

## UKOPA Update 01/01

### Draft Article for Pipes & Pipelines International

The UK Onshore Pipeline Operator's Association, formed as an industry liaison and influencing forum in November 1996, became an independent, self financed organisation (UKOPA Ltd) in August 2000. The current Chairman, Ted Findlay, bp, stated that UKOPA has defined 3 membership categories:

- i) Full - responsible for management and strategy
- ii) Associate - full participation in current activities
- iii) Affiliate - access to information

In addition, invited (non-paying) memberships include HSE, with whom open discussions and exchange of views are essential, and PIG, with whom technical co-ordination is a priority.

The aims of the Association include co-ordinating the influencing of developing legislation, and setting the strategic direction on matters of common interest to pipeline operators, including

- i) testing of pipeline emergency plans
- ii) land use planning
- iii) fitness for purpose and revalidation
- iv) safety and safe working practices
- v) competency of operational staff

The transition in status from a liaison forum to an independent organisation achieves UKOPA's original aspiration to obtain recognition as an authoritative industry voice on issues key to the pipeline operators interests. This aspiration has been met through specific areas of work progressed by the Association:

#### 1) Risk Assessment Work Group

A key project formulated by the Risk Assessment Work Group, chaired by Rod McConnell, is the collation of all pipeline leak and damage data into a common database, so that pipeline risk assessments can be based on failure frequencies characterised by UK conditions. This project is being sponsored by Transco, Shell, Huntsman ICI and bp as a UKOPA initiative. The project is managed by a steering group, which is also chaired by Rod. Advantica Technologies Ltd (previously BG Technology) were selected to compile and manage the database as directed by the Steering Group. The project is being carried out in two phases, the first phase, which is now complete, involved the collation of leak and damage data for Major Accident Hazard Pipelines, the second phase involves the using the damage data to predict pipeline failure frequencies. The results of the first phase were presented at the UKOPA Pipeline Fault Database Seminar held on 30<sup>th</sup> November at Runcorn. The seminar was attended by representatives from pipeline operating companies, HSE and a range of industry experts and consultants currently active in the fields of asset management, damage assessment, failure prediction and risk analysis.

Rod McConnell stated that the discussion at and feedback from the seminar confirmed significant support for the UKOPA initiative, as well as significant interest in wider access to the database. Rod confirmed that UKOPA is keen that the database is widely used, and is considering how this can be achieved.

#### 2) Emergency Planning Work Group

Chairman Jane Haswell explained that this Work Group was formed to represent the common interests of pipeline operators in the proposed amendments to the Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996, which will, if enacted, introduce an emergency plan testing

regime which will be charged to pipeline operators. On behalf of this Work Group, Transco, represented by Paul Williams, organised and facilitated a pilot test exercise in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of desk-top testing, and to show that a single test could provide results for more than one pipeline, pipeline operator and plan within a defined geographic area. Following the exercise, the Emergency Planning Work Group worked with other stakeholders to define 'principles of agreement', which confirmed that desk top testing was considered to meet PSR requirements, one test would cover all pipelines covered by the plan, and that the test should be restricted to pipeline specific issues only. Paul stated that the pilot test had proved to be a major step in bringing together key stakeholders. He emphasised the intent to achieve common stakeholder understanding, and the need to concentrate on pipeline specific issues.

### 3) UK One Call System

UKOPA is committed to the development of an integrated One Call System for excavation in the UK, as this is considered to be the most effect means of improving safety by reducing the risk of damage uncertainty relating to interference damage to pipelines by third party work. UKOPA members initiated and continue to support the Cheshire Pipeline One Call System. There is also active participation in the NJUG Exchange of Records Trial to link into the utilities planning processes.

UKOPA members will participate in the work of the All-Party Working Group chaired by Sir John Cullen, under the auspices of the Pipelines Industries Guild, recognising that in addition to pipeline operators, other key groups that need to be involved include power and communications facility operators as well as contractors and other groups involved in excavation work.

### 4) Competency and Training

Through the work of the Competency Assessment and Training Work Group, UKOPA aims to produce guidelines for competency assessment which are applicable to both large and small operators. Work to specify the competency needed to undertake key pipeline operation tasks has been completed. The Work Group has reviewed and where possible used, competency models and assessment frameworks developed by individual companies, and has maintained a close interest in the occupational standards work being undertaken by GINTO (Gas Industry National Training Board). Chairman Ken Curtis, stated that while existing diverse views and opinions are recognised, UKOPA considers that a practical guidelines applicable across a range of responsibilities are essential, and in compiling these guidelines, the Work Group is keen to receive input from any interested party.

UKOPA meets and corresponds regularly. It is planning to extend its influence and contacts through e-communications ie through a maintained website which will provide details of current membership, working group activities and contacts, and the results of completed work, such as the UK leak database.

Ted Findlay commented that UKOPA will continue to develop its profile and status as an independent and authoritative industry body through active involvement in current issues and the sharing of current knowledge and experience.

For further information please contact The Secretary, UKOPA, Pipelines Maintenance Centre, Ripley Road, Ambergate, Derbyshire.