

Title: Developing an Industry Subject Matter Expert (SME) Network for Enhanced Oil Spill Response: Concepts and Industry Examples from BP and OSRL

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Topic: *Incident and Crisis Management*

Form: *Paper*

Extended ~ 500-word abstract

Due to a variety of factors, including an overall decrease in the number and severity of spills, there has been a general decline within industry in the depth and breadth of technical expertise across the wide variety of subjects that are needed to make up an effective oil spill planning and response programme. As a result, a fresh approach to how Industry identifies, organises and develops Subject Matter Experts (SME) with the relevant skills and experience is proposed.

This proposal is designed to address this challenge. The intention is to set up a cross-Industry SME network with a clearly defined terms of reference and goals. The network will be closely aligned to the Oil Spill Preparedness and Response (OSPR) Tiered Preparedness Wheel. There will be an initial focus on a number of key technical subjects—such as Surveillance & Situational Awareness, Dispersants, Offshore Response, Shoreline Response, and Wildlife— which have been identified as priorities.

The network will seek to identify existing expertise across industry in subjects that are closely aligned to the capability wheel. Across the industry there are experienced technical experts and responders with OSPR specific capabilities who can provide this knowledge and support. There is a need to identify and organise them, so when required, they can support OSPR activities across industry. These SME's will typically;

- Possess the expertise to provide high quality technical advice
- Demonstrate the drive to continuously develop that expertise
- Has earned the credibility, recognition, and trust of their leaders and peers

Another key objective of the SME network is to develop and sustain bench strength to ensure that expertise continues to be available. It is envisaged that less experienced individuals are encouraged so that over time they can fulfil the SME role in their individual subject or provide backup capability to the network. Through mentorship, structured guidance, and continuous professional development opportunities, the aim will be to grow their current knowledge in response settings.

This proposal aims to develop a framework through which a variety of expertise across various organisations can come together. Utilising a collaborative model, similar to successful initiatives such as the BP OSPR SME Network and the OSRL SME Programme, the proposed framework will aim to create a fit-for-purpose network of experts suitable for the challenges the industry faces over the next

decade, through a 'hive mind' collaborative approach, ensuring that the industry retains and grows its technical acumen.

The framework draws inspiration from established collaborative networks such as the Global Response Network (GRN), the Wildlife Community of Practice (CoP) and O&G industry internal SME networks. This alignment fosters expertise development.

In conclusion, the proposed SME network aims to provide a solution to the erosion of critical deep technical expertise across the oil & gas industry. By leveraging existing models and formalising collaboration, the network aims to enhance the industry's preparedness and response capabilities, ensuring that it can effectively manage and mitigate the impacts of oil spills in the future. Cross industry support is essential if this is to be successful, and further develop the expertise needed for new challenges.