



## Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative

Caspian Sea – Black Sea – Central Eurasia

### *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*



**Q-1 What is OSPRI?**

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A: OSPRI, the ‘Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (Caspian Sea – Black Sea – Central Eurasia)’, has been established by a group of oil companies to promote proven, credible, integrated and sustainable oil spill response capability in the identified region. These companies are BP, Chevron, Eni, NCOC and Shell – all major investors in the region.

**Q-2 What does OSPRI do?**

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A: OSPRI provides the means of alignment and focus for its member companies, giving consistent support to governments in developing oil spill preparedness in the region. An action-oriented business plan focuses on local initiatives; utilising the members own experiences, including those gained from similar initiatives across the globe.

**Q-3 Can you clarify what OSPRI is not?**

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A: It is clear from the early days of OSPRI that misconceptions can be held about what OSPRI is and is not. These FAQs primarily address what OSPRI is; it is **NOT** any of the following:

- An oil spill response organization or cooperative with people and equipment on standby.
- A commercial organization with vested interests in particular services or approaches.
- Advocating the proliferation of response equipment stockpiles which are either unrelated to, or divorced from, oil spill risk assessments.

**Q-4 Why is OSPRI needed?**

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A: Although the risk of a serious oil spill incident is low, this does not remove the need for organizations, governmental and private, to make contingencies for oil spills. OSPRI enables industry to play an important role in the development and testing of effective and efficient oil spill contingency arrangements. OSPRI’s support and encouragement of governments’ own efforts at national and regional levels is improving both capacity and capability for spill response, building a stronger community of responders in the process. This enhances environmental protection in the region and complements similar initiatives successfully employed at locations outside the region

**Q-5 What do the actions in the business plan involve?**

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A: The actions are grouped into five core themes of support and advocacy:

- National planning
- Regional planning
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Cooperative agreements
- Training and exercising

OSPRI recognises that true oil spill preparedness stems from clear command and control frameworks, able to identify and sanction rapid response operations bringing the best net environmental benefits.

A set of measures and milestones has been developed to ensure a constructive progress can be tracked and managed. These measures focus on the sharing of information, support to governments, development and testing of trans-boundary response to tier 2 or 3 spills and the demonstration of capability through training and exercises.

### **Q-6 Why the Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Central Eurasia region?**

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A: During the 1990s, this region emerged as one of the most important new sources of world oil supply, attracting investment and providing vital new export revenue. Such developments will bring great benefits to the region, provided uninterrupted exports are maintained. Ensuring effective oil spill preparedness in the region is an important part of the environmental protection strategy for energy companies operating in the region.

### **Q-7 Who oversees OSPRI?**

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A: Ipieca (the global oil and gas industry association for advancing environmental and social performance across the energy transition) is the umbrella organization under which OSPRI functions. Individual OSPRI representatives are drawn from the member companies and other closely associated organizations, providing their support in addition to their own company responsibilities. They communicate regularly and a Manager and Co-ordinator have been appointed to implement and facilitate OSPRI activities.

### **Q-8 How long will OSPRI take to achieve its aims?**

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A: OSPRI supports the establishment of sustainable oil spill preparedness in the identified region. The current Memorandum between the member companies runs until the end of 2028.

### **Q-9 Doesn't OSPRI duplicate existing efforts by companies?**

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A: No. Individual companies continue to ensure that oil spill contingency plans are in place for their own operations. OSPRI brings alignment and focus of effort across the region (with other international organizations) and into governments that cannot be achieved by separate companies acting alone. Ipieca has a joint programme with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), aimed at improving oil spill contingency planning around the world, called the Global Initiative (GI). OSPRI is fully integrated and coordinated with the GI and is the main mechanism to achieve the GI's objectives in the region.

### **Q-10 Does OSPRI support the 'tiered response' concept?**

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A: Yes. All OSPRI's members adopt the international recognized tiered response concept in their contingency planning.

Tiered response establishes and identifies resources to provide an escalating response capability in relation to need, based on comprehensive risk assessments. Potential spills are categorized at tiers 1 (local), 2 (area) and 3 (international).

Companies continue to ensure that oil spill contingency plans are in place for their own operations. OSPRI brings an alignment and focus of effort across the region at tiers 2 and 3 (working with international organizations and governments) that cannot be achieved by separate companies acting alone.

The effectiveness of tier 2 crucially depends on an organizational capability built through cooperative efforts and shared resources (i.e. mutual aid); an independent stockpile of response equipment is not essential. It is neither necessary nor cost-effective to duplicate within the region the existing industry investment in tier 3 centres, as this network already provides rapid and efficient global coverage. OSPRI encourages mechanisms leading to efficient access and integration of tier 3 support, as an essential element in planning for the unlikely case of a major incident.

### **Q-11 What is the status of Governments' preparedness?**

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A: The governments in the region are at various stages of preparedness. Key international conventions relating to oil spill preparedness and response are not fully ratified or implemented. Some countries have national oil spill plans and others are in the process of developing these. OSPRI aims to encourage these developments and the implementation of sustainable training and exercising programmes to ensure plans are tested and effective. There is a regional cooperation agreement between governments for the Black Sea for major oil spills (under the Emergency Protocol to the Bucharest Convention) and a similar framework exists for the Caspian Sea under the Tehran Convention and its Aktau Protocol. OSPRI is supportive of the implementation and testing of these regional arrangements.

### **Q-12 How does OSPRI fit into the international framework?**

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A: Ipieca has a joint programme with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) – a specialized UN agency - called the Global Initiative (GI), which promotes improved oil spill contingency planning around the world. OSPRI is fully integrated and coordinated with the GI and represents the main mechanism to achieve the GI's objectives in the region.

OSPRI also works with a wide range of other international organizations, including International Financial Institutions, donor agencies, other UN agencies (e.g. UNEP and UNDP), the IOPC Funds, ITOPF, Oil Spill Response Limited, commercial oil spill service providers, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). OSPRI has brought technical resources and facilitated synergies between projects relating to the oil spill preparedness. It is estimated that up to €2 million per year is channelled in oil spill prevention and preparedness through international projects in the region and the influence of OSPRI has been significant.

OSPRI's regional focus assists its members to integrate and address risks associated with their production and transportation. This recognizes that an incident which may be

geographically distance from a business unit's production or oil handling operations may cause widespread and serious disruption, for example if export routes are disrupted.

**Q-13 What are the benefits to individual Business Units?**

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A: OSPRI's alignment across a broad part of industry and its advocacy programme will alleviate the related efforts of individual business units. Further, it will reduce the likelihood of variations in regulators' or other interested organizations' expectations, leading to more uniform implementation of international preparedness practices - in other words a 'level playing field'.

OSPRI's efforts will assist business units to plan for their mutual aid and tier 2 or 3 responses more efficiently and effectively, particularly through the sharing of experiences in relation to government interaction. This will give assurance about preparedness for major incidents to business units' managers, as well as shareholder and joint venture interests.

OSPRI's regional focus will assist businesses to integrate and address risks associated with their production and transportation. This recognizes that an incident which may be geographically distance from a business unit's production or oil handling operations may cause widespread and serious disruption, for example if export routes are disrupted.

**Q-14 What resource is OSPRI investing in the region?**

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OSPRI has a budget for direct expenditure, which covers the hiring of the OSPRI Manager and Co-ordinator and helps fund activities to catalyse and assist national and regional workshops, meetings or seminars in line with the business plan. These costs are shared equally by the OSPRI members. The in-kind support to OSPRI's activities by its members is also significant and represents a greater investment than OSPRI's direct expenditure

Furthermore, in pure financial terms the OSPRI budget is relatively small in comparison to the investments being made by operators in the region (which include OSPRI members as shareholders). These investments ensure facility oil spill contingency plans meet international standards, anti-pollution equipment is in place or identified through tiered response and personnel are trained in emergency procedures.

**Q-15 What has OSPRI achieved so far?**

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A: OSPRI has been key partner in helping governments in the region develop more robust and effective national response systems. At the regional level, OSPRI is a primary supporter of successful efforts to develop and implement regional cooperation mechanisms. In the Black Sea, the regional plan of cooperation is now functional and tested through major exercises. In the Caspian Sea, the regional framework has been prepared with assistance from OSPRI and is ready for implementation.

OSPRI has played an influential role in partnerships with other organizations who are providing technical and multi-million dollar financial support to oil spill preparedness.

This has helped ensure synergies and the avoidance of duplicative effort or confused messages.

**Q-16 What about companies who haven't joined OSPRI?**

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A: There are companies who operate or invest in the region who are not currently members of OSPRI or Ipieca. The current members of OSPRI actively seek engagement with these companies and encourage their future involvement in OSPRI, to mutual benefit.

**Q-17 Why not focus on stopping oil spills?**

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A: OSPRI neither detracts from nor diminishes efforts aimed at reducing and preventing oil spills through engineering design, procedures and training. Prevention of spills is the primary means of environmental protection in this regard. Putting in place oil spill preparedness capability is the second line of defence and is recognized as a sensible precaution in support of prevention. OSPRI's relationship with government agencies and international bodies is expected to strengthen and complement the efforts of industry groups such as the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) who are working to ensure effective incident prevention at terminals and for the waterborne transportation link.

**Q-18 Where can I obtain further information?**

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A: More detail concerning OSPRI's work, including local industry contacts involved in this effort, may be obtained from:

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Ipieca and the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (IOGP) have produced informative guidance and technical reports on a wide range of oil spill preparedness and response issues. These may be downloaded from the OSPRI website. Most of these reports are available in Russian language.