

**Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Capability in West, Central and Southern Africa:**

**Responding to new challenges across the region**

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**Introduction**

The Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF Project) is a partnership between the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and IPIECA - the global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues, to enhance the capacity of countries to prepare for and respond to marine oil spills.

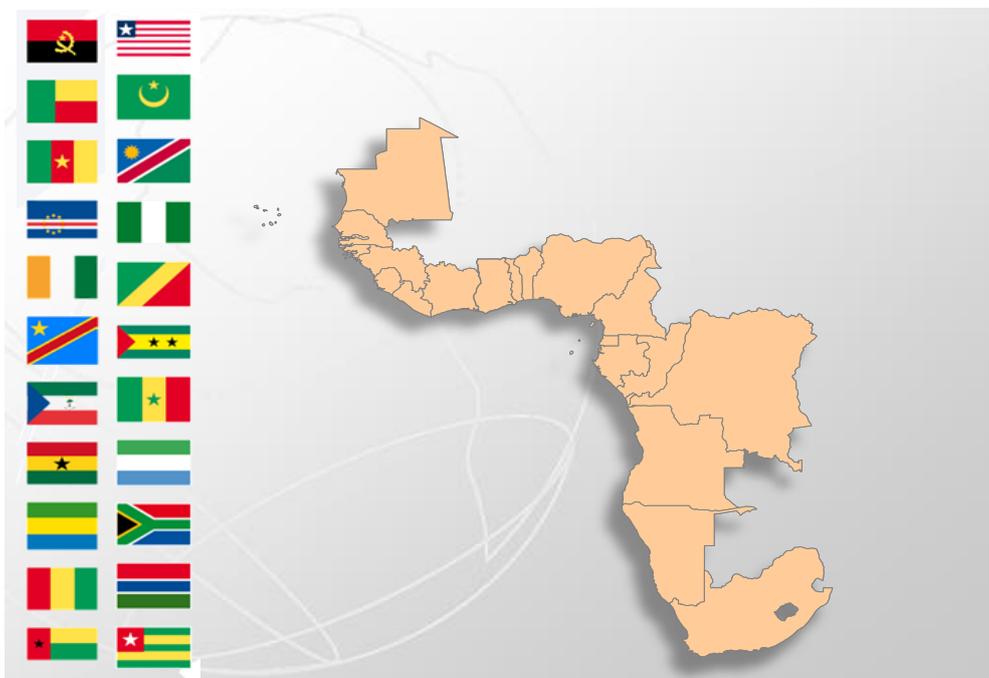
The GI WACAF Project was launched in 2006 and is jointly funded by IMO and nine oil company members in order to strengthen national oil spill response capability in 22 countries of West, Central and Southern Africa through the establishment of local partnerships between the oil industries and the national authorities in charge of oil spill preparedness and response at the national level.

Since its launch the project has evolved, becoming diverse in its activities and responsive to the needs of each of the twenty two countries in the region as expertise in-country deepens and capabilities strengthen.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of current oil spill preparedness and response capability across the WACAF region, to outline what are the most urgent oil spill related challenges that industry and government have identified in the region, and,

focusing upon the 2014 – 2015 period, to explain how the GI WACAF project has and will respond to these challenges.

Figure 1: The twenty two Countries of the GI WACAF project



### **Oil spill preparedness and response capability in the GI WACAF region**

Using data submitted by each country in the WACAF region, it has been possible to gauge the level of national response capability across the region. The data was first collected in 2006 to provide a benchmark, monitored since then and updated most recently in 2014 to confirm progress and improvements.

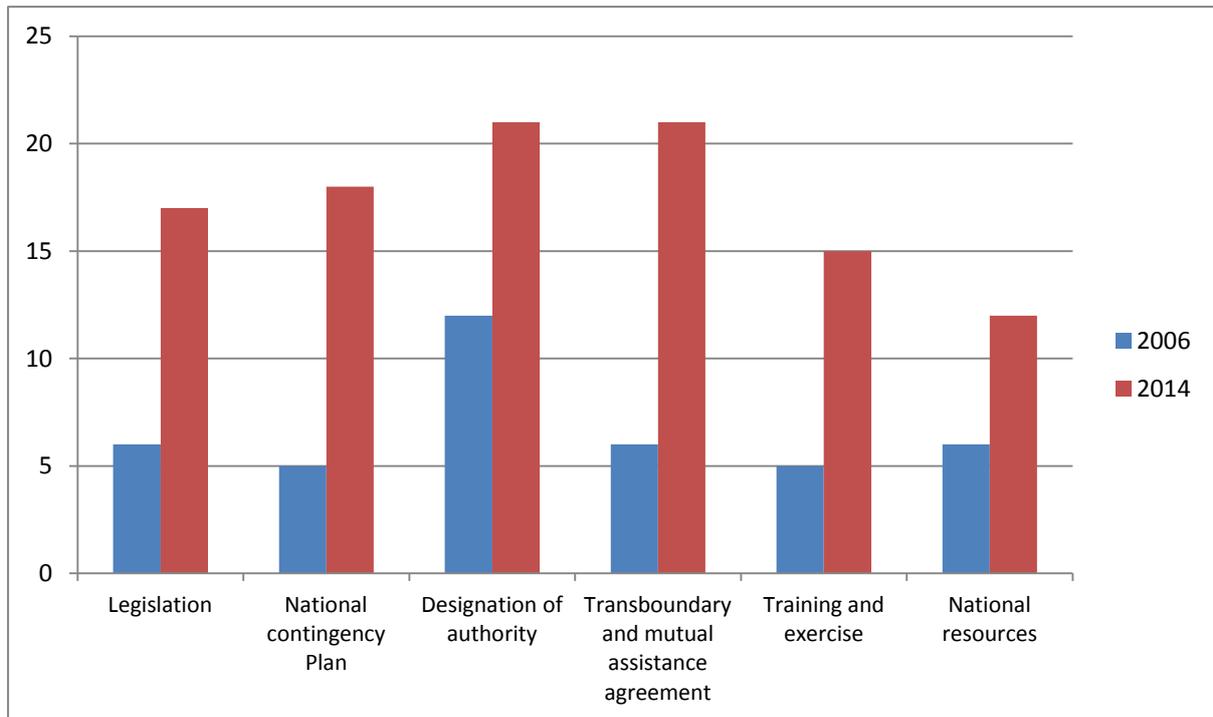
The following Key Performance Indicators are used to measure progress across the region:

1. Designation of authority: Has in place a designated national authority to deal with oil spill related issues
2. Legislation: Has ratified the OPRC 90 Convention

3. National Oil Spill Contingency plan: Has an approved NOSCP
4. Regional agreement: Has in place either a regional, sub-regional, or bi-lateral agreement relating to oil spill response cooperation
5. Training and Exercises: Has undertaken a national level oil spill training and exercise event
6. National Resources: Equipment and resources to adequately address oil spill risks in-country

Figure 2: Key Performance Indicators Results - (Data taken from GI WACAF National Profiles. Available on the GI WACAF website:

<http://www.giwacaf.org/index.aspx?id=4&langue=1>)



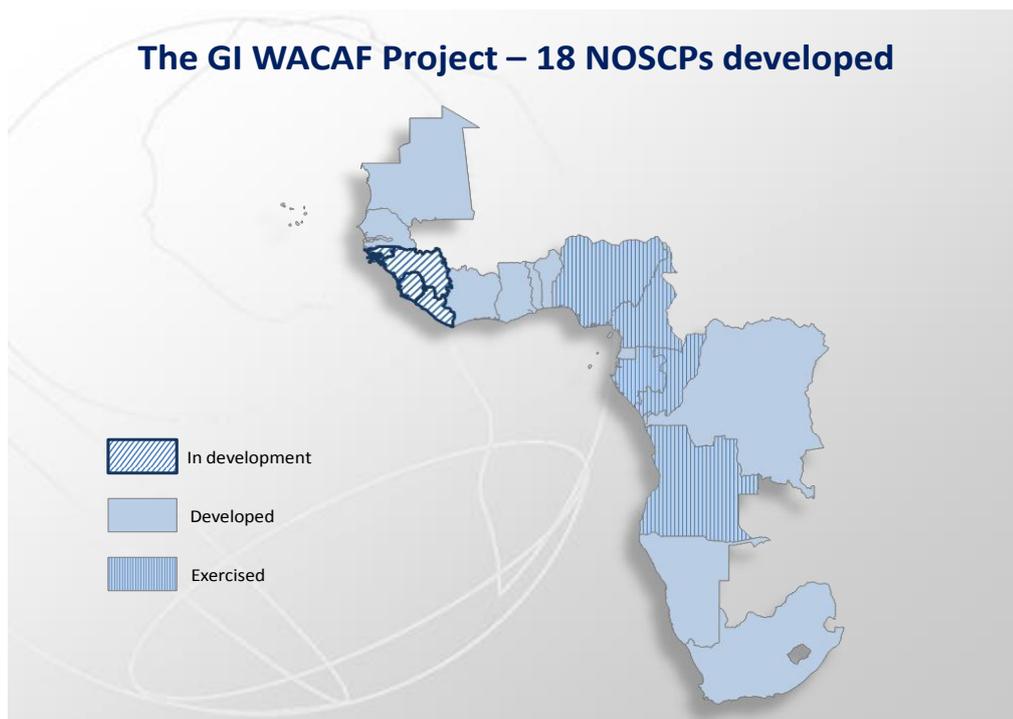
In comparison to 2006, the results from 2014 show a significant increase in the overall level of national oil spill response capability. For example, between 2006 and 2014 there was a significant increase in the number of countries that had ratified a regional, sub-regional, or bi-lateral agreement, and there was a similar increase in the number of countries that had undertaken training and exercises relating to oil spills. For

the remaining key performance indicators there was a strong improvement, for example, there was a 20% increase in the number of countries which had ratified the OPRC 90 Convention.

### Identifying the most urgent oil spill related challenges

Whilst the general trend across the region has been one of advancing oil spill response capability, we have seen since 2006 that the rate of oil spill response development has varied between individual countries. For example, Figure 3 highlights the diverse levels of oil spill response capability that now exist across the WACAF region. In the first case there are countries which have yet to develop their NOSCP, in the next phase there are countries which have in place an agreed NOSCP, and in the next there are countries which have in place an agreed NOSCP and have begun to test and improve that NOSCP.

Figure 3: Status of NOSCP's in WACAF region – 2014 (Information taken from GI WACAF National Profiles. Available on GI WACAF website: [www.giwacaf.org](http://www.giwacaf.org))



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So to the question of what are the most urgent oil spill related challenges that industry and government have identified in the region, the answer is dictated by the great diversification that exists between countries capabilities.

Based upon information collected from governments and industry at the GI WACAF regional conference (2013), we found that for countries with relatively low levels of oil spill capability the greatest challenge remains the development and approval of their NOSCP and ratification of relevant international conventions. Whilst for countries with intermediate and relatively high levels of capability, the most urgent challenge now is to test the effectiveness of their NOSCP through exercises, to strengthen transboundary cooperation through exercises, and to introduce or improve particular elements within these plans. (*GI WACAF Regional Conference Report - 2013*)

What follows is an explanation of how the GI WACAF project has responded to these challenges in the current 2014 – 2015 work biennium.

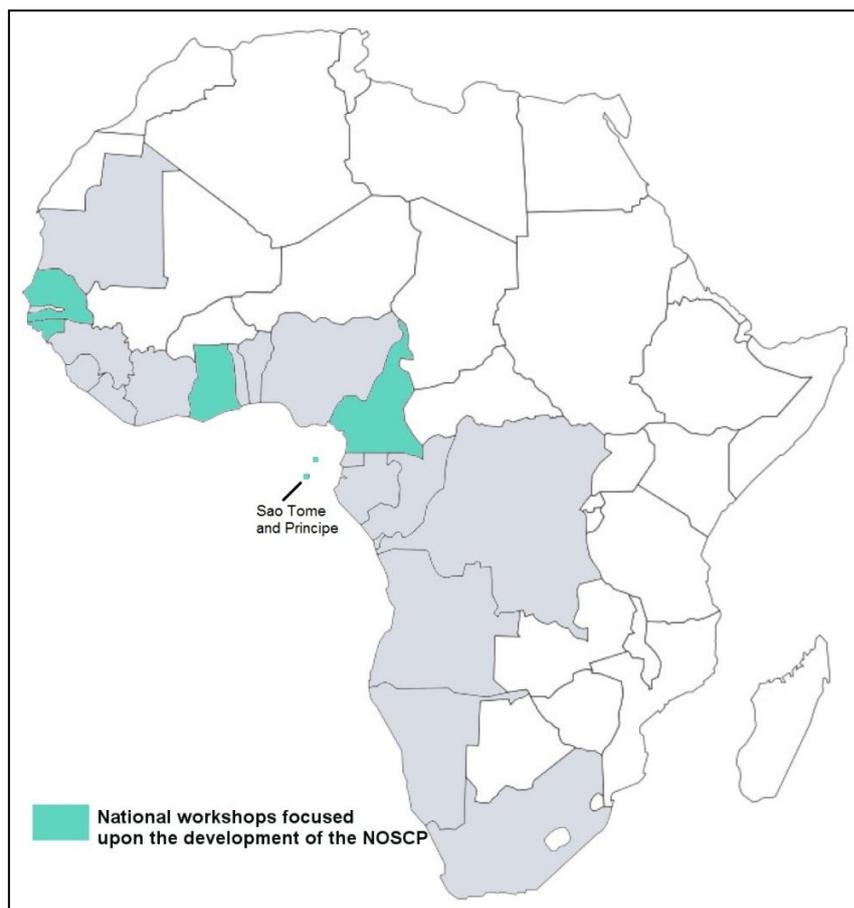
### **Responding to oil spill challenges in the GI WACAF region**

At the key GI WACAF Regional Conference (Namibia, November 2013), Government and Industry Focal Points outlined their priority goals for the next biennium (2014 – 2015). The recommendations provided by delegates at the conference served as country validation to the foundation of the GI WACAF Strategic Plan and are also a reflection of the diverse oil spill challenges which countries face in the region.

GI WACAF activities for the new 2014 – 2015 biennium were divided into three broad categories: 1) National level activities focused upon the core elements of the OPRC 90 Convention, 2) Sub-regional activities focused upon Transboundary cooperation, and 3) Specialist topics.

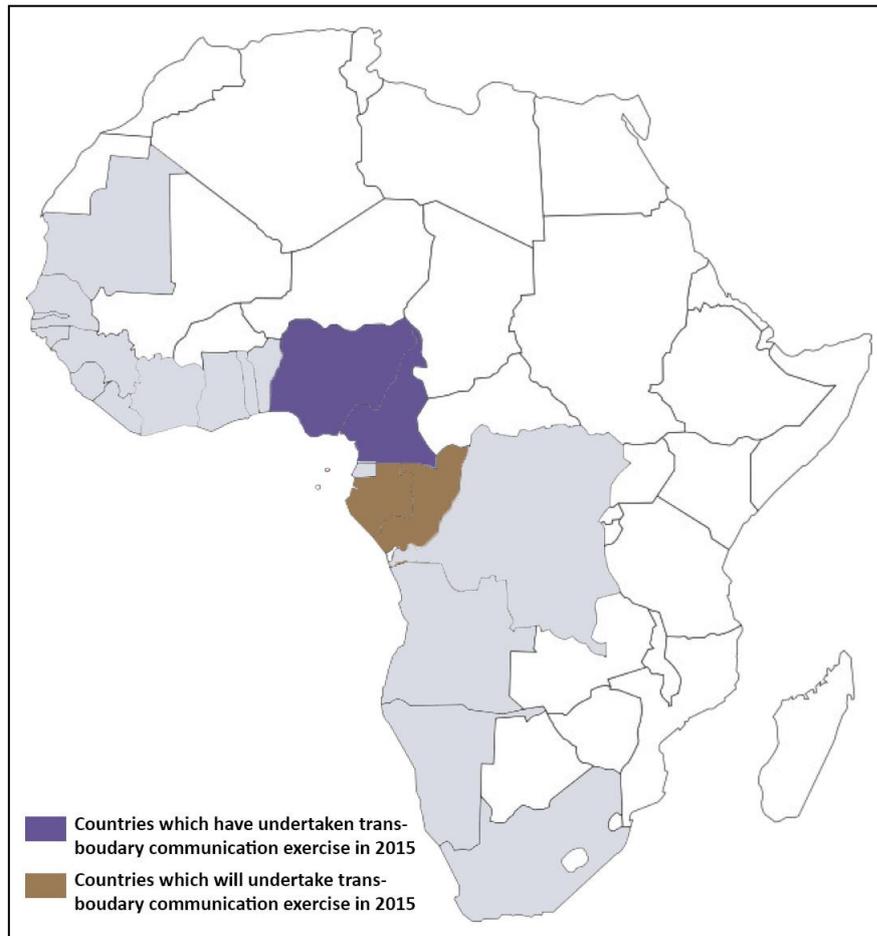
At the national level, GI WACAF has prioritised the continued support of practical exercises to test the respective NOSCP's, and where needed has continued to support the foundational development of NOSCP's through workshops.

Figure 4: National workshop or exercise to develop foundational development of NOSCP (2014-2015)



At the sub-regional level, there has been an increased focus upon trans-boundary cooperation between adjoining countries that share common oil spill risks. Particular emphasis has been placed upon trans-boundary exercises.

Figure 5: Countries undertaking transboundary exercises in 2015



For specialised topics, in addition to existing GI WACAF topics (such as sensitivity mapping, dispersant policy, claims and compensation), focus has also been placed upon developing: Incident Management Systems, Shoreline Cleanup, and Waste Management capability through sub-regional and national workshops.

Figure 6: Countries trained in Shoreline Clean-up and Waste Management during 2014 - 2015

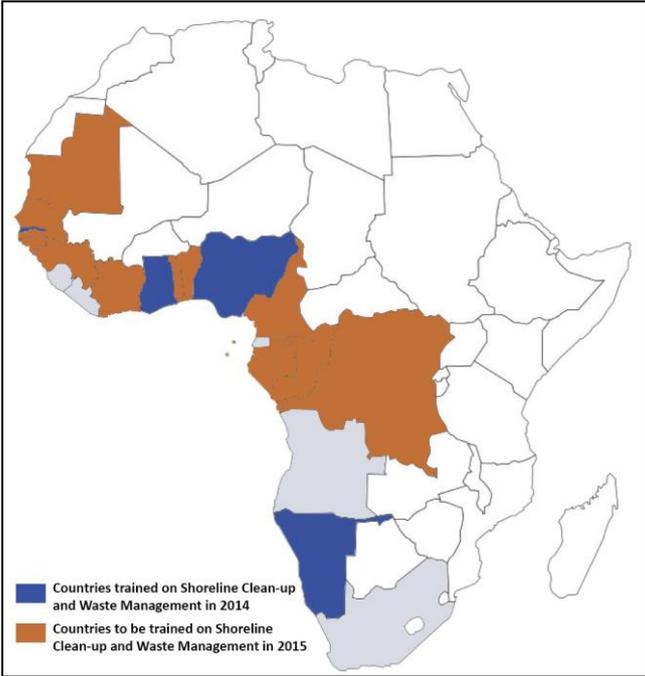
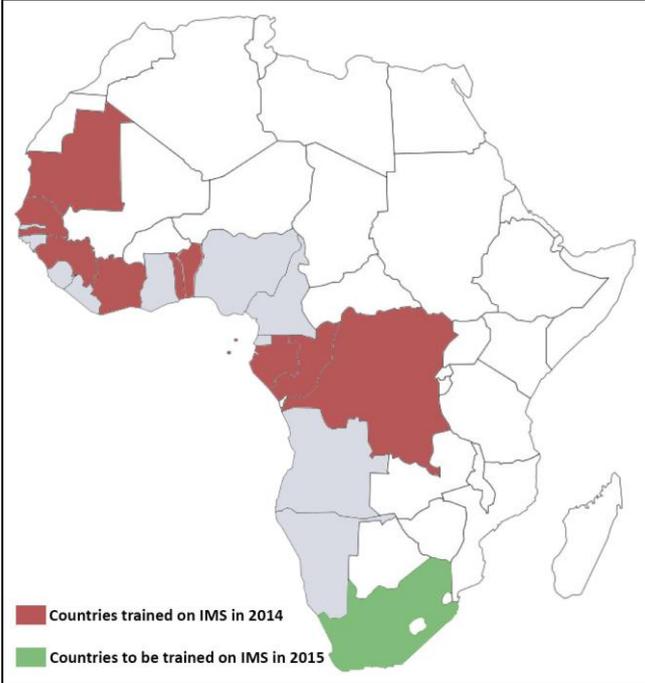


Figure 7: Countries trained in Incident Management Systems during 2014 - 2015



## **Conclusion**

Since the launch of GI WACAF in 2006, countries have made substantial, tangible progress to improve capability. Within this overall, broad regional trend countries have advanced their capability at varied rates which has consequently dictated what are the most urgent oil spill related challenges for government and industry in the region. In response, the GI WACAF work programme has itself become more diversified, to support each country's specific challenges most effectively.

In a region that has made rapid advancements in oil spill response capability and in which oil spill challenges continue to evolve. The story of GI WACAF is of a programme that has managed to successfully adapt and support the changing needs of its country and oil company members.

## References

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