

# Post-Oil Spill Response of the Government of RO Korea: Implementation of a Comprehensive Restoration Programme and Lessons Learned

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More than one and half years have passed since the biggest oil spill accident happened in Korean history, the Hebei Spirit oil spill. With the help of more than 1.2 million volunteers, most of the oil has been removed from the spill sites. However, oil has spread to vast areas, more than 1000 km in length, some small scale oil spill clean ups are still on going.

Since the incident, things have become very different than before the incident: for example, ecosystem has changed significantly; oil spill remnants still exist at remote islands keeping a contaminated environment; commercial fish and shell fish species have diminished drastically; livelihood activities have changed; and the number of visitors is diminishing. As we can imagine, the life of people in the affected areas has been changed significantly.

Compensation has been provided to the people. However, the money for the damage compensation has been always fallen short to satisfy the people in the devastated area. As proven, monetary compensation is not the ultimate solution for the oil spill incident. It is only the beginning of the remedy. What should follow after the initial clean up and compensation?

Considering the long-term adverse effects brought by the oil spill, the Korean government set out a comprehensive restoration programme in the affected areas. The comprehensive programme includes: i) ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration; ii) livelihood assistance for the affected areas; iii) promotion and development of alternative tourism; iv) strengthening the environmental monitoring; and v) strengthening the public awareness on oil spill. Korean government has allocated considerable amount of budget for this long-term programme.

Along with the restoration programme, the government has initiated a major oil spill response system reform including: strengthening the port state control communication; procuring shallow water oil recovery boats and multi-purpose response boats; overhauling oil spill training courses; establishing oil spill training, specialized facility and development of oil spill response technologies to meet the demands of IMO OPRC convention and OPRC-HNS protocol.



This paper deals with the Korean government's restoration programme and its implementation. Sharing of these unique and important lessons will assist the workshop participants in realizing the importance of an effective oil spill response system and in understanding the implementation of a comprehensive restoration programme.