



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP) REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)

10th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.32/INF.4
Date: 8 April 2011

Malta, 3-5 May 2011

Original: English

Agenda Item 8

RAISING SPILL RESPONSE STANDARDS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Submitted by the International Spill Accreditation Association (ISAA)

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This paper gives information about the role of the International Spill Accreditation Association in raising standards of spill response with emphasis on the development of a Regional Accreditation Scheme for the Mediterranean.

Action to be taken: *For information only.*

Related documents: A Power Point presentation describing the Scheme is available free of charge on request to the ISAA Administrator at info@spillcontrol.org.

The International Spill Accreditation Association (ISAA) was formed specifically to “Improve the standards of oil spill response”. It is a non-profit making company with any surplus funds being used to improve the standards of service offered.

ISAA is the world authority for accreditation of spill response organizations (SROs) and is dedicated to the raising of worldwide standards in spill response. As a not-for-profit NGO, ISAA sets international standards for spill response in all areas including inland and marine spills. Accreditation is not only applicable to privately owned spill contractors but can also be used by governments and others for independently checking their own response capabilities.

ISAA accreditation schemes in each participating country or region are controlled by ISAA in partnership with steering groups that include representatives of appropriate government departments and other relevant organizations. ISAA organises training courses and seminars to assist SROs in gaining required levels of competency in ISAA accreditation subjects. In order to gain and maintain accredited status SROs are regularly audited by independent experts. Accreditation may be awarded at one of three levels in spill response disciplines that include marine, shoreline, freshwater, on-land, groundwater, and road/rail tanker spills.

ISAA auditors examine every aspect of each candidate’s operations in accordance with a comprehensive accreditation matrix. The objective is not only to determine appropriate levels for award (or otherwise) of accreditation, but to help accredited SROs, over time, to progress towards higher levels of accreditation. A contractor or government operator is accredited for three years. Application for accreditation can be made in any one or all of the disciplines covered. Besides the three year accreditation it is necessary for a spill or spill exercise to be visited, thus ensuring the actual capability of an operator to respond and perform.

The administration of the Scheme is managed on behalf of ISAA by the International Spill Control Organization (ISCO), an organization that holds Consultative Status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The impetus for the development of a Mediterranean Region Accreditation Scheme has come from a number of the larger oil spill response contractors in countries within the region who wish to undergo formal assessment in order to gain competency recognition. Depending on the result of a rigorous assessment process candidates may be awarded Accredited Status in specified response disciplines and at appropriate levels to give an independent and realistic indication of response capability.

The ISAA Accreditation Scheme runs in parallel with other accreditation schemes – Marine Response Training Organization Accreditation provided by the Nautical Institute and the ISO 9001 (Quality), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) and ISO 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety) standards – but is differentiated by its specific focus on spill response competency.

ISAA is seeking to build relationships with environmental regulators in the Mediterranean countries in order to develop the Regional Spill Response Accreditation Scheme. This is something that will take time but in this Information Paper a first step is being taken to introduce the concept to delegates attending the Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

In order to make progress, ISAA plans to be responsive to requests being received from SROs who are asking to be assessed for International Spill Response Accreditation. At the same time, the relevant regulatory authorities will be informed on SROs within their jurisdictions that make application for accreditation assessment and will be advised on awards that are made. This is seen as a practical solution that will allow ISAA to benefit from the momentum being created by SROs who want to progress more quickly towards achievement of accredited status.

In parallel, ISAA will continue to develop its dialogue with national regulators, REMPEC, MOIG and other stakeholders with an interest in raising standards of spill response. The objective will be, over time, to bring interested stakeholders together in a way that will facilitate their involvement in the future direction of the Regional Scheme and eventually lead to its formal recognition by the relevant governmental authorities.

In other areas it has been found that, once the Accreditation Scheme is in operation, national governments, P+I clubs, oil companies and others preferentially use SROs that have been independently assessed and found to be competent. This, in turn, incentivises other SROs to pursue accredited status.

SRO's who achieve accreditation at a lower level are given impetus to invest in more training and capacity building in order to achieve higher level accreditation.

The overall outcome is that SRO's are motivated not only to improve spill response performance, including full compliance with national legislation – but also to maintain elevated standards in order to maintain their accredited status.

It is therefore a win-win situation. Through independent assessment, service users gain reassurance that accredited SROs will be able to respond in an efficient and cost-effective way. SROs also benefit because their operations become more efficient and, through accreditation, their efforts to operate in a responsible and professional way are properly recognised.

Delegates are invited to contact the Scheme Administrator for more information.