



**The main causes of hydrocarbon contamination in the sea are of anthropogenic nature. They are often connected to incidents occurred to oil ships or extraction platforms. In addition there are also natural events, such as fractures in the subsoil, that can cause oil spills in the sea.**

The consequences of a spill are always devastating for the marine habitat, in fact the alien layer formed blocks the natural physical and chemical exchanges between the sea and the atmosphere.

The potential danger of a spills and the high vulnerability of the Mediterranean marine environment led Italy to define the planning policies about the sea reclaim from harsh hydrocarbon contamination. They are based on the following main principles:

- Regulated procedures about the suitability/employability of products to be used in the sea, with a very rigorous assessment about the potential impacts on the marine environment;
- Requirement to use absorbent products primarily;
- Regulation about the use of dispersants products (exceptional use only) must be approved by the Antipollution Operations Centre of the Italian Ministry of the Environment.

The attention to the selection of products to be used in reclaim works is clear, with a preference for the absorbent products instead of the dispersants ones.

The 31 March 2009 and 13 March 2013 Decrees give **the updated list of the absorbent product that can be used in the sea.**