

Evaluation report

FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE – MASEPOLREX2023

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25th – 29th September 2023

Mauritius

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FTX 2023 EVALUATORS:

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List of acronyms

CGS	Coast Guard ship
DCoC	Djibouti Code of Conduct
DoE	Department of Environment
DoS	Department of Shipping
ECG	Exercise control group
FTX	Field training exercise
IAP	Incident action plan
IC	Incident commander
ICS	Incident Command System
IEMP	Integrated Environmental Management Plan
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IMS	Incident management system
IMT	Incident management team
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IOPC	International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds
IORIS	Indo Pacific Regional Information Sharing (platform)
MASE	Maritime Security Programme (East and Southern Africa)
NCG	National Coast Guard
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NOSCP	National Oil Spill Contingency Plan
OSRL	Oil Spill Response Limited
POLREP	Pollution report
PPE	Personal protective equipment
RCOC	Regional Coordination Operations Centre
RMIFC	Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre
ROSCP	Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan
SAMSA	South African Maritime Safety Authority
SOG	Standard Operating Guidelines
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TTX	Tabletop exercise
USA FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency of the United States of America
WIO	Western Indian Ocean

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IOC brief to Evaluator

The MASEPOLREX23 aims at ensuring effective coordination and strengthening institutional cooperation at the national level through the implementation of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP), as well as the testing of the draft Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan (ROSCP) for preparedness and response to major marine pollution incidents in the western Indian ocean (WIO) region with the participation of regional institutions, of which the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) is one of the most important, together with the MASE centers, the Nairobi Convention, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) network and neighboring national institutions in the WIO.

Considering the above, the IOC invites you to participate in MASEPOLREX as the Exercise evaluator.

Objectives of the field training exercise (FTX)

- A. The National Incident Management Structure is operationalized (NOSCP 2021, Part 2).
- B. The Planning Cycle (of the National Incident Management System) and drafting of an Incident Action Plan are triggered to enable efficient and coordinated response.
- C. A containment and recovery system is deployed offshore and protective booming at the lagoon location is achieved.
- D. Utilize the POLREP to alert the region - to check that national operational contact points are listed, reactive and familiar with the POLREP documentation and procedures.
- E. Make a request for assistance through the forms provided in the IMO Guide on International Offers of Assistance publication.
- F. Check customs and immigration procedures – to ensure that people and equipment can be brought into the country without hindrance or delay.

Exercise Control Group (ECG)

An ECG was established to plan the FTX and the evaluation team members participated in all ECG meetings.

Participating Centers

- 1. National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) – Mauritius
- 2. Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) – Seychelles
- 3. Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) – Madagascar

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FTX Evaluators

1. Captain Ravi Naicker (lead) – SAMSA
2. Dr Angela Pinzón – ITOPF
3. Mr. Mark Harvey – OSRL

SAMSA did a presentation at plenary on the 25th September informing participants on the doctrines, criteria and grading to be used to evaluate the exercise. Participants were also alerted on specific items to be considered.

The methodology employed for the FTX was based on the one previously utilized during the TTX in July 2023, following the recommendations of the RCOC. Minor adjustments were made to adapt it to the requirements of FTX. The participants did not raise any objections in this regard.

On day 1 of the exercise (26th) all three evaluators were located at the NDRRMC, where the incident command post was located. On day 2 (27th), SAMSA and OSRL observed activities aboard the CGS Barracuda whereas ITOPF remained at the NDRRMC. On day 3 (28th), SAMSA and ITOPF were at NDRRMC and OSRL at Black River for the shoreline boom deployment and shore logistics.

Evaluation result

After three days of planning and deployment, key participants conducted a debriefing session on the 29th. The consensus was that there was a good level of effectiveness, with only a few notable discrepancies, and that overall, coordinated actions were successfully executed. The final overall score is **3,5** out of a possible 4.9. The table below shows the scores for each category, and the section further below provides details and recommendations for each criterium.

Criteria		Score
1	Doctrines and concepts	3,5
2	Organisation and personnel	3,3
3	Infrastructure and equipment	3,8
4	Information exchange	3,2
5	Training and logistics	3,6
6	Interoperability	3,5
7	Regional cooperation	3,3
Overall score		3,5

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1. Doctrines and concept

CRITERIA. The following items were considered during the evaluation: NOSCP, ROSCP, Check Off list, Forms, SOP's, SOG's Instruction & Orders

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. NDRRMC shared the FTX invitation list via e-mail. A significant number of invitations were distributed by an environment officer on behalf of the Permanent Secretary – Coordination and Project Implementation Division.
- b. The attendance register for the 3 days was provided at the NDRRMC. CGS Barracuda compiled an attendance register.
- c. It is understood that the current NOSCP has undergone validation by a committee of stakeholders, but it has yet to receive official approval. It was this draft version that was tested during FTX. It was noted that the NOSCP was not widely available and was rarely used as a reference document during the exercise. From the evaluators' observations, only the chair and technical advisor had a hardcopy. Recommendations include increasing awareness of the NOSCP and related policies, such as the dispersant's policy, as improving the documents' accessibility and clarity of their location.
- d. The organisation chart was updated as the scenario was played out (Figure 1), but not clearly visible in the incident management post. As a recommendation, it's advisable to ensure the organisational chart is prominently displayed for all FTX participants. This will enhance everyone's understanding of reporting lines and roles.
- e. A unified approach, with the Department of Environment (DoE) leading and the Department of Shipping (DoS) as co-chair, proved effective in managing the FTX scenario.
- f. A solid waste management plan was observed to be in place with the reduce, reuse, and recycle concept. A *modus operandi* is also in place for hazardous waste generated from oil spills.
- g. Historians within the incident management structure were responsible for documenting daily events and activities. While the overall record-keeping was satisfactory, there is a need for improved accuracy. It is recommended to enhance the integration of technology by replacing whiteboards with screens for safer information storage, accessible at any point during the incident.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATION STAKEHOLDERS

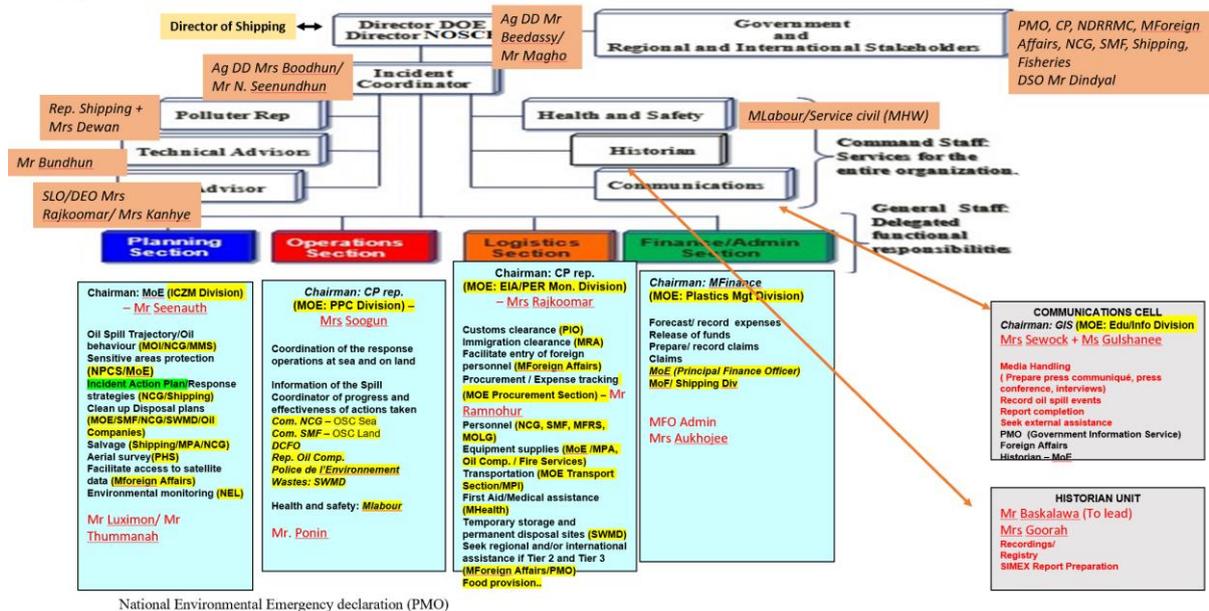


Figure 1. Organisational chart used during MASEPOLREX23 showing personnel assigned to the different roles of the IMT.

- h. Wildlife authorities were on hand to provide details of the integrated environmental management plan (IEMP). A plan is in place and a national environment laboratory is also active.
- i. Apart from the TTX in July 2023 and the FTX in September 2023, it is understood that there have not been other opportunities for participants to interact with other agencies involved in the NOSCP. It would be advantageous to create additional spaces, such as workshops, training sessions, and similar forums, for both intra-agency and inter-agency engagement. This can foster a deeper comprehension of roles and responsibilities while also facilitating channels for inter-agency collaboration.
- j. Participants are encouraged to approach all future exercises as if they were real incidents to thoroughly and effectively assess the procedures and roles outlined in the NOSCP. It was observed that the exercise was frequently treated as a drill rather than a genuine incident.

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2. Organisation and personnel

CRITERIA. The following items were considered during the evaluation: Incident Management Team, Planning P cycle, Watch Standers, International Liaison Officers, Observer & White cell (ECG).

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. The NOSCP has adopted an Incident Management System (IMS) response model consisting of the standard five key functions: Incident Commander, Planning, Operations, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. However, it is worth noting that apart from these functions, the standard procedures and roles outlined in the IMS were not put into practice. There was a lack of utilization of the recommended forms, and no structured approach was followed in terms of the Planning P cycle for meetings and record-keeping. Participants have indicated that there was no prior training provided on the IMS, which is strongly advised. For future exercises, it is recommended to make the Planning P cycle clearly visible at the incident management post to help guide meetings and the processes leading to the development of incident actions plans (IAPs).
- b. Decision making power for Incident Commander/Coordinator (IC) is recommended to be reviewed, together with that of the Director of Environment. At times there was confusion on whether the IC role was a coordination or command function, and the terms were often used interchangeably. Based on the observations during the FTX, decision making took place collectively and was included in the IAP during strategy meetings, rather than resting solely with the Incident Commander. If this approach is to be retained, it should be clearly specified in the NOSCP.
- c. Enhancing coordination between the planning, logistics and operations cells is recommended with the goal of developing more feasible and effective strategies and making more realistic and efficient use of resources.
- d. IAPs were observed to lack pragmatism. A lack of understanding was perceived from the IMT on how to effectively deploy resources on a shoreline, but which still had to be implemented in the field. For example, one of the IAPs proposed to use 13 km of sorbents, which is unlikely to be put in place timely, and would result in large volumes of hazardous waste and additional waste management logistics.
- e. The venue selected for the FTX was the NDRRMC, where each desk/cell was clearly labelled. However, this labeling system must be considered during an actual incident, as the intended arrangement at NDRRMC would interfere with the IMS arrangements described in the NOSCP.

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- f. Arrangements were made at NDRRMC to accommodate various departments and agencies. However, it was observed that space constraints might have impacted the flow in information across the cells, particularly in the context of the planning cell under the NOSCP. It is possible that there was some duplication of efforts between the planning cells (NOSCP and NEOC). Therefore, it is recommended that all cells share the same workspace, and that future discussions include more specific delineations of functions between planning cells.
- g. It was noted that there is a requirement at the national level for capacity building in acquiring satellite imagery for remote sensing of oil spills. It is recommended to leverage regional/international cooperation mechanisms to bridge this gap until the national capacity is developed.
- h. Debriefing sessions by IMT allowed for each of the entities to provide details of their actions, which resulted in lengthy meetings. It is suggested that the planning cell streamlines meetings in the interest of time.
- i. Blue economy participation - ban on fishing activities announced timely. However, there was no specified procedure for lifting the ban.

3. Infrastructure and equipment

CRITERIA. Functional tools, Internet, intranet & Telephone, Resource (response needs and asset assessment), Resource deployment (monitoring and combatting equipment- surface & air)

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. Good internet connectivity and Wi-Fi availability were observed throughout FTX.
- b. Good lighting and comfortable workspaces were provided at NDRRMC. However, a larger workspace is recommended for future exercise to encourage greater interaction and collaboration and avoid congestion.
- c. Welfare conditions at NDRRMC require attention for future exercises and incidents. It was observed that participants did not have continuous access to water, coffee/tea, snacks, toilet facilities regularly serviced, and a breakout area, all of which have a significant impact on the wellbeing and performance of participants.
- d. It is suggested that technology upgrades are explored for virtual meetings at NDRRMC.

- e. It is recommended to equip the main meeting room at NDRRMC with a microphone that has recording capabilities, considering the size of the meetings held during the FTX.
- f. At the national level, there has been an identification of limited interim storage capacity and insufficient resources for the transportation of hazardous waste.

Day 2 - At sea deployment, CGS BARRACUDA

- g. The overall mission to deploy sea boom was accomplished.
- h. Boom deployment took a long time. The stern area of the CGS Barracuda was observed to be cramped (Figure 2) with no current ability to deploy over the stern directly rearwards. As a result, the boom had to be deployed off the side of the vessel, which hampers an efficient deployment and recovery. It is to be noted, however, that having Coast Guard vessels able to deploy oil spill response equipment is unusual yet highly commendable by the NCG.

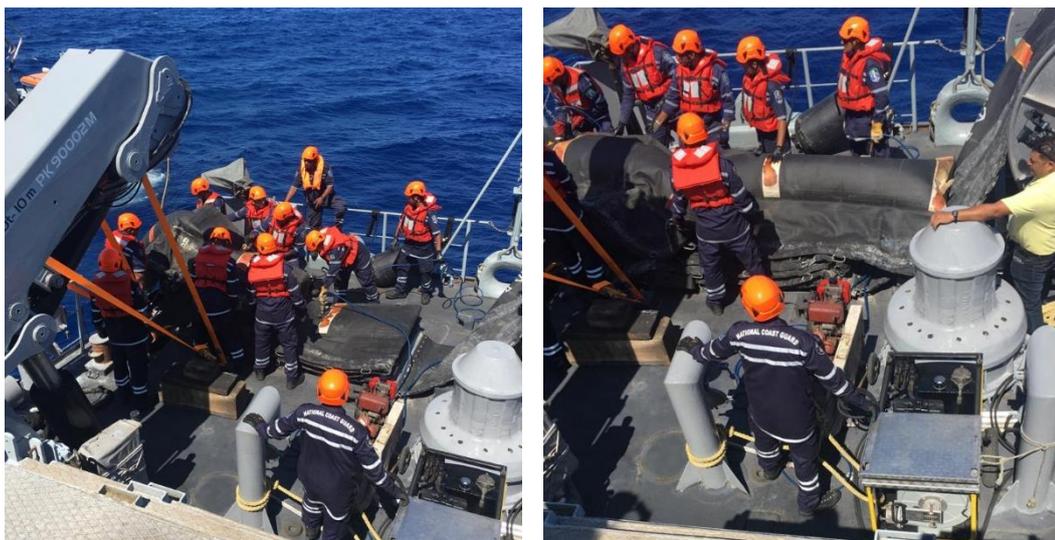


Figure 2. Cramped stern area of CGS Barracuda as observed on 27th September during offshore deployment activities

- i. Crew PPE on CGS Barracuda was observed to be excellent, and support vessel and line management was good.
- j. Although the correct offshore skimmer was unable to be used due to a mechanical fault, an alternative skimmer was deployed for demonstration purposes.
- k. Compressor position could impact on crew health and should be moved 3-5 m away from the noted position to improve crew conditions.

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- l. Incorrect towlines used (24mm) to connect to vessels to go into formation. On deployment, booms were not properly secured to both vessels.
- m. Sea boom was observed to be upside down in some sections. It is recommended that the NCG take appropriate and urgent action.
- n. The deployment vessels (CGS Valiant & Barracuda) and two support vessels were observed at the planned locations. Dornier aircraft was also observed on scene.
- o. It is advisable to strive to fully engage spill response equipment during exercises, treating each scenario as if it were an actual incident.
- p. Dispersant spraying from the CGS Barracuda did not take place, which was initially planned for demonstration purposes. For future exercises, it is recommended that it is made abundantly clear to participants which actions are designated for demonstration purposes only, clearly distinguishing them from strategic choices.

Day 3 – Shoreline boom deployment and site preparation

- q. The deployment exercise on the shoreline involved the use of offshore boom on beaches, which highlighted the unavailability of shoreline boom and required additional deployment resources that would be considered unreasonable in the context of an actual incident. It is important to consider that such additional costs would be considered inadmissible for compensation in accordance with the applicable IOPC guidelines.
- r. The use of PPE on the shoreline was satisfactory and there were no incidents reported.
- s. All participants in the field displayed openness and honesty when questioned and were fully co-operative, which is an essential element for successful exercises and incident management.
- t. The operational layout was observed to be good for beach management.
- u. Site control (restricted access) was not fully implemented. It is understood that this may have been due to operational constraints locally as well as authorisations.

4. Information exchange

CRITERIA: Documents, SITREP, Report & Briefing and response to injects

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. Six IAPs were completed & signed by the Technical Advisor on behalf of the Director of Environment during the FTX. However, the delegation of authority to the technical advisor for signing the IAPs is not documented in the NOSCP.
- b. Good interaction with all participants for clarity seeking and information management. In some instances, one on one engagement was necessary.
- c. Exercise control group (ECG) was in charge of preparing and executing the FTX. The ECG for the FTX was an expansion of the TTX team, giving continuity to the planning strategy.
- d. There were delays in responding to exercise scenarios when the FTX commenced. However, there was noticeable improvement as the exercise progressed, particularly when relying solely on IORIS. It is advisable to conduct a full download from IORIS for referencing and training purposes.
- e. It was observed that no resource request forms were used during the approval process, as approval is granted at IMT meetings for relevant authorities to action. As this is not aligned with the standard practices outlined in the IMS model, this approval process should be clearly stated in the NOSCP.
- f. Government information service (GIS) was activated and all key stakeholders were engaged directly. All relevant documents (e.g. list of stakeholders) were available.

5. Training and logistics

CRITERIA. IORIS and SeaVision utilisation, legal aspects, Inventory of assets database – coordinated import process & customs requirements)

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. ECG in consultation with the NCG made the decision to use both IORIS and Seavision for the exercise.
- b. Inventory database for spill response equipment was not sighted.
- c. National guidelines on the impact of oil spills on human health are under development but expert input is recommended.
- d. Capacity building is recommended on the following aspects:

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- i. Incident Management System implementation. (IMS) 100, 200, 300 and IMS function specific training. The USA FEMA website can be used for the ICS 100 and ICS 200 courses. Alternatively, a regional training session to be held for MASE program countries.
 - ii. Creation of an IMS manual and handbook.
 - iii. IMO level 1 and 2 courses. This will help when developing oil spill response strategies.
 - iv. Documentation and record keeping.
 - v. Trajectory and weathering modelling capabilities. It is understood that a private service provider will be delivering a workshop in-country soon aimed at bridging this gap.
- e. It is recommended to take into consideration and implement, where relevant, the feedback provided by RCOC and RMIFC.
 - f. Several presentations were made by various entities on day 5 of the FTX (29th September) covering their deployment and actions (see program below). It is worth noting that the evaluation team was present at the incident management post, the CGS Barracuda, and at the shoreline deployment site only, and was therefore unable to assess the activities conducted by such entities.
 - g. A participant evaluation form (see below) was distributed among participants and observers. See further below for consolidated scores and general comments.

6. Interoperability

CRITERIA. Regional process, Intra communication, Cooperation with regional & national centres, legal finish.

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. No foreign equipment was used during the FTX. However, it was observed that the at-sea equipment is from various equipment suppliers (e.g. Lamor, Vikoma, Desmi), which can impact equipment deployment due to variations in manufacturers differing connections, etc.

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7. Regional cooperation

CRITERIA. Integration with MRCC's, Regional centres (RMIFC & RCOC), Resources availability and utilisation.

The details below reflect the observation of the evaluation:

- a. The movement of hazardous waste was considered as per the Basel Convention. Lesson learned from MV Wakashio.
- b. The Foreign affairs department acknowledged receipt of the request for assistance form and prepared a note verbale.
- c. International observers were present at the NDRRMC, CGS Barracuda, and Black River for shoreline deployment.

MASEPOLREX₂₃

Participant's feedback form

*Specific written feedback would be appreciated and this form should facilitate this.
Please assess and comment on the following elements based on your experiences during the exercise.*

If you had no involvement with the element, please leave blank.

1 = Poor: there were problems with this element (constructive written comments in the spaces provided would be especially useful to help improve matters).

2 = Average: the performance of the team was acceptable.

3 = Good: the team did well in dealing with the element.

4 = Very good: the team handled the element extremely well.

		1	2	3	4
Establish, equip and staff emergency response centre	Tick here >				
Comment:					
Understanding of your individual role and responsibilities					
Comment:					
Integration of emergency response and crisis management					
Comment:					
Acquire information, make assessments and develop action plan					
Comment:					
Integration between company and authorities					
Comment:					
Overall value of the simulation					
Comment:					

continued ...

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Please use the following to list the TWO most successful aspects of the exercise for you and the TWO areas where you felt improvements could be made. General comments would also be welcome.
Most successful aspects:
One
Two
Areas for Improvement:
One
Two
OTHER COMMENTS:
<i>NOTE: Any comments made may be included or consolidated in the overall Exercise Evaluation Report but these WILL NOT be attributed to individuals.</i>

Participants feedback

The table below provides an **average** of the scores (maximum score of 4), together with all the comments received from the participants (a total of 16 forms received), showing that the overall satisfaction ranged between good and very good:

Q1. Establish, equip and staff emergency response centre	3.1
Q2. Understanding of your individual role and responsibilities	3.6
Q3. Integration of emergency response and crisis management	3.1
Q4. Acquire information, make assessments and develop action plan	3.2
Q5. Integration between company and authorities	2.9
Q6. Overall value of the simulation	3.3

Most successful aspects

1. The use of equipment was superb.
2. Maritime and air ops took place with absolute security.
3. The live phase aboard patrol ship Barracuda.
4. Field exercise on the beach.
5. Equipment deployment was excellent.
6. Participation of different entities and performance according to their roles in the plan is commendable.
7. Equipment and technicians were excellent.
8. The center was setup and well equipped.
9. There was proper planning.
10. There was great simulation which was well deployed and displayed.
11. There was proper use of PPE's and deployment of equipment at sea and on land.
12. The multi-agency among the police was commendable and they made the exercise run smoothly.
13. The staff had done what was expected to do.
14. Well briefed.
15. Good coordination from the team leaders.
16. Teamwork and multi-agency.
17. Diversification of roles.
18. Seamless flow of info from all components nationally & regionally.
19. Inter-agency collaboration and coordination in the national laws.
20. Proper and cooperative leadership. The coordinators knew how to manage their respective team members without stepping on each other's shoes.

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21. Will power and rapid acquirement of knowledge to apply knowledge of tactics, sharing of info when and where necessary.
22. Sharing of info was quick.
23. Teamwork.
24. Joint collaborative efforts.
25. No duplicity of efforts.
26. The FTX help us to evaluate not only the way to handle the operations but also to evaluate how our officers on site are responding accordingly.
27. Coordination amongst stakeholders, ministries, and putting heads together, looking for solutions and ready to amend strategies as and when required.
28. Command and control, guiding others to achieve what is estimated to be invaluable.
29. Deployment of equipment was successful.
30. Anticipation by protecting sensitive area and sacrifice debris area for collecting the spillage and cleaning it up.
31. My impression of the training it was positive because the coordination of working groups and all involved parties so that an incident response takes place. I think that communication on this process is very important.
32. Good equipment.

Areas for Improvement

1. Define the conditions under which dispersant use is effective.
2. Involve scientists in the field of accidental marine pollution in this type of exercise.
3. Dispersant spraying needs to be done by airplane for efficiency.
4. Zoning on shore was not well clear.
5. Improve on timely booming and recovery of the spilt fuel as there was delay in the same.
6. Information was guarded and observers were not aware on who was the on-scene command and other roles.
7. Establish a national centre for coordination of activities.
8. Use of equipment -proper equipment during the exercise. Do not reserve the best.
9. The planning section should be more accommodating especially for the GIS team at the NDRRMC.
10. The internet should be fast to ensure maximum efficiency at the NDRRMC.
11. NEOC to take overall command.
12. SeaVision and IORIS was only manned by NCG. Must have another platform (read only) for other stakeholders to follow.
13. Regional assistance and external aid.

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14. Use of artificial intelligence (AI).
15. Pool of equipment-have an urgent regional storage/centralised at a specific country. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Newly inducted staff to be provided capacity building. Significant progress required in integration of emergency response and crisis management. More working sessions required. An updated contact list/review of contact persons/emails is a prerequisite.
16. Access (view only) to IORIS platform as it was difficult to view any progress on the situation on the screen which keep on changing. We can easily miss important info displayed.
17. Wi-fi access to all stakeholders present at NDRRMC as to facilitate communication with their direct office.
18. More aerial support in simulation exercise involving some NGO's, volunteers from the region itself and so on.
19. Deployment of dispersant onboard CGS Barracuda failure.
20. Delay of booming equipment.

Other comments:

1. Carry out all the different techniques to combat oil spills; on site burning; the use of dispersant products and the containment/recovery of pollutants at sea.
2. Congratulations for a successful exercise.
3. The exercise was a success. Thumbs up to Mauritius.
4. The list of available equipment is kept thus it was possible to quickly act.
5. The individuals were well equipped with PPFs and well involved of their roles and responsibilities.
6. There was coordination but it can be improved, which is one of the reasons the exercise was done.
7. The response was quick. Small delays here and there but it was adequate.
8. There was very good integration between stakeholders, both private and government.
9. It was a good exercise, well planned and executed.
10. Improved response on pollution matters.
11. Well organized exercise from all teams.
12. This being a simulation is not really possible to evaluate integration between company and authorities only assuming how it would work.
13. Further communications and follow-up should be done to ensure that the status of the participating countries of TTX and FTX improve over the years, else nothing will become better. Funding for equipment and capacity building is crucial.

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14. Good communication by all teams. We have our own SOP's and are well conversant.
Well integrated. Good relationship.
15. Well designed and good in testing our capabilities.
16. Good exercise.
17. For future (ops) exercises, salvage scenarios can be considered.
18. Media and volunteer handling not covered adequately.
19. As a first of its kind in our region, it has provided the foundation for future integration.
20. In general, MASEPOLREX23 was successful, of course improvement is needed. We are still learning and will grow smarter through this type of exercises.
21. Very well try, doing things with what you have in hands, big congratulations to the NOSCC, of course improvement is needed.
22. Capability of booming deployment.
23. These regional exercises initiatives in the context of preparing the response to hydrocarbon spills are to be welcomed as contingency plans require implementation and operationalization and to be improved whenever necessary.

MASEPOLREX23 Photo and videos gallery



ECG and observers at the IOC premises on 26th September 2023 during the end-of-day debrief



IMT at the NDRRMC on 26th September 2023 where IORIS is shown displaying the scenario injects developed by the ECG

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Strategic meeting chaired by the DoE and co-chaired by DoS at the NDRRMC on 26th September 2023



IMT at the NDRRMC on 26th September 2023 with the planning and operations sections in the forefront

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Deployment of offshore boom from CGS Barracuda on 27th September 2023. A support vessel (left) and CGS Valiant (right) as seen during the exercise



Deployment of offshore boom off the side of CGS Barracuda on 27th September 2023



Decontamination areas set up during the shoreline deployment exercise on 28th September



Boom deployed during the shoreline deployment exercise on 28th September in Black River



Preparation of equipment during the shoreline deployment exercise on 28th September 2023