

## International Regulators Forum Culture of Safety Study

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The International Regulators Forum (IRF) continues to share interest in improvements related to the evaluation of the existence of a culture of safety within industry and individual operators. A culture of safety research project was initiated to contribute to this area of importance.

At the 2010 Vancouver International Regulators Forum (IRF), *safety culture and leadership* was mentioned as one of five topics the IRF would focus on in the future. Dr. Mark Fleming, CN Professor of Safety Culture at St. Mary's University, organised a safety culture workshop at the Perth IRF Conference in 2013. Safety culture means “the attitudes, values, norms and beliefs, which a particular group of people shares with respect to risk and safety”<sup>1</sup>.

In late 2015, the International Regulators Forum established a working group to explore the regulatory use of safety culture indicators. The work group proposed that a study be conducted, which would leverage an existing suite of indicators that were developed by the North American Regulators Working Group on Safety Culture. The overarching goal was to identify key cultural elements/indicators that impact process safety performance and contribute to major hazard incidents.

During the research study, the safety culture indicators were evaluated to determine their validity and usability. Additionally, the study identified a smaller subset of indicators (using the validity and usability ratings) which might be piloted in the future.

The study results show that the suite of indicators received positive ratings regarding face validity (provided by association evaluation) and positive ratings of construct validity (provided by subject matter expert evaluation). It was also determined that in order to effectively collect evidence associated with these indicators, additional assessment methodologies would need to be developed and tested.

IRF members have agreed to conduct an industry-regulator workshop at the 2018 offshore safety conference, Safety 30, in Aberdeen, Scotland, UK. The workshop will further explore safety culture assessment and the practical path forward as industry and regulators seek to improve safety and environmental protection through cultural transformation. **For more details about the study, please see the study report ([click here](#))**

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of any other IRF member.

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<sup>1</sup> Mearns, K., Flin, R., Gordon, R. & Fleming, M. (1998). *Measuring safety culture in the offshore oil industry*. Work and Stress, 12(3), 238-254. “Safety” includes safety of workers and the public, process safety, operational safety, facility integrity, security and environmental protection.