

## **InterSpill 2025 Conference: Abstract Submission 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Topic: Outreach and Communication: Partnerships and Collaborative Working  
(Regional cooperation)**

**Gemma Singleton, Hannah Hood, Jagath Gunasekera**

Title: How regional cooperation and overseas partnerships are improving preparedness to major pollution events.

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is funded through official development assistance to deliver tangible and positive impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities that depend on healthy marine ecosystems. OCP has partnered with the Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA) in Sri Lanka to build response capacity, resilience and awareness of stakeholders involved in emergency response, which is crucial following the impacts from the X-Press Pearl incident. Through this partnership, OCP and MEPA successfully co-led a workshop bringing stakeholders together to identify gaps and appropriate solutions to strengthen emergency response in Sri Lanka. This has led to an updated National Contingency Plan addressing these gaps to ensure Sri Lanka is better prepared at a national level.

Building from the national level progress, the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) with headquarters in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is an inter-governmental organisation established in 1982 by the Governments of South Asia to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment. As part of this Programme, five of these countries (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), came together to develop the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. In 2024, SACEP in partnership with the OCP and International Maritime Organisation (IMO), will host a multi-day regional symposium to re-invigorate the programme and make necessary updates to ensure the effectiveness of the plan.

This presentation will focus on national level lessons learnt, outputs and how these are leading to regional scale change through SACEP from Sri Lanka and beyond.