



Solomon Trader Oil Spill

Roundtable 1: Solomon Trader Incident
20 October 2021

Lessons learned from Solomon Trader oil spill



- MV Solomon Trader ran aground on on 5 February 2019
- SIMSA was informed on 7 February but informed NDMO only on 12 February
- On 15 February 2019 heavy fuel oil was observed
- Intensive clean-up operation took place from early March through to 26 July 2019.
- Lessons learned:

— Risk management

- Unregulated shipping operations associated with extractive industries in high-risk areas
- SIG is not party to key conventions
- P&I Club, SIG, CROP and int. agencies not prepared for an incident of this magnitude in remote location
- Management of the large volumes of oily waste was challenging

— Governance

- Marine pollution regulations and NATPLAN not implemented – NDMO took leadership
- Emergency response personnel can impact the sensitive social setting of rural Solomon Islands
- Lengthy negotiation and lack of preparedness by stakeholders led to delayed actions
- Lack of understanding of how oil would disperse in shallow coral reef environment with limestone shoreline led to conflict over clean-up end points

— Response and Recovery

- Lack of pre-planning by int. agencies and communication within SIG led to unnecessary
- Remote location, language barriers and parallel command structures led to delays and conflict
- SIG staff had no prior training or equipment to respond to oil spill of this magnitude
- Limited capacity within SIG to investigate complex maritime incident.

Ways to address areas of concern

Immediate actions

1. Implement **what we have**:

- **SIMA Act 2018** provides now for the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA) to prevent and respond to marine pollutions
- strictly implement the **Shipping (Marine Pollution) Regulations 2011**:
 - ✓ (re)establish the **Marine Pollution Advisory Committee**
 - ✓ strictly activate and implement the **NATPLAN**
 - ✓ establish **working arrangements with Shipping Agents** for vessel tracking and monitoring
 - ✓ **pursue criminal proceedings under the Shipping Act 1998** as amended to get support from conviction of polluters.
- Develop and implement procedures and use existing capacity:
 - ✓ **procedure at SIMA** under the 2011 Regs. And NATPLAN for immediate action and response
 - ✓ **recruitment** of pollution specialist and re-engage Port State Control Officers.

All above done with some successes for MV QUEBEC deliberate discharge of oil in Jan 2021.

Ways to address areas of concern

2. Implement **measures taking into account the specificities of Solomon Islands:**

Medium to long-term actions

- Track international vessels within Solomon Islands and better manage/regulate sufferance ports
- domesticate international standards applicable to bulk carriers
- Align the NATPLAN to the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) and better articulate the working together
- develop procedures and capacity for on-the-ground first response, environmental and social impact assessment and oil spill clean-up operations specifically in remote location requiring long deployment and increased autonomy from the response team
- Prepare for community awareness and engagement, and health messaging procedures.

3. Undertake a **whole-government 3-tier approach:**

- accede to conventions and associated instruments relating to prevention of marine pollution and covering liability and compensation
- be signatory and active participant to regional agreements relating to marine pollution response, and
- implement of the National Marine Pollution Fund (POLFUND) as prescribed in the Shipping (Marine Pollution) Regulations 2011.

At Roundtable 2 will present on MV QUEBEC successes and challenges to highlight the importance of policy, legislation and institutional frameworks.



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