

## **Interspill 2012**

### **UK Response Readiness**

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20 April 2010 will be a date forever etched on the collective memory of the oil industry. This was the night that a massive hydrocarbon release engulfed the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig on the Macondo field in the Gulf of Mexico, claiming the lives of 11 men and unleashing the largest oil spill in the history of the United States.

How the upstream oil and gas industry around the world responded to this tragic incident was significant. Alongside the immediate offers of practical support was the recognition of the need for sombre reflection and challenge with regard to industry drilling practices and procedures. Macondo raised important questions which no company or national regulator could ignore. There was no room for complacency.

In the UK, the industry reaction was swift. In little under a month, the UK Oil Spill Prevention and Response Advisory Group (OSPRAG) had been mobilised to secure an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration across the offshore oil and gas industry, its regulators and the trade unions. Their immediate task was to carry out a thorough review of drilling practices on the UK continental shelf, firstly to satisfy that it was still safe to continue to operate and then to look to see what enhancements might be possible for the existing prevention and response mechanisms.

The OSPRAG review of the UK's oil spill prevention and response practices and procedures, believed to be the largest and most thorough ever conducted by the industry, has given rise to a high degree of confidence in the current regulatory regime and reassurance that it drives the right health, safety and environmental behaviours.

As a result, UK operators now have access to the groundbreaking OSPRAG Cap, designed to swiftly seal off an uncontrolled well and to be ready for deployment in the unique metocean conditions to be found in the UKCS. As such it forms a key element in the UK offshore oil and gas industry oil spill emergency contingency plans. Two new pan industry forums have been created to provide expertise in the specialist areas of Well Life Cycle Practices and Oil Spill Response and in addition, the industry's financial responsibilities in meeting the potential clean up and compensation costs associated with a major oil spill have been scrutinised and progress made to secure appropriate and proportionate provisions.

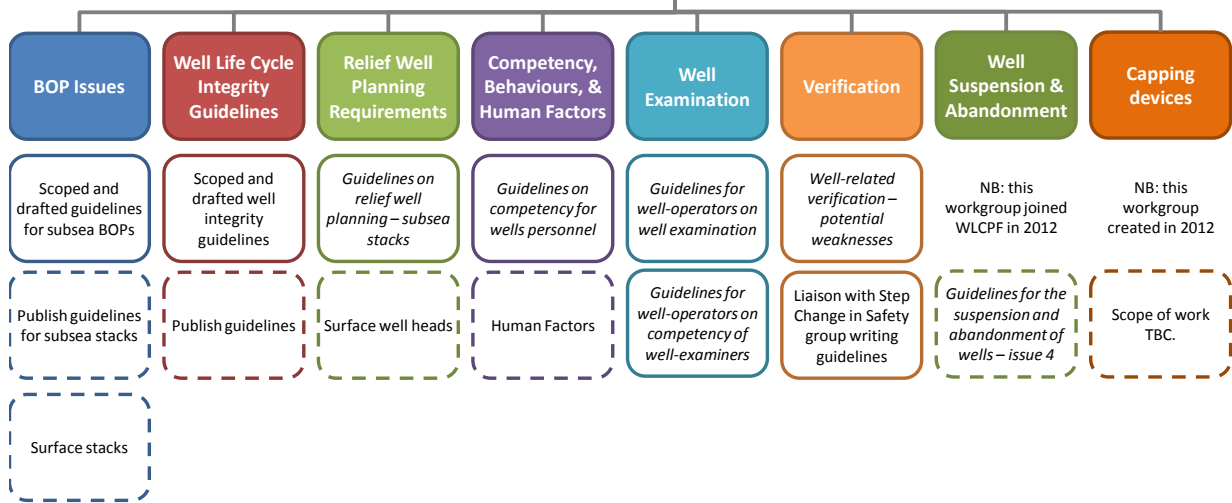
The work of OSPRAG and the new forums will ensure that the industry continues on the path of improvement and that the regime under which the UK offshore oil and gas industry operates remains robust and fit for purpose.



Work completed in 2011

Work planned for 2012

# Oil & Gas UK Well Life Cycle Practices Forum



# Oil & Gas UK Oil Spill Response Forum

