

Oil and gas: meeting challenges today... for tomorrow

While the oil and gas industry works to prevent oil spills, it also remains prepared by developing comprehensive contingency plans in cooperation with governments. These ensure a rapid response to anticipate and minimize the impacts of oil spills.



This image is of a practice exercise, not an actual oil spill.

THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE: PARTNERSHIP FOR ENHANCED OIL SPILL RESPONSE

The Global Initiative (GI) is an umbrella oil spill preparedness and response programme for cooperation between governments and the oil and gas industry. The programme is implemented by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a United Nations specialized agency, and IPIECA. The IMO and IPIECA work together to help countries develop national structures and capability for oil spill preparedness and response. This helps maintain ocean and coastal sustainability.

The oil and gas industry contributes significantly to social and economic development around the world. However oil spills can affect the environment and surrounding local communities. Even with sophisticated safety measures in place, the risk of an oil spill remains.

Since the launch of the GI programme in 1996 and in line with the outcomes of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (especially chapter 17 of Agenda 21 which calls for protection of the oceans and coastal areas), significant progress has been made. The GI has resulted in increased ratification of oil spill-related conventions and improved contingency planning and response capabilities. It is an example of an innovative public-private sector partnership that addresses a

major global environmental concern.

The programme addresses the issue of potential oil pollution, while recognizing that the development of oil and gas reserves is an important economic activity. The GI contributes to sustainable development by:

- enhancing regional economies and safeguarding local environmental assets;
- developing legal and institutional reforms for effective ocean governance;
- supporting the monitoring and evaluation of ocean conditions;
- carrying out sensitivity mapping that conveys essential information to spill responders by showing where the different coastal resources are, and by indicating environmentally sensitive areas, and
- building capacity in local economies in support of sustainable oceans.

KEY FACTS AND FEATURES

Since 1996, many countries have made major improvements to their national oil spill plans and response systems. The GI has initiated regional and national workshops, training courses and exercises that have encouraged better communication and cooperation between

For further information

The International Convention on Oil Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 – goo.gl/mrW70

The Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative – www.ospri.moonfruit.com

The Mediterranean Oil Industry Group – www.moig.org

The Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF) – www.giwacaf.org

UNEP Regional Seas Programme – goo.gl/hBJZR

The Regional Association of Oil, Gas and Biofuels Sector Companies in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARPEL) – www.arpel.org

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean – goo.gl/fzJa4

The Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre – goo.gl/uCR7X

The Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region – www.nowpap.org

IMO, the International Maritime Agency, is the United Nations' specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

IPIECA is the global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues. It develops, shares and promotes good practices and knowledge to help the industry improve its environmental and social performance; and is the industry's principal channel of communication with the United Nations.

OGP, the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers, works on behalf of the world's oil and gas exploration and production companies to promote safe, responsible and sustainable operations. It represents the industry before international organizations and regionally at the European Commission.

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Global Initiative objectives

- Enhancing cooperation between industry and governments.
- Preserving the marine and coastal environment.
- Supporting local communities by incorporating them in national emergency plans.
- Creating opportunities in the environment sector and developing local expertise.
- Strengthening institutional frameworks by promoting ratification of international convention.

government and industry.

The GI has also helped develop a sustainable approach for the oil and gas industry by reducing its impact on the environment, contributing to economic growth and supporting society. This has been through the development of specific tools – including sensitivity mapping – that help preserve key regions that are environmentally sensitive (such protected natural sites or species) and the local economy (including fisheries and tourism). The GI has raised awareness of sustainable development through a series of workshops where local and international experts share experience training hundreds of people each year.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC 90) calls for national authorities to work with the oil and shipping industries to unify response efforts. The GI meets this requirement by sharing good practice between regions.

Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Central Eurasia

Established in 2003, the Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI) has built relationships between governments and international partners, leading to significant improvements in preparedness. OSPRI continues to work with governments to develop proven, credible, integrated and sustainable national and regional oil spill response capability.

Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG), launched in 2004, brings together oil and gas companies and commercial providers from the region. The group serves as a regional oil industry forum on oil spill prevention,



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preparedness and response. MOIG engages in collaborative activities with the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC).

West, Central and Southern Africa

IMO and IPIECA set up the Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF Project) in 2006. The project is implemented in partnership with the UNEP Regional Seas programme, the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project, various bilateral cooperation initiatives and the recipient countries.

South East Asia

Throughout 2012 IPIECA worked with its international and regional partners to establish a new GI programme in South East Asia. The culmination of these activities was the launch of the Global Initiative for South East Asia (GI SEA) in March 2013. This recent development stands out as major commitment from both industry and government to improve oil spill preparedness and response in the region.

China

In 2012 IPIECA and the IMO, working with key stakeholders in China, explored the possibility of establishing a GI Level 1 program to address oil spill risks in the region. At a GI workshop hosted by the China Maritime Safety Agency participants agreed to establish an informal oil spill preparedness and response technical consultative group, and approved the options for a biennial program of joint GI activities. The Chinese Maritime Safety Agency, IMO and IPIECA have now scheduled a meeting to take place in May 2014 to progress plans.

WHAT NEXT?

As East African economies continue to grow, increased maritime traffic could lead to a heightened risk of oil spills, therefore, this region is the next area of focus for the GI. IMO and IPIECA are currently building on established national and regional arrangements, with the aim to strengthen preparedness and response. ■