



ITOPF was established in 1968 as a not-for-profit service organisation for the principal purpose of administering the Tanker Owners Voluntary Agreement concerning Liability for Oil Pollution (TOVALOP).

The damage and publicity following the grounding of TORREY CANYON off the South West coast of the UK in 1967, with the loss of its entire cargo of 119,000 tonnes of crude oil, prompted the world's tanker owners, through their P&I (Protection & Indemnity) Clubs, to take constructive action to mitigate the effects of oil spills and to assure adequate and timely compensation for those affected.

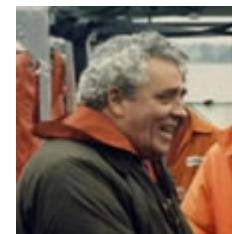
The compensation scheme known as TOVALOP was conceived in 1968. A sister voluntary oil spill compensation regime CRISTAL (Contract Regarding a Supplement to Tanker Liability of Oil Pollution) for cargo owners was developed in parallel. Both voluntary agreements were designed to be interim arrangements pending the widespread adoption by maritime states of two international conventions developed under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (formerly the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, IMCO), namely the Civil Liability and the Fund Conventions. As Managing Director in the 1970s, Mr Alex Hetherington oversaw the early expansion of spill response activities at ITOPF.



The administration of TOVALOP was originally ITOPF's prime function and remained an integral part of its activities for more than a quarter of a century. However, the high incidence of major tanker spills in the early 1970s underlined the need for a specialised group to provide technical advice on response techniques and effects. It was also recognised that there would be a requirement to assess objectively the reasonableness of clean-up measures and the merits of claims for compensation under both the voluntary agreements and international conventions. In this way the technical service function of ITOPF was established under the guidance of our first technical manager, John Wardley Smith.



Whilst there has been a dramatic reduction in the annual incidence of major oil spills since the end of the 1970s, concerns about the environment as well as more aggressive and often emotive media coverage have ensured that the subject of marine pollution remains at the forefront of news agendas. Public awareness therefore contributed to a broadening of ITOPF's capabilities under the guidance of managing director John Archer and technical manager Mike Garnett and a consequent increase in the number of staff. Whilst the priority remained the promotion of effective response to oil spills, considerable effort was placed on the assessment of damage caused by spills and the resulting claims for compensation; on contingency planning and advisory work; on training and education, and on information services - a focus that continues today. Since 1980 ITOPF has had observer status with the International Maritime Organization and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds.





History of ITOPF



The rapid growth in acceptance by maritime states of the Civil Liability and Fund Conventions and their development through various protocols led to the decision to end TOVALOP and CRISTAL at 20th February, 1997. The then managing director Dr Ian White, together with technical manager Joe Nichols, oversaw the transition of ITOPF to solely providing specialised technical services in the field of marine pollution.

Prior to 20th February, 1999, attendance at non-tanker incidents was on a consultative basis. However, the rising awareness of pollution from non-tanker shipping led to an important change in the funding arrangements of ITOPF. Since this date, the owners and bareboat charterers of non-tankers have been eligible to become Associates of ITOPF and thereby have access to the organisation's technical services on a similar basis to its tanker-owner Members. The development of the Bunkers Convention has reinforced the importance of non-cargo oil spills to the work of ITOPF.



The growing importance of the potential for pollution from other substances, primarily chemicals, and the development of corresponding international conventions e.g. HNS Convention, has allowed ITOPF to develop expertise in the provision of advice in this complementary area. Over the years, ITOPF has also provided advice *inter alia* to spills of vegetable oils, cereals, coal and to containers and their contents.



The [membership and associate status](#) of shipowners and corresponding funding of ITOPF continues to be arranged through the P&I Clubs and other pollution insurers.

ITOPF celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2008 during the tenure of Dr Tosh Moller, Managing Director and Mr Hugh Parker, Technical Director. Tosh retired in May 2009 and Hugh in April 2010, both after 30 years' service.

Now under the leadership of Dr Karen Purnell, ITOPF continues to excel at providing impartial advice on all aspects of marine spill response and damage assessment.

