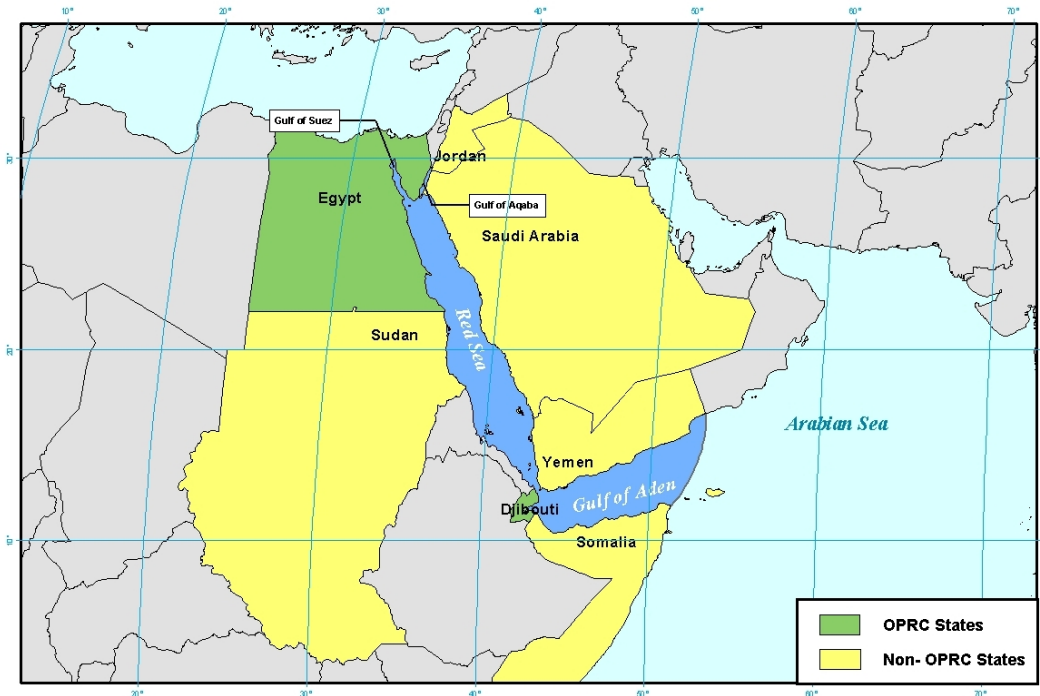


RED SEA & GULF OF ADEN



The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region includes the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, and comprises the states of Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The countries within this region hold some of the world's largest oil and gas reserves and export potential.

The waters of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden constitute a unique ecosystem with high biological diversity. In particular, they host an extensive system of coral reefs and their associated animals and plants. Surrounded by arid terrestrial environments, the reefs support rich biological communities and representatives of several endangered species. There are also mangroves, seagrass beds, salt marshes and salt pans in the region. Fishing and an ever growing tourism industry are important to the economy of this area.

THE RISK OF OIL SPILLS

The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden form an important transport route between Europe and the Far East, particularly for the carriage of oil and commodities. Although approximately 11% of the world's seaborne oil is transported through the region, there have been no major spills (>5,000 tonnes) resulting from shipping accidents. Most spills in this region have been the result of operational discharges, equipment failures and groundings.

Despite the low occurrence of major accidents within the region, the high volume of shipping results in chronic pollution in the form of tarballs arriving on the shorelines. Studies of water quality suggest that the Red Sea environment receives more oil per square kilometre than any other regional sea. The coast of Saudi Arabia between Jeddah and Yemen is heavily tarred in places. The Egyptian coast near the offshore oil fields of the Gulf of Suez is similarly affected by oil discharges. Increasing levels of dredging, construction and industrial waste associated with coastal development, are also creating threats to the marine environment.

In terms of navigation there are some potentially hazardous areas within the region. The strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is well defined and marked with an established traffic separation scheme. Numerous offshore platforms in the Gulf of Suez pose a danger to navigation, as do a number of coral reef systems in the Strait of Tirana at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, where many ships have grounded in the past.



RED SEA & GULF OF ADEN

THE STATE OF PREPAREDNESS

Developments and improvement in the state of preparedness and response capabilities in the region have been slow, but in recent years there has been progress towards improved regional co-operation.

The Jeddah Convention of 1982, formally titled "Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment," provides an important basis for environmental cooperation in the Region. It was the result of a Regional Intergovernmental Conference, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Regional Intergovernmental Conference also adopted a "Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERGSA)." PERGSA is an intergovernmental body dedicated to the conservation of the coastal and marine environments. Its daily affairs are managed by a secretariat run by a team of professionals recruited from various countries in the region. All countries in the region are currently party to the Jeddah Convention and members of PERGSA.

In addition to regional agreements and conventions a number of initiatives have been developed that aim to promote and encourage cooperation and mutual assistance. These initiatives include, for example, a regional oil spill contingency plan between Israel, Egypt and Jordan ensuring cooperation and assistance for oil spills within the Gulf of Aqaba.

Efforts are also being made to protect the marine environment under the World Bank funded Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, which aims to improve coastal and marine environments by reducing navigational risks and preventing and controlling marine pollution in a regional context. The countries of Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen have established marine protected areas consistent with the aims of the SAP for promoting awareness of the sensitivities of the marine environment.

Progress with regard to implementation of international conventions over the past decade has been relatively slow. As at October 2003, only two of the seven countries have ratified MARPOL 73/78 and OPRC 90. Two states are party to the CLC 92. Despite the limited oil imports and high risk of pollution damage within the region, only Djibouti has ratified Fund 92 to date.

The knowledge of national contingency planning within the region is limited. However, it is understood that most of the states have some form of contingency planning arrangements in place. The extent of implementation varies from government plans to national oil company plans, draft plans awaiting approval and co-operative plans involving more than one country. Generally the industry plans are exercised regularly.

Improvements in preparedness and response capabilities may be expected with recent initiatives by PERGSA and ROPME (the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, which comprises Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) in promoting greater co-operation between the countries of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and those of the Gulf.

In addition to regional initiatives, the Petroleum Association of Japan has a significant stockpile located in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates and another in Saudi Arabia. This non-profit, trade association has a number of stockpiles strategically located along the tanker route from the Middle East to Japan. The equipment is available free of charge to anyone in need of assistance, subject to the equipment being returned clean and any damaged items repaired or replaced.



RED SEA & GULF OF ADEN

STATUS OF CONTINGENCY PLANS, TIERED RESOURCES AND CONVENTIONS

	Competent National Authority	National Plan	Clean-up Resources		Subregional Agreement	MARPOL	OPRC '90	LLMC '76	CLC '69 CLC '92	FUND '92	Inter-vention '69/'73
			Tier 1	Tier 2							
Djibouti	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		'92	'92	'69
Egypt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	'92		'73
Jordan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		Yes				
Saudi Arabia	Yes	1991	Yes	Yes	Yes				'69		
Somalia	?	?	?	No	Yes						
Sudan	Yes		No	No	Yes						
Yemen	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes			Yes	'69		'73

Date of issue: October 2003
Conventions Updated: May 2004

Terms & Conditions

These Regional Profiles are provided in good faith as a guide only and are based on information obtained from a variety of sources over a period of time. This information is subject to change and should, in each case, be independently verified before reliance is placed on it. Regional Profiles may have been re-issued solely to incorporate additional or revised information under one heading only. Each Profile has therefore not necessarily been completely verified or updated as at the stated Date of Issue.

The International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited ("ITOPF") hereby excludes, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, any and all liability to any person, corporation or other entity for any loss, damage or expense resulting from reliance on or use of these Regional Profiles.

©The International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF) 2003.

These Regional Profiles may be reproduced by any means for non-commercial distribution without addition, deletion or amendment, provided an acknowledgement of the source is given and these Terms & Conditions are reproduced in full.

These Regional Profiles may not be reproduced without the prior written permission of ITOPF either for commercial distribution or with addition, deletion or amendment.