**Notes to Editors – ITOPF Limited**

**ABOUT ITOPF**

ITOPF exists to provide objective and scientific based technical advice worldwide to those involved in preparing and responding to accidental marine spills of oil, chemicals hazardous substances and cargo. It provides an emergency service and operates on a not-for-profit basis. ITOPF has responded on-site from its locations in London and Singapore to more than 860 ship-source spills in 100 countries and has provided remote advice on around a thousand more incidents. ITOPF provides advice on clean-up measures, the effects of pollutants on the environment and economic activities, and on compensation. Its highly skilled international team is ready to assist 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

ITOPF promotes a collaborative approach to spill response. Its services are provided to interested stakeholders, including intergovernmental organisations, governments, coastguards, and port authorities. ITOPF’s attendance on site and claims assessment work is usually initiated by a request from its Members (tanker owners) or Associates (other shipowners) or their Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurers.

At times when there is no insurer present for an incident, and where relevant, ITOPF will provide advice to the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

ITOPF has observer status at the IOPC Funds and provides advice to these two intergovernmental organisations (the 1992 Fund and the Supplementary Fund) which provide compensation for oil pollution damage resulting from spills of persistent oil from tankers. There is no equivalent to the IOPC Funds for ship-source spills of other substances.

ITOPF has a longstanding Memorandum of Understanding with IMO, to provide advice to the United Nations specialised agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships. IMO has 176 member states and is responsible for more than 50 international conventions and protocols. ITOPF also holds observer status at IMO.

The organisation was rebranded “ITOPF” to reflect the broad range of services it provides and the stakeholders it works with. The name is not an acronym and the previous name is no longer in use.

**TECHNICAL SERVICES**

ITOPF offers five key services:

1. **Spill response**

ITOPF’s priority service is to provide objective scientific advice on clean-up measures and the effects of pollutants on the environment in response to ship-source spills of oil, chemicals, hazardous substances and cargo. This is provided worldwide, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

1. **Claims analysis and damage assessment**

ITOPF provides consistent and objective technical assessments for claims associated with spill response and pollution damage across all four claim types covered by the international conventions governing compensation – preventative measures, economic loss, property damage and environmental damage.

1. **Contingency planning and advisory work**

ITOPF undertakes contingency planning and advisory activities to positively support and assist countries and organisations. These activities also help build relations and trust with stakeholders to the benefit of all when an incident occurs.

1. **Training and education**

ITOPF delivers training courses and workshops with and for a broad range of stakeholders, including national maritime authorities, coastguards, local government authorities, spill response contractors and university students. ITOPF’s technical team regularly speak at industry conferences around the world.

1. **Information services**

ITOPF is an authoritative source and leader in the dissemination of knowledge and best practice across the industry through its films and publications. Key publications include the widely recognised and cited Oil Tanker Spill Statistics (an annual publication providing data on accidental oil spills from tankers, combined carriers and barges since 1970) and Technical Information Papers, the most recent of which is entitled Response to Plastic Pellet Incidents. The ITOPF Handbook also contains a wealth of valuable information and guidance for those likely to be involved in spills of oil, chemicals, hazardous substances or other cargoes from ships.

**APPROACH TO SPILL RESPONSE**

While ITOPF’s role during the response phase varies from case to case, its approach is always advisory and based on consistent scientific principles and past experience attending spills in a large range of habitats and economies.

ITOPF’s services during an incident are provided to all relevant stakeholders, including governments, intergovernmental organisations, coastguards, port authorities, wildlife agencies, shipowners, contractors and claimants. ITOPF works collaboratively to promote effective spill response as a means of reducing impacts on the environment and affected communities.

The aim is to reach agreement on measures which are technically justified and best suited to the circumstances. This helps ensure that the clean-up is as effective as possible and that damage is minimised. It also means that subsequent claims for compensation are likely to be admissible in line with the principles of international ship-source pollution conventions.

However, it is not always possible to reach consensus. ITOPF acts as an objective technical adviser and not as a decision-maker. Failure to follow ITOPF’s advice may result in higher costs which are later assessed to be unrecoverable. But ultimately, it is up to the parties managing the incident response whether to accept ITOPF’s advice.

**APPROACH TO CLAIMS ANALYSIS**

ITOPF assesses claims based on whether the claim is admissible in line with the principles of international ship-source pollution conventions. ITOPF considers whether adequate, scientifically robust, evidence has been provided to support the claim. ITOPF reviews decisions to implement reinstatement measures and assesses whether those measures were technically justifiable, and whether the costs claimed are reasonable.

ITOPF does not decide whether claims are paid. Decision-making rests solely with the relevant insurer. Decision makers may consider other factors in addition to ITOPF’s technical advice when approving claims.

**OBJECTIVITY**

ITOPF prides itself on being a trusted source of objective technical advice worldwide on preparedness and response to accidental marine spills. ITOPF’s approach to the sharing of knowledge and expertise during a spill response reflects its objectivity. ITOPF’s mission statement is to promote effective response to marine spills of oil, chemicals and other substances as a means of reducing impacts on the environment and affected communities.

ITOPF’s funding model means that it is detached from competing commercial interests arising from a spill.

ITOPF is insulated from acting directly for individual shipowners involved in an incident because ITOPF’s income derives primarily from dues paid for up front and collectively by all its Members and Associates on an annual basis.

Membership of ITOPF is available to an owner or demise charterer of a tanker; this being any self or non-self-propelled ship which is designed, constructed, or adapted for the carriage by water in bulk of crude petroleum, hydrocarbon products and any other liquid substance. Associate status of ITOPF is available to an owner or demise charterer of any ship other than a tanker. Members and Associates are usually entered with ITOPF following a request by the relevant pollution liability insurer. ITOPF does not charge Members or Associates for its time on-site but does seek reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred.

**EXPERTISE**

The ITOPF Technical Team is highly skilled and has expertise in marine pollution response, including biology, chemistry, climate science, coastal management and protection, ecology, engineering, environmental science, earth science, fisheries and aquaculture, geography, geology, geophysical hazards, marine biology, marine ecology, marine fisheries science, oceanography, and zoology.

Individuals within ITOPF’s entire Technical Team possess a Master’s degree or PhD in their relevant area. Short biographies of the team are included in the ITOPF Handbook. Team members regularly produce and contribute to scientific papers and posters on their areas of expertise, including the ITOPF Technical Information Papers.

The ITOPF Technical Team keeps up to date with changes in the shipping industry, including the adoption of alternative fuels, and shares knowledge internally to ensure it remains a leader in the dissemination of knowledge and best practice across the spill response industry. Externally, the team are members of several working groups including providing advice to the UN system on marine environmental protection.

ITOPF holds observer status at IMO and the IOPC Funds.

ITOPF delivers international training on ship-pollution response to government agencies, on behalf of IMO and at the request of national authorities.

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**ENDS**