and objectives should always be formulated out from well defined lack of abilities and capabilities (studies and lessons learned from reality and exercises), and as such be coherent with the defined risk and vulnerabilities for the region.
3. Alarmex should always be combined with other types of exercises
4. Introduction of Command post exercises(CPX) as a complement to full-scale exercises.
5. There must be a predictable exercise calendar, 5-10 years ahead, updated annually.

Increase the intervals between each full-scale exercise. Maintain focus on the planning and evaluation phases of the exercises with the JC in a central role.

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