



**International Offshore Petroleum
Environmental Regulators**

International Offshore Petroleum Environmental Regulators

Annual General Meeting

29 – 31 October 2024 | Dublin, Ireland

Communique`

IOPER CONTINUES FOCUS ON ENHANCED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF THE OFFSHORE OIL
AND GAS INDUSTRY

The International Offshore Petroleum Environmental Regulators (IOPER) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Dublin, Ireland from 29 to 31 October 2024. The IOPER AGM was held during the same week as the International Regulators Forum (IRF) AGM, also in Dublin. The AGM was chaired by Australia and was attended in person or virtually by representatives from Canada, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The meeting featured updates from each country on their jurisdiction. The IOPER members discussed common topics, issues and opportunities and good practices. Key themes discussed included:

- ❖ Regulating in the context of the opportunities and challenges associated with energy transition and global energy needs.
- ❖ Increasing emergence of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) projects proposed.
- ❖ Decommissioning including the implications associated with end of life and in-perpetuity risks and challenges.
- ❖ Stakeholder interest in the regulation of the offshore energy sector and environmental decisions.
- ❖ First nations' culture, heritage, values and engagement by companies and regulators.

Workstream

Ongoing working groups shared updates and progress on engagement by members in key areas:

Marine Sound Working Group (MSWG)

Members discussed the future need for the MSWG in light of the Management of Ocean Noise by Multinational Energy Regulators (MONMER). MONMER was established as a multilateral forum to share information and collaborate on scientific, technological and regulatory issues on ocean noise associated with offshore energy industries, with a broad scope beyond that of MSWG of IOPER. Key topics covered at the most recent MONMER Working Group meeting were communicated at the AGM. It was recognised that IOPER members would need to invest time and resources into MONMER and that formalising regular reporting on MONMER activities and outputs to IOPER would be reflected in the MONMER Terms of Reference (ToR) (when updated) and provide a suitable replacement to the MSWG.



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IOPER members also agreed to share MONMER information with interested Agencies (within their jurisdiction but also with non-IOPER member countries) and to make their own individual applications to join MONMER in their own right.

The Oil Spill Working Group (OSWG)

An update on the IOPER OSWG was presented and members discussed the ongoing value and the future focus areas to be further explored to support a longer-term planning direction.

Consultations with Indigenous Peoples Working Group

The Consultations with Indigenous Peoples Working Group was established in 2024 to raise awareness and provide a forum for sharing best practices for engaging with Indigenous communities. The Working Group is intended to facilitate, among IOPER members, information sharing, cooperation and development of opportunities for meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples.

An update on the Working Group's progress was presented to the meeting, highlighting opportunities to share effective methods for engaging with Indigenous communities while recognising diversity between and within different countries. Discussions also covered the Group's establishment, the ongoing development of a Work Plan for 2024/25 and completion of the ToR.

Members discussed and supported the focus on the common interests and challenges related to First Nations stakeholder engagement. Broader community engagement would continue to be considered by members in the general meetings.

Decommissioning End of Life and Longer Term Risk Working Group

An update of the Group's progress was presented, focusing on the comprehensive definitions and scoping of topics. The value in sharing best practices was highlighted, with consideration to possibly including sharing of templates for various aspects, particularly in relation to decommissioning and end-of-life issues. Topics also covered the recognition of differences in regulations, the challenges experienced in undertaking decommissioning activities both in deep and shallow waters and the critical need for early planning. Members considered the potential for a good practice library sharing initiative for internal use by Regulators.

The number of proposals for in-situ abandonment of steel pile jackets was also discussed, with members noting rare or exceptional circumstances in most or all jurisdictions. It was noted that many jurisdictions were continuing to expect or be moving towards removal at or near the seabed.



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Environmental Management of Carbon Capture and Storage Working Group (EMOCCS)

As CCS gains traction as one of the key technologies for transition to net-zero, IOPER is focusing on sharing information and focusing on areas of uncertainty that could assist in advocating research priorities. A Communication Plan will be developed, together with a Work Plan for 2025. The first EMOCCS Group ‘in-person’ meeting was scheduled to be held in Dublin, Ireland, on Thursday 31 October 2024.

IOPER and Engagement with the Other Groups

The IRF AGM was held the same week of the IOPER AGM, in Dublin, where IOPER members engaged with IRF members and stakeholders interested in the offshore energy sector.

The IOPER AGM included an industry engagement session to hear updates on their global environmental initiatives and future plans. IOPER continues to engage with stakeholders and build collaborative knowledge on environmental regulation and improvements on environmental performance. The AGM also heard updates on Ireland’s efforts to improve planning and sustainable management for the offshore areas.

Future Activities

A virtual mid-year meeting is planned for May 2025 and the Annual General Meeting will be held in person in October 2025 in St Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

For a full list of IOPER member countries and agencies, visit the [IOPER website](#).