

## **Towards common spill response standards**

Following the headline merger and acquisition activity amongst the oil majors in the 1990s, consolidation is percolating down through the oil transport supply chain. Two purchases by Lamor Corporation AB over the past 12 months has propelled the Finnish company to the top spot amongst the ranks of oil spill equipment producers. The acquisition of Lori Products brought Lamor a number of important patents relating to the stiff brush skimmer technology, while GT Pollution Technology Ltd, a UK manufacturer of skimmers and pumps for the oil recovery industry, has enhanced the company's sales and support network and its technological resources.

"The two acquisitions have helped Lamor face up to what we believe is the greatest challenge facing the oil spill responders - creating an industry-wide ability to respond effectively and in a coordinated manner to large-scale marine spills," points out Bent Larsen, Lamor president.

"Our industry still finds it difficult to coordinate broad responses to significant incidents. There is little or no interconnectivity in terms of the various types of equipment available while the different response organisations all appear to take different approaches to mobilising gear when fighting a spill. Also, the fact that there is no standard governing equipment manufacture makes it difficult for different responders to work together to combat large spills.

"We believe that it is possible to develop and apply standards for oil spill combat equipment and that, once applied, they would yield important benefits in the coordination of spill response by numerous agencies in the event of major spills," continues Bent Larsen. "Lamor would like to be at the forefront of such an initiative, and we are currently looking at different ways in which this goal can be achieved."

One of the drivers for this initiative is the sinking of the tanker Prestige off the coast of Spain in November 2002, an incident which galvanised public opinion and caused environmental authorities to call for better means of protecting the environment from similar disasters. Lamor was one of the first companies to respond to calls for assistance from the Spanish environmental authorities following the Prestige disaster, delivering equipment to La Coruna in Spain on November 19, just 24 hours after being contacted.

In recent years Lamor has become increasingly involved in response-related projects centred on building and improving preparedness for oil spill recovery in ports and harbours, a development reflecting a growing customer requirement for full service packages rather than simply the provision of spill equipment, as in the past.

Following the spillage of 300 tonnes of heavy bunker oil from the Maltese-flag tanker Alambra in the Estonian port of Muuga in September 2000, for which Lamor provided oil booms, a high capacity skimmer and advice, the Muuga port authority issued an international tender.

Lamor teamed up with a competing oil spill recovery equipment producer - the Danish company Ro-Clean-Desmi - to develop a comprehensive spill response proposal for the port. The collaboration proved to be successful and the two companies were awarded the contract. In the same Baltic Sea region, where the oil export potential is growing rapidly, Lamor has also recently developed response preparedness plans for the Russian ports of Visotsk and Primorsk.