

Exercise Oyster: Practicalities of Response - COVID-19 Workshop

Date: April 2020

OSRL Member & OSRL



Oil Spill Response Limited

Lower William Street
Southampton
SO14 5QE
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)23 8033 1551
Fax: +44 (0)23 8033 1972



Contents

- 1. Executive Summary..... 3
- 2. Workshop Details..... 4
- 3. The Workshop..... 5
 - a. Workstream 1- Human Factors: 5 What do we need to do to put together a team of people willing and able to respond?..... 5
 - b. Work Stream 2- What Support Can We Provide Remotely: How can we support the business unit remotely before deploying international boots on the ground? 6
 - c. Work Stream 3- What We Need in Place Before Deployment: Assurance of systems, process and infrastructure on the ground to support people and equipment getting in and out of country 8
 - d. Work Stream 4- When Deployed, What Can We Do and How? Once in country what roles can be undertaken and how this will work within current guidance on social distancing. 9
- 4. Workshop Lessons Learned..... 9
- 5. Next Steps 11
- 6. Appendix/References 12

Author	Dan White (Response Readiness Manager)
Approved by	Paul Foley (OSRL Regional Response Manager)
Distribution list	

1. Executive Summary

Between the 29th April and 30th April, a workshop was held with OSRL and a Member to explore the impact that COVID-19 has had on the mobilisation and response to an oil spill. The workshop was facilitated remotely with participants primarily from the UK, Angola, Nigeria, and Cameroon all joining utilising various remote working tools. Over the course of the workshop 75 participants were involved throughout different stages.

The workshop focussed around one spill scenario offshore Nigeria. The overall goal was to identify how remote support can be provided to the member's Corporate emergency support team referred to in this document as the Quick Reaction Team (QRT) to mobilise and respond to an incident in West Africa, and to validate the practicalities of an in-field response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working through several pre-identified work-streams the workshop delivered outputs that identified a series of lessons learned that can be used to enhance future response efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. This report outlines the set-up of the workshop, the details of the scenario, the outputs of the workstreams, the lessons learned and the next steps.

The workshop proved that although there are many significant barriers to respond it is possible to mobilise a team of responders safely and effectively. Success is dependent on good prior planning, the development and execution of effective COVID-19 mitigation procedures and strong support from the local stakeholders. It is noted however that even with good prior planning the unexpected will still happen, picking right people who can adapt and overcome who are 'pathfinders' for the initial wave of response will help manage any unexpected events.

2. Workshop Details

Scope:

The purpose of the workshop was to focus on the potential challenges for providing a response to a substantive release of oil offshore Nigeria during the COVID-19 Pandemic; facilitated through a workshop setting and conducted remotely the exercise looked to address several areas:

- **Member Assurance:** can OSRL and the member's QRT deploy appropriate resources
- **Comfort:** understanding responders' willingness to travel
- **Barriers:** identify the barriers to response and develop detailed mitigation plans for each barrier
- **Validation:** delve into the detail to obtain actual real-world information to validate assumptions
- **Timelines:** reset the 'normal' timeline on what a response would look like now amid COVID-19, to include credible best- and worst-case scenarios

Objectives:

- To identify challenges and barriers to response and to provide workable, scalable solutions.
- To deliver a high-level plan for mobilisation and a realistic timeline
- To develop an improved understanding on the limitations and challenges which can be shared with Industry
- To identify relevant questions to ask for members and their businesses units to aid the development of preparedness and to assist future mobilisations.

Assumptions:

- The Member is already responding to a global event (COVID-19 Pandemic) which calls upon international (Tier 3) support. The oil spill, therefore, becomes the second event that requires international support and the response will run parallel to the ongoing crisis and business continuity efforts.
- The Nigeria scenario will be treated as a 'guide event' with each other country affiliate then working their location specific detail.

Workshop Set-up and Format

It was agreed during the exercise planning phase that a normal table-top exercise construct would not offer the flexibility required to meet the desired outcomes as such the full ICS structure would not be used. It was agreed that we would design a slow-time workshop to focus on specific areas, such as mobilisation process and COVID-19 mitigations and not on typical response discussions such as NEBA/SIMA.

The workshop was split into four workstreams:

- Human Factors
- What support can be provided remotely
- What is needed in place before deployment
- When deployed, what can we do and how

A scenario was designed to allow participants to focus on a specific area of operations and to identify what was needed to be able to bring capability (e.g. people, equipment and dispersant / surveillance aircraft) into country to operate.

The member wanted to use this opportunity to gain detailed feedback from three of their operating affiliates in West Africa: Nigeria, Cameroon, and Angola.

Skype for Business was chosen as the primary means of collaboration with Microsoft OneNote used for live collation of the workshop outputs.

There were nine groups who were tasked to work the details of each workstream: Angola, Cameroon, Nigeria, OSRL, QRT – Safety, QRT – Operations, QRT- Logistics and QRT - Planning. To achieve this, a cycle of events was agreed, see Figure 1 below.

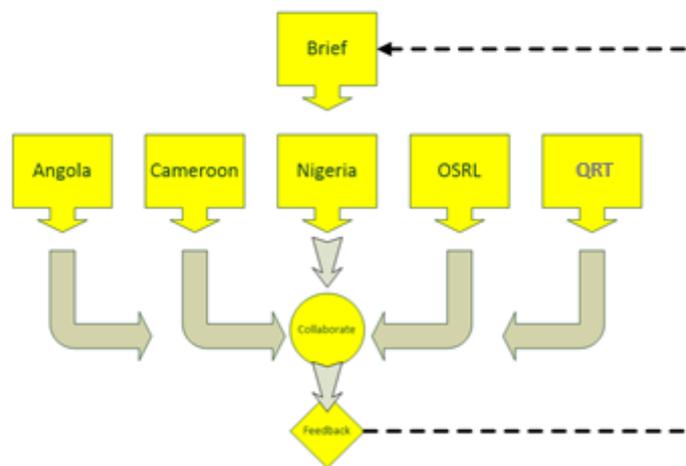


Figure 1 Brief in a central call (virtual IMT ICP) then break out into individual calls for each of the 8 groups with an agreed feedback session on the central call.

The workshop was developed and facilitated by both OSRL and Member personnel. Their role was to move from section to section, observe, keep the participants on track, identify gaps / issues and try to fix those issues where possible during the workshop. This enabled them to focus in the ‘bigger picture’ and provide valuable input.

3. The Workshop

a. Workstream 1: Human Factors:

What do we need to do to put together a team of people willing and able to respond?

The 'human factor', in this context, is how humans behave physically and psychologically in relation to particular environments. A risk profile is an evaluation of an individual's willingness, or appetite for risk. Every Responder and their family will react differently to the COVID-19 pandemic and everyone will have a different perception of risk when mobilising for a spill. OSRL and the mobilising member will always work to mitigate this risk by advanced planning and the adoption of robust

control measures. Comfort and confidence can be further increased by addressing questions that *could* be asked by Responders and effectively communicating the controls that are in place.

To aid the workshop participants a selection of key questions were prepared to ensure consistency between the workgroups:

- What do we need to do to put together a team of people willing and able to respond?
- Am I a vulnerable person or is a member of my household?
- What questions will our responders and their families have?
- Will I be put in a Government run quarantine on arrival?
- Will I be put in a Government run quarantine on return?
- Is there adequate medical capability in country?
- What if I need to go home, can I? will I be quarantined back on arrival back home?

The first workstream was used to feed into later workstreams where detailed investigations or planning could take place to provide the mitigation to the barriers identified in Workstream 1.

Figure 2 outlines the process of addressing these questions to help identify any potential barriers to response.

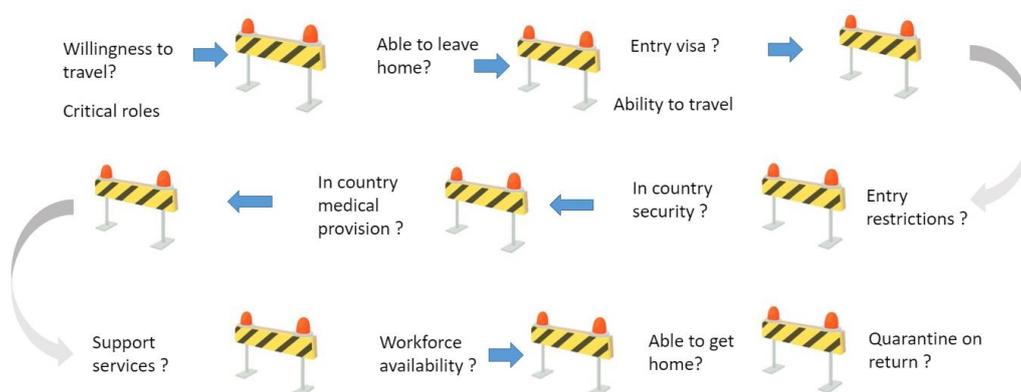


Figure 2: Barriers to respond

b. Work Stream 2: What Support Can We Provide Remotely; How can we support the affiliate remotely before deploying in-field?

Based on the scenario used in the workshop, the previous time to deploy out of country personnel was typically between 24-48 hrs. The new realistic timeline was established to be between 4-18 days depending on what mitigations needed to be put in place and the support available from local regulators to expedite the process. We posed several questions to start Workstream 2.

Questions	Consolidated Workstream Output
-----------	--------------------------------

<p>How can we support the affiliate remotely before deploying international resources?</p>	<p>OSRL can provide support remotely such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite Surveillance • OilMap Modelling • Telephone support and advice. • Prepopulated travel plans • Application for visa waivers • Identification of Technical Advisors for specific countries. • Development of country-specific response plans • Development of Logistical <p>Early establishment of function to function communication. For example, by setting up a remote ‘buddy’ system whereby liaison officers where a Technical Advisor from OSRL or the member could partner with someone in country to directly support them with an activity they are specifically skilled in.</p> <p>One of the most important factors to increase the ‘bandwidth of remote support’ is to allow OSRL to integrate and communicate on a function to function basis. This means OSRL can provide support in each section of the virtual IMT.</p>
<p>How can we utilise IT to dial in to support the affiliate?</p>	<p>MS Teams, Skype, Polycom video Conferencing, Zoom, Extranet site for file sharing are all options which are available. OSRL can work with all of these options.</p> <p>To make this efficient it is important to agree communication protocols of what and how information is shared.</p>
<p>How can OSRL TA’s deploy to local corporate head office Europe / USA?</p>	<p>OSRL TA’s can deploy to either members regional HQ in Europe or the USA. In this case the member’s preference was to deploy to the OSRL Southampton base.</p>
<p>How can we use local contacts already in country such as CNA / UAV as force multipliers?</p>	<p>OSRL has a mutual support agreement in place with Clean Nigeria Associates. OSRL has recently setup a UAV provider based in Lagos as an approved supplier. This will support with situational awareness for subsequent operational support taskings.</p>
<p>Is it feasible for Aviation assets (dispersant and surveillance) to stage out of a FOB in another country?</p>	<p>Yes, depending on local logistics and aircraft capabilities. This would be assessed on a case by case basis. It would be preferred for the 727 and WASP aircraft to operate within the country of the incident. This to ensure the maximum number of sorties are achievable and potential issues around air clearances are avoided.</p>

c. Work Stream 3- What We Need in Place Before Deployment: Assurance of systems, process and infrastructure on the ground to support people and equipment getting in and out of country

The purpose of Workstream 3 was to consider assurance of systems, processes, and infrastructure on the ground to support people and equipment getting in and out of country. This built upon the mitigations to the identified barriers to respond highlighted in the previous workstreams:

Barriers to respond	Consolidated Workstream Output
Deploy expats into country for response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimise the number of people required by providing remote support or utilising local resources where possible 2. Identify vulnerable Responders and those with vulnerable family members 3. Confirm compliance of approved quarantine facilities with local authorities and member occupational health 4. Setup pre-departure COVID-19 testing and gain approval from local authority
Visa and customs clearance	Contact local authority to confirm they are able to support with emergency waivers. In the case of Nigeria NOSDRA have confirmed they can provide emergency waivers for visa's customs clearance and quarantine on arrival for significant spills.
Travel restrictions within country, between states	Obtain waiver for interstate movement of equipment and people for moving equipment. Test arrangement prior to mobilisation.
Airport closed and airspace restricted	Obtain approval from local civil aviation authority. To open airport and gain access to airspace.
Personnel Flights	Commercial flights are not available. Source private charter flight. Suitable capacity to allow for social distancing.
Medical certificates / COVID testing	Leverage corporate occupational health to support with COVID testing pre departure. Gain approval from local authorities to accept the pre departure COVID tests
Equipment movement once in country	Validate local logistics providers have the required clearance for transporting large quantities of equipment by road
Messaging to the local	Start communications early, provide details of response plan.

community to manage relationship	Factor in community support into the response plan
Measures to handle COVID infected personnel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor for symptoms 2. Defined self-isolation facilities / procedure in place 3. Evacuation via medivac provider if required

d. Work Stream 4- When Deployed, What Can We Do and How? Once in country what roles can be undertaken and how this will work within current guidance on social distancing.

The purpose of Workstream 4 was to identify the tasks which needed to be completed for this response and to explore how these tasks could be completed. The specific measures for in-field response guide was utilised by OSRL to support decision making on identifying the relevant controls for any in-field response. Each affiliate explored the tasks they considered essential and explored how they could be completed. Specific points raised were:

1. Social distancing pinch points:
 - a. Shoreline clean up – in all cases incorporating local communities into the shoreline clean-up plans is an essential way of managing community relations. With COVID -19 this poses a specific risk. Community liaisons were not included in this workshop. A plan needs to be developed to manage the risk of a shoreline clean-up operation
 - b. Offshore operations – social distancing onboard a vessel is very challenging. The member has a process in place for vessel crews the OSRL personnel deploying offshore would need to comply with this process resulting in them having to follow the crew roster program. Personnel would not be free to leave and repeatedly re-join the vessel.
 - c. Aerial operations - utilising an aircraft of opportunity personnel would need to be kept to a minimum, personally issued headset to be used and the use of RPE may be required.

4. Workshop Lessons Learned

The following lessons learned were derived from several feedback sessions throughout and post the workshop. They are applicable to both OSRL and the member

- *We can respond during the COVID-19 pandemic* - It is possible to mobilise a team of responders internationally, there are significant barriers to respond which can be mitigated through prior planning, application of existing COVID-19 mitigation procedures and where this needs to be expedited support from the local regulators.

- *Working virtually requires more planning* - Running a virtual workshop like this is new for both OSRL and the member. Extra effort is required during the setup to explain how it will work and clearly state expectations to alleviate fear of the unknown.
- *Liaison officers improve integration* - Working virtually with a dedicated liaison officer helps OSRL integrate with the Member IMT further and increases our effectiveness. Where working as a remote IMT the liaison officers provide an important bridge between the various sections
- *Still aim co-locate a liaison officer* – if the member IMT or the OSRL EOC is physically manned to any extent there is significant benefit in co-locating either an OSRL technical advisor in the IMT or a member liaison in the OSRL EOC.
- *Function to function communication is essential* - Ensuring function to function communication is setup as soon as possible. OSRL representatives joining the section calls and meetings significantly increases the value of support OSRL can provide our members. It allows OSRL to provide better value, get more involved and removes the bottleneck we normally encounter with the Duty Manager to client call.
- *Have dedicated facilitator role* - Having an OSRL facilitatory role worked well, it allows OSRL to see the bigger picture and therefore offer better support. This role can help identify and fill gaps, coach and mentor those in the virtual IMT who need it and better anticipate the Member's needs.
- *Pick the right people for the team* - The first wave of responders deploying in-field need to be 'Pathfinders' they will encounter more barriers to respond than we would normally expect and they need to be able to rapidly access the situation and provide unique and innovative solutions to very challenging problems.
- *The Same ICS principles apply* - Too many people involved in the workshop during the first two workstreams resulted in confusion. Focus on smaller teams with better span of control and a decision maker identified to agree the way forward before bringing in more personnel to drive actions in later workstreams or workshops.
- *Virtual IMT guidelines* - Running a virtual IMT is relatively new; develop clearer guidelines on how to run a virtual IMT incorporating lessons learned from this workshop and other drills or exercises.
- *OneNote to get started* - The notification and mobilisation phase of the response is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Where Members rely on digital incident action plan tools to be setup once the IMT is setup in-field it was found, utilising OneNote as an alternative interim solution worked well. It provided a way to centrally collaborate on tasks and record information during the notification and mobilisation phase before the in-field team would be able to setup and start using the digital incident action plan tool. This needs to be explored

further and embed into process. OSRL having access to OneNote is critical for information flow and efficiency.

- *Plan for IT issues to happen* - IT issues happen, with the number of people involved in the workshop it was inevitable that we would have some IT issues. Plan for them to happen, have backup methods of communication incorporated into the plan and ensure everyone tests their access and communication channels ahead of the workshop to minimise risk.
- *Working remotely is tiring* - Managing participant fatigue is challenging when working remotely, more structure to the daily schedule to allow staggered breaks while still adhering to meeting schedules is required.
- *Plan time for command and exercise facilitators to meet* - To compensate for not being face to face time for the command and exercise facilitators to meet needs to be included within the daily meeting schedule. What would normally happen organically during a face to face has to be factored into the schedule otherwise those opportunities will either be missed or run behind schedule.
- *Choose the right IT platform* - Preference to move away from Skype and use Zoom or MS Teams for the added functionality such as imbedded whiteboard, OneNote, file sharing, action tracker, ability to setup incident channel with multiple groups will make managing a workshop or incident easier in the future.
- *It's all about relationships* - Further strengthen the relationship between OSRL and the member, by regularly exercising together, working function to function on exercises and continuing to keep those relationships alive outside of exercise and spills.

5. Next Steps

- Conduct a follow up exercise with the member to focus on APAC, this will be a large virtual exercise where both member and OSRL will be able to utilise our global footprint (October)
- Timeline – OSRL working with member to deliver revised response timeline document looking at best and worst-case.
- Lessons learned incorporated within the virtual IMT lessons learned document and shared
- OSRL wiliness to respond workshop – based on the response scenario and detailed information provided by the Nigeria affiliate OSRL are briefing the response teams to

understand people's willingness to respond in the current climate where we have identified all the barriers to response and identified suitable mitigations.

- Develop further guidance on virtual IMTs (tools, techniques, etc.). Inc. Guidance on how and when to use the tools at our disposal to best effect. Setting ground rules at the outset.

6. Appendix/References

1. OSRL Country Plans- [Nigeria](#)
2. OSRL Country Plans- [Angola](#)
3. OSRL Country Plans- [Cameroon](#)
4. OSRL [Specific Measures for In-Field Response](#)
5. OSRL [lessons learned](#) & [Webinar](#)
6. OSRL virtual IMT [Webinar](#)