

The IMO/IPIECA Global Initiative: Expanding Government and Industry Cooperation into New Regions**Thomas Coolbaugh**

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ABSTRACT 293388:

As oil industry exploration and production activities and global marine shipping patterns have evolved, there is recognition of the potential for increased levels of oil spill risk in specific regions. In response to this, the IPIECA/IMO Global Initiative (GI) Programme is undergoing a period of broad expansion into regions where these increased activities may have the biggest potential impact. These same regions tend to show a need for improvement: consistency in the application of international legislation; effectiveness of regional agreements and national plans; and industry arrangements in order to minimize the likelihood of a significant incident and to mitigate the consequences. As is the case in the existing GI regions, the overall objective of any proposed new regional initiatives is to strengthen the cooperation between government and industry on oil spill related issues and to improve the capacity of countries to protect their marine and coastal environments and resources through the full implementation of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC).

Three active and functional GI regional programmes have been established between 2003-13, covering (i) the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Central Eurasia, (ii) West, Central and Southern Africa and (iii) South East Asia. The establishment and successes of these programmes are described, along with on-going work in this field in the Mediterranean Sea.

As a result of increased oil and gas activity, IPIECA and IMO have identified East Africa as a “high priority” region for future GI activities. In 2013, IPIECA has commissioned a report to outline the existing level of oil spill risk from upstream and shipping activities and assess the existing preparedness and resource capabilities of government and industry within the region. The current status of this effort will be reviewed.

The possible development of a GI programme for coastal China that would provide spill preparedness and response technical workshops in China will be reviewed with particular emphasis on a 2012 agreement between the Chinese Maritime Safety Agency, IPIECA, and the IMO.

INTRODUCTION:

Oil spills remain one of the highest profile environmental issues associated with the oil and gas industry. The prevention of oil spills is of vital importance to the oil and shipping industries and national governments. While spill prevention is of primary importance and will remain a key industry focus area, the risk of possible accidents still exists. Therefore, while industry works continually to prevent spills, it also remains prepared for any event by developing comprehensive contingency plans. These ensure a rapid response to anticipate, mitigate and minimize the impacts of oil spills.

The global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues (IPIECA; www.ipieca.org), working with its international partners, continues to play a leading role in enhancing preparedness and response to oil spills. Experience has demonstrated that cooperation and integration between all relevant organizations provides the best framework for preparedness. This is clearly demonstrated in the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC). The International Maritime Organization (IMO, the UN agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships; www.imo.org), IPIECA and others have been working together for over 20 years to encourage governments to ratify and implement OPRC, with industry involvement and support. The joint efforts of the IMO and IPIECA were formalized as the Global Initiative (GI) in 1996.

Countries that had not developed national plans or response systems have made major improvements thanks to the GI’s activities. Regional/national workshops have been implemented to provide training courses and exercises to encourage better communication and cooperation between government and industry. These activities support the development and implementation of national, regional and sub-regional oil spill contingency plans, and encourage the ratification and implementation of relevant international Conventions (i.e., OPRC and the conventions relating to oil spill compensation from tankers and other vessels) and regional agreements.

A global risk assessment carried out in 1998 under the GI was updated in late 2009; the updated information showed the top ‘improvers’ in preparedness are the regions benefiting from the existing formal GI regional programmes. This is strong evidence that the targeted regional programmes under the GI result in measurable success.

Today, four different regions have established programmes and two others are currently under consideration. These are discussed more fully below.

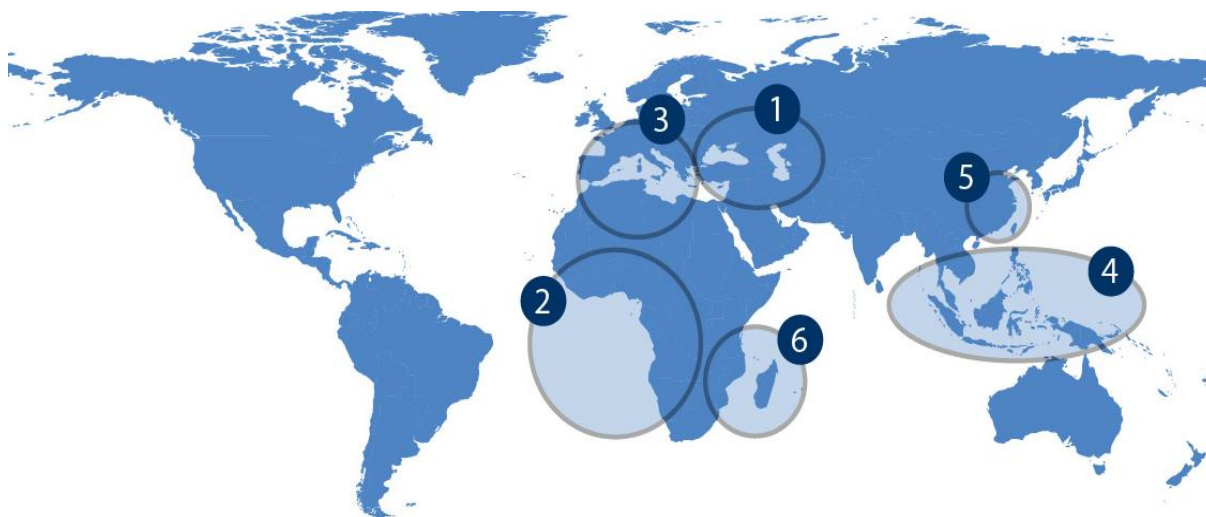


Figure 1. Localization of the different Global Initiatives

1. Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Central Eurasia (OSPRI)
2. West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF)
3. Mediterranean (MOIG)
4. South East Asia (GI SEA)
5. China
6. East Africa

As highlighted, the majority of GI activities currently focus on key regions: Caspian and Black Seas, West and Central Africa, the Mediterranean Sea, and more recently South East Asia. The intention is to expand the current GI programme to ensure that the experiences and results attained in these areas can be used to successfully support governments elsewhere. Future actions will focus on establishing GI programmes in regions such as: East Africa and China. In this article we will first describe the established GI projects and then follow with a discussion of the possible development of programmes in East Africa and China.

DISCUSSION:

Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF)

IPIECA and IMO set up GI WACAF (www.giwacaf.org), during 2006 in Libreville, Gabon. The Project is implemented in partnership with the UNEP Regional Seas programme, the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) Project, various bilateral cooperation initiatives and the recipient countries. The project area covers 22 West and Central African countries with a seaboard, from Mauritania in the north, down the entire west coast to South Africa and is funded jointly by governments through the IMO and IPIECA and by eight oil company members of the project. Governments and local oil companies also participate to support the implementation of each activity providing key inputs and support to the project.

The first years of the project focused on the development of National Oil Spill Contingency Plans in each of countries in the project areas. This focus supported the broader main objectives of:

- Ratification of key IMO Conventions relating to oil spill preparedness and response.

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- Designation of lead authorities and the involved ministries and agencies.
- Promotion of regional cooperation through the development/ratification of bilateral and multilateral or regional agreements.
- Training and exercises.
- Technical developments including the development of national oil spill sensitivity maps and the development of dispersant policy.

The extent of project activity is shown through the delivery between 2006-13 of over 70 workshops or seminars and the participation of over 4,000 personnel in such events and related training or exercises.

From an initial baseline of a small number, at the end of 2013, 18 of 22 countries have developed a national oil spill contingency plan and five have been tested in cooperation with the GI WACAF Project (Figure 2). This is a significant achievement but significant work remains to ensure plans are operational, notably through testing and exercising. These results showed significant progress in strengthening oil spill response capability. Success is due to the high involvement and ownership of individual country focal point representatives.

As a result of GI WACAF activities, the six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have each shown significant progress. These KPIs are linked to OPRC and refer to the 'elements of preparedness' identified during the launch of the GI WACAF project in 2006:

- Legislation: Promote the ratification of the relevant international Conventions
- Contingency plan: Have contingency plan for all the countries of the region
- Designation of authority: Get clarity on roles and responsibilities for oil spill response
- Regional agreement: Promote exchange and mutual assistance for oil spill response
- Training: Ensure that training and exercises are developed in each country on a regular basis
- National capabilities: Support countries in developing their own national response system

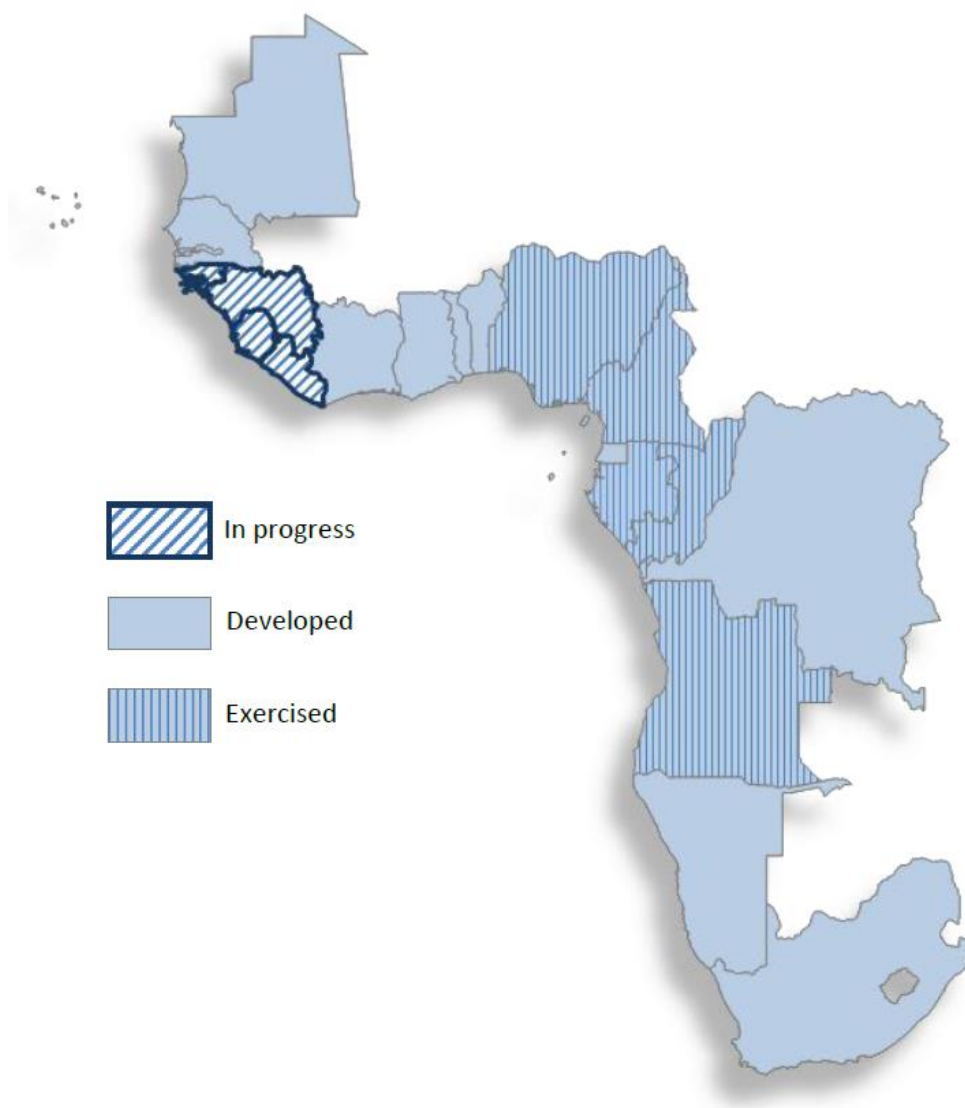


Figure 2: Status of National Oil Spill Contingency Plans in the GI WACAF region

The project has also been very successful in encouraging the appointment and recognition of a network of government focal points. These focal points are a key success factor in facilitating solid progress and accelerating the overall improvement in oil spill preparedness in the region. Moreover, 30 industry focal points were appointed and have been involved at various levels, including attendance at national workshops, participation at follow-up working groups, deployment of equipment, and sponsorship of events.

The review and development of GI WACAF's strategic focus is coordinated with the IMO biennial activity programme. The latest conference and workshop for the WACAF region was held in Namibia in October, 2013. Twenty of the countries in the region attended and there were representatives and inputs from a wide range of regional and international organizations, both governmental and industry. This event helped during the development of the 2014–15 work plan. It was recommended that the project should prioritise the continued support of practical exercises to test the respective National Oil Spill Contingency Plans (NOSCP). In addition, there will be an increased focus upon trans-boundary cooperation between adjoining countries that share common oil spill risks, with particular emphasis upon

trans-boundary exercises. Finally, it was recommended that in addition to existing GI WACAF focus topics (such as sensitivity mapping, dispersant policy, claims and compensation), focus should also be placed upon Incident Management Systems (IMS), effective exercising, shoreline clean-up, and waste management.

Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI) for the Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Central Eurasia

The Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI; www.iecea.org/system/files/publications/ospri.pdf) was formed in 2003 with a mission “to encourage and support industry and governments to work cooperatively, promoting the adoption of proven, credible, integrated and sustainable national, regional and international oil spill response capability.” OSPRI is administered by IIECA and is funded by ten IIECA members companies with interests in the region. OSPRI has signed a statement of intent with IMO and the effort is fully aligned with the Global Initiative (GI). Activities and approaches follow industry’s good practice guidance and draw on the experiences and lessons learned from over fifteen years of the GI. Across the ten littoral States comprising the Caspian Sea and Black Sea (see Figure 3), the ratification of the key IMO Conventions relating to oil spill preparedness has moved from 28% in 2003 to 68% in 2013, demonstrating long-term progress and commitment by the countries.



Figure 3: The Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Central Eurasia showing the littoral States

OSPRI uses a set of success factors based on the six ‘elements of preparedness’ as metrics similar to the GI WACAF KPIs; continual progress is being tracked. Figure 4 shows a summary of the changes in the assessed status of these success factors across the region between 2008 and 2012.

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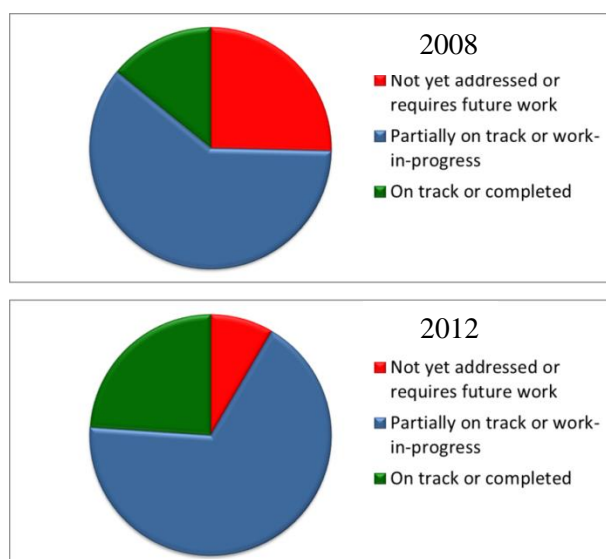


Figure 4. Summary status of OSPRI's success factors in 2008 (upper) and 2012

There are regional Conventions for the Black Sea and Caspian Sea and these provide the inter-governmental legal framework for regional-level oil spill preparedness, in alignment to the OPRC Convention. In the Black Sea, the *Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution* ('Bucharest Convention') and its so-called *Emergency Protocol* are the key instruments. Under this framework, with IMO support, the governments have developed a regional contingency plan for cooperation in case of major oil pollution. This plan is the operational tool to coordinate the six littoral States national oil spill plans. OSPRI has been closely involved since 2005 in supporting a regional exercise programme to ensure the regional plan's procedures are well rehearsed and effective.

Notwithstanding the unsolved issue of a defined legal status, the littoral States of the Caspian Sea have taken joint action towards the environmental protection through the successful conclusion of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea* ('Tehran Convention') in 2003. The importance of this 'framework' Convention for the region being the first legally binding agreement between the five countries cannot be overestimated and marked a major milestone for regional cooperation. The Convention entered into force in 2006 - and its *Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents* ('Aktau Protocol') was the first finalized and signed Protocol, under which specific actions are obligated regarding cooperation in case of major oil pollution incidents.

Efforts towards implementation of the Tehran Convention's Oil Pollution Incident Protocol (the 'Aktau Protocol') commenced in 2012. The Protocol enters into force when the five Caspian Sea littoral States have ratified it; this is anticipated in 2014. In 2012, OSPRI supported a regional workshop concerning preliminary work on the Protocol's implementation through a draft regional plan of cooperation. The key outcome of the workshop was an agreed schedule of actions to culminate in the expected adoption of the finalised regional cooperation plan in 2014. This plan will be the basis of regional coordination in case of major oil pollution.

OSPRI continues to focus efforts on organizational aspects of oil spill preparedness and response (i.e., command and control frameworks with clarity of roles and

responsibilities). This means supporting development of both national contingency plans and regional cooperation plans, plus their implementation and testing through a structured and coordinated programme of exercises.

In order to ensure consistency of approach and adopted practices, OSPRI recognises and supports coordination of efforts between Global Initiative regional groups. For example, in 2013 OSPRI provided inputs to the launch of the GI for South East Asia and shared experiences at the major biennial regional workshop held under GI WACAF.

Global Initiative for Southeast Asia (GI SEA)

IPIECA and its members recognise the importance of maintaining oil spill response preparedness and in 2009 the Oil Spill Working Group (OSWG) was requested to identify the main risks around the world and develop proposed responses. As part of this, the OSWG identified South East Asia (Figure 5) as a potential area for a Global Initiative project. The prioritization was based on considerations of both the current levels of potential risk and existing levels of preparedness.

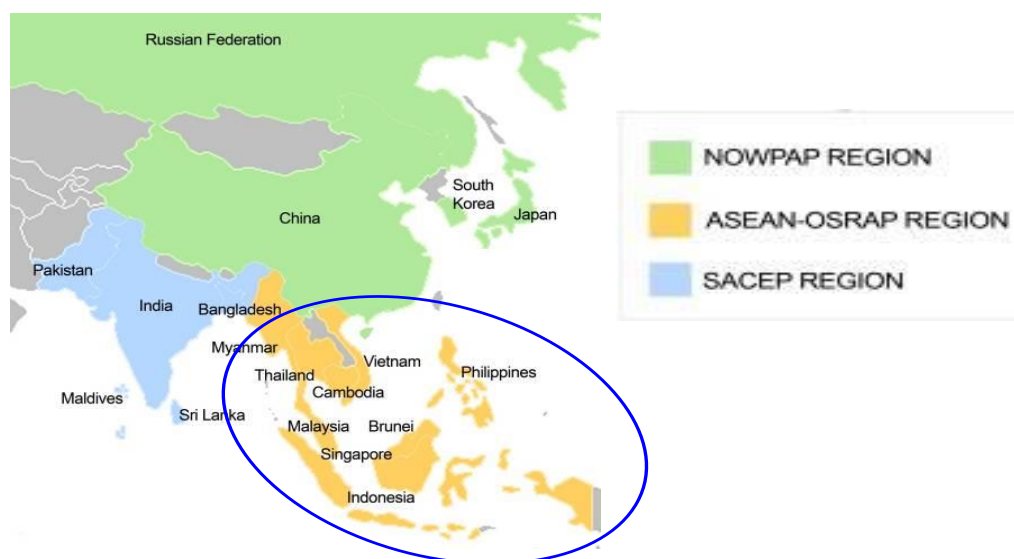


Figure 5: Region targeted by GI Southeast Asia

Along with this and following increasing requests from governments and industry in the region for GI activities in South East Asia, the OSWG and regional industry representatives held a meeting in Bangkok in February, 2011 to identify past issues with the possible establishment of a GI programme in Asia, explore the feasibility of setting up a GI programme in South East Asia, and determine the appropriate structure of such a programme.

The Global Initiative for Southeast Asia (GI SEA) was formally launched in Jakarta on March 20-21, 2013. The GI SEA involves formal funding and in-kind inputs from both industry and IMO. It is also benefitting from initial financial support from the International Oil Spill Conference. It held its first official meeting on the 8th of November 2013 in Bangkok with attendance of a number of regional representatives. The project manager is currently working to define and solidify action plans beyond the first biennial set of activities, i.e., beyond 2014.

Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG)

The Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG; www.moig.org) was originally initiated by IPIECA following a joint oil spill response seminar by IMO/IPIECA in Cairo in 1992. The commitment was made, at that time, to set up an industry network in the Mediterranean region that included all the countries that had a shoreline on this sea (21). The first MOIG meeting took place in Rome in April, 1996.

From the industry perspective, the initiative was primarily led by ENI/Total who, at the time, had considerable influence and potential exposure in this region, particularly in the North African states. Other international oil companies (IOCs), National Oil Companies (NOCs) and Government representatives were invited and encouraged to become members. The objectives of MOIG were to assist countries in developing a national structure for oil spill response and preparedness and to encourage the ratification and implementation of the key international conventions, mirroring the GI approach.

In 2013, MOIG had 24 oil company and commercial oil spill service providers as members in the Mediterranean region. The group serves as a regional oil industry forum on oil spill prevention, preparedness and response and engages in collaborative activities with the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC; www.Rempec.org), located in Malta. REMPEC was originally established as the “Regional Oil Combating Centre” in 1976 and is administered by the IMO. The current situation in the Mediterranean region is evolving with likely changes in the roles of MOIG, REMPEC, IPIECA and IMO during 2014 and beyond.

FUTURE GI PROGRAMMES:

Global Initiative for East Africa

East Africa has been identified as a region with a rapidly evolving oil spill risk profile. With this in mind, and building upon the demonstrated success of the other established GI efforts, IPIECA and the IMO opted to create a task force to consider the possibility of creating another GI programme. The task force included a number of oil and gas companies with interests in the region.

The first step of the project was to commission an internal study outlining the existing level of oil spill risk from upstream and shipping activities and assess the existing preparedness and resource capabilities of government and industry within the region. The study is intended to help define the priorities and potential GI-related activities in order to give IPIECA and its members a more accurate view of the current state of preparedness and to better understand what may be possible to achieve. The outcomes from this study, along with any specific recommendations, will provide the foundation upon which decisions on future GI activities in East Africa will be based.

For the purposes of this study the countries associated with the East Africa Region are:



- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mozambique
- Uganda
- Tanzania
- South Africa

Figure 6: East Africa countries covered by the study

The study is underway and is focused on the following points:

- Review of the most recent available data on potential risk in the East Africa Region, taking into consideration shipping, offshore exploration and production and downstream activities
- Review of existing regional oil spill programmes and action plan(s) to determine what gaps exist
- Review of the six GI elements of preparedness (Legislation, Planning, Equipment, Training, Exercises, Forces for implementation) in the region
- Stakeholder mapping and a review of country specifics
- Provide recommendations to facilitate further action with the view to developing a possible GI East Africa project

It is expected that the study should be complete during the first half of 2014.

Global Initiative for China

In July 2007, IMO, IPIECA, and China Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) signed a “Statement of Intent” with a goal to improve and sustain the oil spill preparedness and response capabilities of China and to enhance cooperation between government and industry. In June 2012, a meeting was held in Qingdao, China to discuss the key challenges in the preparedness and response to marine oil spills and to determine whether there was continued interest in establishing a GI China Programme.

At this first IMO, IPIECA and China MSA meeting, more than 70 delegates attended, representing a broad cross-section of the IMO, IPIECA, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Environment Protection, North China Sea Branch of the State Oceanic Administration, ITOPE, oil industry, shipping industry, scientific research institutes, oil spill response equipment manufacturers, Ship Pollution Response Organisations (hereinafter referred to SPROs) and other organizations. The meeting focused on oil spill preparedness and response in China and there was agreement with the need to develop a cooperative process and specific programme of activities for a defined period of time, e.g., two years. IPIECA provided

feedback to ensure that the general scope of the GI programme was understood and kept in focus. Following a reorganization of MSA, progress has been frozen, but there is an expectation that discussions will recommence in 2014.

CONCLUSION:

Over the past 17 years the Global Initiative has promoted and achieved significant improvements and a level of sustainability in terms of oil spill preparedness, response and environmental risk management in a variety of regions. Thanks to the close working relationships with key stakeholders, IPIECA and IMO have succeeded in implementing GI programmes in West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF), the Caspian and Black Seas (OSPRI), and, most recently, in South East Asia (GI SEA).

These initiatives have helped establish National Oil Spill Contingency Plans (NOSCP) and functional cooperation agreements, implemented through a significant number of training & exercising activities, workshops and conferences in the relevant countries and regions. The results have been measurable and positive.

IPIECA and IMO will continue to examine the value the Global Initiative model has been able to provide with respect to enhanced oil spill preparedness and response. This may include new areas able to benefit from structured GI programmes, e.g. East Africa or China, or areas which may need re-evaluation or invigoration. The existing GI regional successes provide a solid experience upon which to base future GI activities around the world.