



**NATIONAL MARITIME
SEARCH AND RESCUE BOARD**

NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN - 2022

**A Publication by
National Maritime Search and Rescue Board**

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PREFACE

I am pleased to promulgate the third edition of the National Maritime Search and Rescue Plan 2022, which was first promulgated in 2003.

The purpose of SAR plan is to facilitate the development of integrated and coordinated maritime approach within Indian SRR amongst the stakeholders/ resource agencies. The plan provides guidelines for inter-agency cooperation and is appropriately supplemented by the NMSAR Manual 2020, which is an integral subset of the larger maritime search and rescue system.

This edition of NMSAR Plan-2022 is consistent with the relevant International SAR and safety instruments to which India is a party and entails various advancements and alterations in M-SAR set up since 2013, which also includes the additions of new NMSARB members. Board members/ resource agencies are welcome to suggest any improvements that could be incorporated in the next edition of the Plan.

This third edition of the NMSAR Plan-2022 shall be effective from the 18th day of November 2022 and replaces the NMSAR Plan-2013.

(VS Pathania)
Director General Indian Coast Guard
Chairman National Maritime Search and Rescue Board

New Delhi

NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN - 2022

Policy

1. It is the policy of the signatory agencies to the International Maritime SAR Convention, 1979 to provide a national plan for coordinating Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR) services to meet the national needs as well as regional and international commitments. Guidance for implementing this plan is amplified in the National Maritime Search and Rescue (NMSAR) manual, International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual and other relevant directives of the agencies to this plan.

Purpose

2. This plan construes by inter-agency agreement, the effective use of all available resources and facilities to assist persons and property in potential or actual distress at sea within the Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR) regardless of the nationality or circumstances in which that person is found.

Terms and Definitions

3. Following are the terms and definitions based on International Maritime Organization usage for M-SAR :-

- (a) **SAR Coordinator**. A person or agency with overall responsibility for establishing and providing SAR services within the SRR and ensuring that planning for those services is properly co-ordinated for which India is obliged under Maritime SAR Convention, 1979.
- (b) **Search and Rescue Region (SRR)**. An area of defined dimensions recognized by International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) or other cognizant international body and associated with a Rescue Co-ordination Centre, within which SAR services are provided.
- (c) **Search and Rescue Sub-Region (SRS)**. A specified area within a SRR associated with a rescue sub-centre.
- (d) **SAR Services**. The performance of distress monitoring, communication, coordination and SAR functions, including provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources including co-operating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations.
- (e) **Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC)**. A unit responsible for promoting efficient organisation of SAR services at sea and coordinating the conduct of M-SAR operations within a SRR.

- (f) **Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC)**. A unit subordinate to a MRCC established to complement the latter according to particular provisions of the responsible authorities.
- (g) **Search and Rescue Unit (SRU)**. A unit composed of trained personnel and provided with equipment suitable for the expeditious conduct of SAR operations.
- (h) **On-scene Co-ordinator (OSC)**. A person designated to co-ordinate SAR operations within a specified area.
- (j) **SAR Mission Co-ordinator (SMC)**. An official temporarily assigned to co-ordinate response to an actual or apparent distress situation.
- (k) **Search and Rescue Point of Contact (SPOC)**. Rescue Co-ordination Centres and other established and recognized national points of contact which can accept responsibility to receive COSPAS-SARSAT alert data to enable rescue of persons in distress.
- (l) **Mission Control Centre (MCC)**. Part of the COSPAS-SARSAT System that accepts alert messages from the local user terminal(s) and other mission control centres to distribute to the appropriate Rescue Co-ordination Centres or other SAR points of contact (SPOC).
- (m) **Search and Rescue Data Provider (SDP)**. A source for a Rescue Co-ordination Centre to contact for obtaining data to support SAR operations, including emergency information from communications equipment registration databases, ship reporting systems and environmental data systems (e.g. weather or sea current).

Objectives

4. Having known the obligations under several international conventions, agreements and instruments to render assistance to persons in distress at sea and to the establishment of effective SAR services, the participating agencies to this plan recognise the need for co-operation and co-ordination of activities regarding safety on and over the sea and desire to :-
 - (a) Provide a national plan for co-ordinating SAR services, effective use of all available resources, mutual assistance and efforts to improve such co-operation and services for greater protection of life and property with economy of effort.
 - (b) Support in implementing the provisions of International Maritime SAR Convention, 1979 of IMO and other conventions to which India is or may become a party.

Scope

5. This plan is solely intended to provide internal guidance to all signatory agencies. No provisions of this plan or any supporting plan are to be construed in any way to contravene responsibilities and authorities of any participant as defined by statute, executive orders or international agreements or of established responsibilities of other agencies and organisations, which regularly assist persons and property in distress resulting from incidents. The participating agencies by signing this National Maritime SAR Plan, are obliged to fully extend all possible support and co-operation for effective conduct of SAR operations at sea.

Participating Agencies

6. The participating agencies to this plan are:-

(a) **Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways**. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways encompasses within its fold ports, shipping and waterways sectors, and has been entrusted with the responsibility to formulate policies and programmes on these subjects and their implementation. The Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) is an attached office of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India, and deals with all executive matters, relating to merchant shipping which includes implementation of shipping policy and legislation so as to ensure the safety of life and ships at sea, prevention of marine pollution, promotion of maritime education and training, in co-ordination with the International Maritime Organization. The DGS being the Indian Maritime Administrator is responsible for taking preventive measures for reducing shipping casualties. There are numerous steps taken in this regard, and one of the key step is the effective implementation of the maritime policies, as these act as a safeguard and plays a key role towards prevention of shipping casualties. Further, shipping casualties are investigated as per the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.

(b) **Indian Coast Guard**. Indian Coast Guard has been designated as the national coordinator for the conduct of maritime SAR operations on and over the sea areas of the Indian SRR. Towards this, the Indian Coast Guard develops, establishes, maintains and operates SAR facilities for maritime SAR operations. The operation is coordinated through Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCCs) and Maritime Rescue Sub Centres (MRSCs) located in coastal states/ UT of India.

(c) **Indian Navy**. Indian Navy has facilities and resources that are used to support their own operations. These facilities may be used for M-SAR needs on a 'not-to-interfere' basis with military missions.

- (d) **Indian Air Force.** Indian Air Force has SAR facilities for their own operations over land and sea. These facilities may be used for M-SAR needs on a 'not-to-interfere' basis with military missions.
- (e) **Shipping Industry.** Shipping industry operates a fleet of merchant ships for national use and promotes a safe merchant marine, which should assist and support when called upon in maritime SAR operations in accordance with the national and international conventions and provisions.
- (f) **Airports Authority of India.** Airports Authority of India has following functions:-
- (i) **ANS Providers.** Undertakes air traffic control, maintains flight service facilities and shall provide information to assist in M-SAR operations.
 - (ii) **Airport Operators.** Undertake flight service facilities and shall provide information to assist in M-SAR operations within their area of jurisdiction.
- (g) **Meteorological Department.** Meteorological Department shall support M-SAR operations through timely input of weather messages, marine environment forecasts, warnings for the coastal and high seas and provide weather information on demand to co-ordinator and coordinating agency.
- (h) **Department of Space (DoS).** Department of Space (DoS) shall provide satellite "alert" services as per the guidelines of COSPAS-SARSAT for detection and location of aircraft, ships and individuals in potential distress situation that carry recommended distress beacons. DoS also maintains Beacon registration data base, through web based access, containing unique identity of the Beacon, vessel/aircraft type, owner and emergency contact details as provided by the users and also distributes the same to concerned rescue co-ordination centre for SAR mission planning.
- (j) **Chief Hydrographer.** Chief Hydrographer to Govt of India shall assist the maritime SAR agencies by timely promulgation of navigational warnings through NAVAREA and other measures.
- (k) **Customs and Excise.** Customs and Excise provide rescue facility assistance, and equipment clearance during M-SAR operation involving foreign crew/ passengers.
- (l) **Major Ports/ Non- Major Ports/ Private Ports.** Major Ports provide rescue facility assistance to the SAR agencies during SAR operations occurring near ports and offshore areas. The major ports shall also provide berthing, towing, tug assistance to SAR agencies, when requested. In addition, major

ports shall also provide medical evaluation and initial medical assistance to the survivor brought to the respective ports post rescue. Further, non-major and private ports may also have the facilities to provide initial medical assistance to the survivor to the extent feasible.

(m) **Department of Telecommunication (DoT)**. Department of Telecommunication (DoT) on advice from the coordinating agency, promulgates rules and regulations for non-government use of wireless and radio facilities for promoting safety of life and property and co-operation in SAR operations by relaying inputs obtained from Coast Radio Stations.

(n) **Coastal State Government**. Coastal State Government shall provide assets, emergency medical and other facilities that would contribute to the effective SAR operations when requested by the coordinating agencies.

(p) **Fishing Community**. Fishing Community representing fisher-folk and operating around coasts shall provide assets to the coordinating agencies, when requested to augment SAR effort.

(q) **Sailing Vessel Operators**. Sailing vessels operating around coasts for commercial purposes shall provide assistance to the coordinating agencies, when requested to augment SAR effort.

(r) **Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**. Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is to provide an updated list of civil aircraft registered in India, coordinate flexible use of Air Space by civil and military air traffic and issue air safety notices during a particular SAR operation involving various air units. Ministry of Civil aviation shall also provide details of helicopter and sea planes available with various agencies in coastal zones for inclusion as SAR resources during an operation.

(s) **Bureau of Immigration**. Bureau of Immigration to provide rescue facility by expediting immigration clearance during SAR operation involving foreign crew/ passengers and also provide Regional and Foreign Language Experts whenever requisitioned by SAR agencies.

(t) **Oil Exploration Agencies**. Oil Exploration agencies (Government, PSUs and Private) to provide offshore Supply Vessels, Tugs, Helicopters, extend helipad of oil platforms/drill ships, medical facility whenever requisitioned by SAR agencies.

(u) **Airlines**. Airlines (Government, PSUs and Private) are to extend facilities to M-SAR agencies whenever requisitioned. The airlines to provide passenger list of the aircraft in distress at sea and diversion of other aircraft, if feasible, to locate vessel/aircraft in distress.

- (v) **Marine Police/Coastal Security Police (CSP)**. Marine Police/ Coastal Security Police (CSP) shall provide boats and other assistance to the coordinating agencies, when requested to augment SAR effort.
- (w) **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science and Technology (CSIR-NIO)**. The CSIR-NIO being the reputed institution for oceanographic research shall provide real time wave data collection along the Indian coastline.
- (x) **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**. Department of Fisheries shall arrange fishing boats to assist during SAR operations and provide necessary support until arrival of designated SRU through State Fisheries Department. Life saving training shall be instituted in each coastal State/ UT.
- (y) **INCOIS**. The Indian National Centre for Ocean Search Information Service, under the Ministry of Earth Science, shall provide ocean information parameter to MRCC/MRSC and also maintain special software for establishing search area which would contribute to the effective SAR operation when requested by MRCC/MRSC and other agencies as required.

Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR)

7. SRR is established by a country solely to ensure the primary responsibility for coordinating or providing effective SAR services, communication network and routing of distress alerts to MRCC responsible for that geographic area. SRR should, as far as possible, be contiguous and should not overlap.
8. India's maritime and aeronautical SRR will be harmonised with each other to the extent practicable, recognising that the lines separating SRR must be agreed by the countries having neighbouring SRRs. The delimitation of SRR is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any maritime boundary between neighbouring countries. The Indian SRR limits need to be resolved with the neighbouring countries for publishing in the documents of the IMO and ICAO.
9. Maritime SRR may be sub-divided into sub-regions as long as delimitation coincides with relevant SRR limits. Where this is not practicable, changes to the international limits should be taken up with the appropriate international organisation through proper channel by the M-SAR Co-ordinator.
10. Each SRR is to be associated with a MRCC. The MRCC is responsible for coordinating the conduct of SAR operations within a SRR. The standards and guidance for the MRCCs has been developed by the IMO and can be found in international conventions and IAMSAR manual. They are to be kept in the MRCCs for reference.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Primary Responsibility

11. SAR coordinator is responsible for arranging SAR services and establishing the MRCCs within the SRR. The system established should meet International standards and to facilitate integration into the global M-SAR system support outside ISRR.
12. SAR co-ordinator may support M-SAR operations outside the Indian SRR when requested, consistent with the expertise, capabilities and legal authority. This is in keeping with India's concern for safety of life at sea and the humanitarian nature of SAR and the advantages of national and international co-operation.
13. The Rescue Co-ordination Centre compatible with their capabilities and expertise will support M-SAR operations in the neighbouring States territorial and international waters beyond Indian SRR when requested, in accordance with the international laws. In such cases, SAR operations shall, as far as practicable, be co-ordinated by the MRCC which has authorised entry, or such other authority designated by the State concerned.
14. In carrying out Maritime SAR support functions with other nations such as training, exercises and liaison, each Participant will co-ordinate its activities with other Participants having M-SAR expertise with respect to the support concerned.
15. While it is appropriate that the Participants have the authority to do so, to co-operate and maintain liaison with M-SAR authorities of other nations, such support should be dealt in co-ordination with the M-SAR Co-ordinator and neighbouring SAR authorities. Such co-ordination will normally include Indian Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi, to ensure consistency with India's obligations under international agreements to which India is a Party, in compliance with the IAMSAR Manual and other relevant international guidance relevant to implementing such agreements.
16. Participants should not accept SAR Coordinator or MRCC role for M-SAR operations of SRRs for which other nations are responsible. However, the Participants may provide and support M-SAR operations in such areas when :-
 - (a) Assistance is requested (normally this should be in accordance with MRCC to MRCC procedures prescribed in the IAMSAR Manual).
 - (b) Indian citizens are involved or Indian facilities become aware of a distress situation to which no other suitable facilities are responding, or where other available SAR services appear to be inadequate.

17. When assisting M-SAR authorities of other nations, or agencies or organisations supporting these authorities, Participants to this Plan should ensure that :-

- (a) Have expertise to do so.
- (b) Provisions of conventions or agreements to which India is Party are not violated.
- (c) Relevant procedures set forth in the IAMSAR manual, National Maritime SAR manual and other relevant directives are known and complied.
- (d) Such efforts are carried out in consultation with Participants to this Plan.

18. Policies on rendering assistance in neighbouring States' territorial waters must have the objective of balancing concerns for saving Lives, for sovereignty, and for national security. Provisions for territorial entry should be addressed in international SAR agreements as discussed below and care should be taken to ensure that such agreements are compatible with the national policies.

19. Participants to this Plan, if addressing M-SAR-related inquiries or proposals from other nations or organisations outside India, or when hosting or attending international meetings on M-SAR, care should be taken that interested Indian agencies, organisations or persons are consulted and involved as appropriate.

Maritime SAR Agreements

20. Bilateral or multilateral SAR agreements with other Participating agencies or organisations or with authorities of other nations are of practical value to improve or simplify M-SAR operations and beneficial for purposes including :-

- (a) Helping to fulfill national or international obligations and needs.
- (b) Enabling more effective use of all available national resources.
- (c) Integration of Indian M-SAR services with the global SAR system.
- (d) Identifying types of co-operative matters and efforts to build commitments that may enhance or support M-SAR operations, such as access to medical or fuelling facilities; training and exercises; meetings; information exchanges and use of communications capabilities.

21. Negotiation and conclusion of such agreements should consider :-

- (a) Which authorities of the governments, agencies or organisations concerned are the appropriate ones to have a formal agreement with.

- (b) Which types of SAR operations (e.g., aeronautical, maritime) or SAR support functions should be included within the scope of the agreement.
- (c) Congenial with international and national M-SAR policies.
- (d) Establishment of lines separating SRRs, if relevant.
- (e) Whether other treaties, agreements, etc. exist which should be superseded or included for preparation of a new agreement.
- (f) Relevant guidance of the IAMSAR manual and National Maritime SAR manual.

22. Any such international agreement may not be signed or concluded without prior consultation with the Chairman, National Maritime SAR Board/ MoPS&W.

National Maritime Search and Rescue Board

23. The National Maritime Search and Rescue Board (NMSARB) is the patron of this Plan. The Board, consistent with applicable laws and executive orders is to :-

- (a) Formulate and promulgate National Maritime SAR Plan.
- (b) Co-ordinate measures to be adopted by Participating agencies and formulate contingency plan.
- (c) Review and update matters relating to the Plan affecting more than one Participant, including recommendations for Plan revision or amendment.
- (d) Define functions to be performed by participating agencies.
- (e) Attending to matters relating to M-SAR as per IMO requirements in consultation with Ministry of Shipping.

24. The Board in particular, is intended to accomplish the following :-

- (a) Oversee this Plan, develop and maintain National Maritime SAR Manual. The applicability of the rules for SAR for defence forces should be in conformity with the provisions as enshrined in their respective Acts and practice in vogue.
- (b) Provide a standing national forum for co-ordination of administrative and operational M-SAR matters.
- (c) Provide an interface with other national, regional and international organisations involved with providing or supporting M-SAR services.
- (d) Develop and maintain suitable guidance for implementation of this Plan, such as a National Maritime SAR manual, supplement to the IAMSAR Manual.

- (e) Promote effective use of all available national resources for support of M-SAR.
- (f) Promote close co-operation and co-ordination with Armed Forces and other SAR communities for provision of effective M-SAR services.
- (g) Improve co-operation among Maritime and Aeronautical SAR communities for the provision of effective M-SAR services.
- (h) Determine other ways to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of M-SAR services and to standardize procedures, equipment, and personnel training where practicable.
- (j) Review technological advances, R&D and procedural progress in M-SAR and recommend its' implementation at national level.
- (k) Review IMO initiatives on M-SAR and recommend for its adoption in National Maritime SAR plan.

Maritime SAR Services

- 25. This Plan covers M-SAR operations such as :-
 - (a) Provision of initial assistance at or near the scene of a distress situation.(e.g., initial medical assistance or advice, medical evacuations, provision of needed food or clothing to survivors etc)
 - (b) Delivery of survivors to place of safety or where follow-up assistance can be provided.
 - (c) Saving of property when it can be done in conjunction with saving lives.
- 26. M-SAR does not include operations such as :-
 - (a) Air ambulance services, which did not result from a rescue or recovery operation.
 - (b) Military operations, such as Combat SAR or other types of recovery by military operations to remove military or civilian personnel.
 - (c) Salvage operations.
 - (d) Overall response to natural or man-made disasters or terrorist incidents.
 - (e) Preventive SAR measures.

Mutual Assistance

- 27. The Participants agree to co-operate :-
 - (a) Support each other by pooling relevant facilities and resources as appropriate for M-SAR operations within the SRR.

- (b) Make, and respond to, requests for operational assistance between the designated MRCCs, MRSCs of the Participants as capabilities permit.
- (c) Develop procedures, communications and databases appropriate for coordination of facilities responding to distress incidents and for co-ordination between the MRCCs, MRSCs of the Participants.
- (d) Follow applicable guidance of the IMO or other relevant international laws regarding M-SAR operational procedures and communications.

Charging for M-SAR Services

28. In accordance with customary international laws, when a nation requests help from another nation to assist a person(s) in danger or distress, if such help is provided, it will be done voluntarily, and India will neither request nor pay reimbursement of cost for such assistance.
29. Participants agree that M-SAR services they provide to persons in danger or distress will be without subsequent cost-recovery from the person(s) assisted.
30. Participants are to fund their own activities in relation to this Plan unless otherwise arranged by the Participants in advance and will not allow a matter of reimbursement of cost among them to delay response to any person in danger or distress.

PRINCIPLES ACCEPTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

General

31. Participants coordinating operations should be consistent with applicable laws and executive orders, organise existing agencies and their facilities through suitable agreements into a basic network to assist military and non-military persons and property in actual or potential danger or distress, and to carry out obligations under customary international laws and instruments to which India is or may become a Party.
32. Participants will seek to keep political, economic, jurisdictional or other such factors as secondary when dealing with lifesaving matters, i.e., where possible, what is best for lifesaving will govern their decisions.
33. Consistency and harmonisation will be fostered wherever practicable among plans, procedures, equipment, agreements, training, terminology, etc., for various types of life saving and recovery operations, taking into account terms and definitions adopted internationally as much as possible.
34. If a distress situation appears to exist or may exist, rescue or similar recovery

efforts will be based on the assumption that a distress situation does actually exist until it is known differently.

35. Assistance will always be provided to person(s) in distress without regard to their nationality, status or circumstances.

36. Generally, cost-effective safety, regulatory or diplomatic measures that tend to minimize the need for M-SAR services will be supported.

37. Recognising the importance of reduced response time to the successful rescue and similar recovery efforts, a continual focus will be maintained on developing and implementing measures to reduce the time required for :-

- (a) Receiving alerts and information associated with distress situations.
- (b) Planning and coordinating operations.
- (c) Facility transits and searches.
- (d) Rescues or recoveries.
- (e) Providing immediate assistance, such as medical assistance, food and clothing to survivors, as appropriate.

Research and Development

38. Research and development efforts for M-SAR need to be undertaken for improvements in SAR services. The focus of such efforts usually, is to develop data, procedures or equipment which enables SAR services to be more effective. Finding ways to exploit new and emerging technologies for SAR to make it a common focus for research and development.

39. Research and development results should be shared with other maritime nations to reduce the risk of duplicated efforts and to maximize the benefits of the results.

Training, Qualification and Certification

40. Training and experience are crucial for effective SAR response and efficient conduct of any operations. Officer-in-Charge, MRCCs/ MRSCs and MRCC/ MRSC staffs need specialised training in watch keeping, coordination of available resources, search planning and rescue planning. M-SAR co-ordinator has the responsibility to ensure effective overall training programme. It will normally be the responsibility of the Officer-in-Charge (O i/c) of the MRCCs/ MRSCs to ensure that personnel manning RCCs/MRCCs are adequately trained for undertaking SAR Operations. Qualification and certification processes are to be ensured, so that, sufficient experience, maturity and judgments are gained. During a qualification process, the individual must, by demonstration of

abilities, show mental and physical competence to perform as part of a team. Officer-in-Charge, MRCCs/MRSCs need to issue a certificate to all personnel prior independent watch keeping in MRCCs/MRSCs.

Validation of National Maritime SAR Plan

41. (a) The requirement of a SAR mission is called for without any prior notice or appointment. The agencies likely to be involved in the SAR operations are to be geared up in all respects so as to be ready to render assistance, if required. Also, the procedures involved in undertaking such an operation with various agencies on the scene are to be very well known to the agencies and also to the personnel of every faculty. Therefore, to ensure that everyone is prepared in all respects and work in cohesion, SAR training and exercises involving all the agencies are to be conducted periodically by simulating a SAR scenario. This will enhance the capabilities of the SAR system further and allow every agency to evaluate their capabilities to respond to any actual SAR requirement. The frequency of exercises will be as follows :-

- (i) National level exercise - Biennially involving national and international participants
- (ii) Regional level exercise - Annually

(b) Inter Agency Liaison

(i) All personnel involved in the M-SAR operations should maintain constant liaison with the MRCC and the co-ordinating MRCC should, in turn, maintain constant touch with the military authorities providing SRUs and other SAR agencies involved in the operation to help coordinate the activities, provide briefing and debriefing and keep Search & Rescue Mission Co-ordinator (SMC) informed on the SRU availability. Adequate background information must be provided so as to develop a picture on, what actions might have been taken by the missing craft and provide expertise about the craft to aid in search planning during all joint operations. This will also enable conduct of co-ordinated studies, review of procedures and equipment and recommendation of better method of operation. Any development in this regard should be informed to the SMC in an ongoing operation.

(ii) The inter-agency liaison will enable review of SAR matters affecting more than one agency, including recommendations of participating agencies for revision and amendment of the plan. This will also encourage all the agencies involved to develop equipment and procedures to enhance the national SAR capability and promote coordinated development of all national SAR resources.

Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR)

42. Personnel associated with the SAR activities should be familiar with the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, IAMSAR Manual, National Maritime SAR Manual and other information applicable to M-SAR.

43. SAR principles and procedures of relevant customary international Conventions and IAMSAR Manual will serve as guidelines for co-ordination and conduct of SAR operations especially when dealing with other countries, organisations or jurisdictions. National maritime SAR manual and the SAR plan will be consistent with these international provisions to the extent practicable.

44. Indian Coast Guard will operate and maintain a ship reporting system (INDSAR) exclusively for M-SAR operations, which is voluntary for ships transiting the Indian SRR. The information collated would enable identification of potential ship in the area to quickly respond to the distress situation. The ships send their data through the INMARSAT on entering SRR and every 24 hours thereafter and prior exiting the SRR. (This system will be used only for SAR with its information being treated as "commercial proprietary" as promised to the ships reporting).

45. Operational responsibilities for M-SAR will generally be associated with internationally recognised geographic maritime SRR. Indian Coast Guard has been assigned the responsibility for co-ordinating M-SAR operations in Indian SRR with other agencies and organisations providing support as appropriate. SAR Points of Contacts are given at Appendix 'A' of this Plan.

46. Distress situations involving airborne aircraft ditching in sea, will be handled by the Maritime SAR authorities (i.e. Indian Coast Guard) in co-ordination with the Aeronautical SAR authorities (i.e. Airports Authority of India).

47. Agencies responsible for SAR operations under this Plan will :-

(a) Keep information readily available on the status and availability of key SAR facilities or other resources, which may be needed for SAR operations.

(b) Keep each other fully and promptly informed of operations of mutual interest or which may involve use of facilities of another Participant.

48. SAR Co-ordinator will delegate to their MRCCs the authority to :-

(a) Request assistance via the MRCC/MRSC of other nations, and to provide all pertinent information on the distress situation and the scope of assistance needed.

- (b) Promptly respond to requests for assistance from other MRCC/MRSC, including those of other nations.
- (c) Grant permission for entry into Indian SRR for SAR facilities of other nations, if need arises.
- (d) Make arrangements with customs, immigration, health or other authorities to expedite entry of foreign SAR facilities as appropriate.

49. SAR Co-ordinator will authorise the MRCCs to arrange promptly or in advance for entry of foreign rescue units into India should it ever become necessary. Such arrangements should involve appropriate authorities in India as well as proper authorities of the nation or SAR facility involved with the entry. Such entry may include over flight or landing of SAR aircraft and similar for surface SAR units as circumstances dictate for fuelling, medical, or other appropriate and available operational support, or delivery of survivors. It could also be in response to a request made by the Indian MRCC to the MRCC of another nation for assistance of those facilities.

50. Operations of SAR facilities committed to any SAR mission normally should be coordinated and directed by an appropriate MRCC or MRSC consistent with the provisions of this plan.

51. On-scene co-ordination may be delegated to any appropriate unit participating in a particular incident by the SAR Mission Coordinator of a MRCC.

52. No provision of this Plan or any supporting plan is to be construed as an obstruction to prompt an effective action by any agency or individual to relieve distress whenever and wherever found.

53. SAR Co-ordinator shall arrange for the receipt of distress alerts originating from within SRR for which they are responsible, and ensure that every MRCC and MRSC can communicate with persons in distress, with SAR facilities, and with other MRCCs/ MRSCs.

54. **Facilities and Equipment.** The MRCC/ MRSC is located where they can effectively perform their functions within their Area of Responsibility. The MRCC/ MRSC has the communications facilities and general office equipment, desks, plotting space, charts for performance of SAR. Further, additional equipments/ facilities available with MRCC/ MRSC are elaborated at Para 2.17 of NMSAR Manual 2020 and as summarized below.

- (a) **Communications.** Communication needs are met by fixed communication networks, public services, GMDSS equipment, ATS channels, Digital Selective Calling (DSC), email facility and through INMARSAT earth station, besides mobile communication. Maritime SAR communication functions, carriage

requirements including Radio communication frequencies *inter-alia* other communication procedures and protocols are enumerated at chapter 5 - Maritime SAR communications of NMSAR Manual 2020.

(b) **SAR Distress Telephone Number**. A SAR distress emergency telephone number 1554 is established nationwide which when dialed, the call reaches the respective MRCC/ MRSC.

(c) **Software based SAR Assistance Tools**. Usage of computer based applications such as SARAT, developed by INCOIS for ascertaining most probable search area for implementing suitable search pattern and web based ReaLCraft software can be utilised for Indian fishing vessel to aid the SAR operations.

(d) **Information**. Ready access to operational information is available at all MRCC and MRSC to help the SMC take immediate and appropriate action in an emergency. Much of this information is derived from this Manual, SOPs, MRCC plan for operations, SAR databases and other policy directives. The SRR chart and the local maps showing areas adjacent to the SRR are available at MRCC and MRSCs.

(e) **Publications and Supplies**. SAR publications of ICAO, IMO, National SAR Manual, Air Navigation Regulations and Notices to Mariners, Communications publications, ITU publications.

55. **Search and Rescue Units**. The Search and Rescue Units (SRUs) are used as a resource for performing search, rescue or similar operations. The unit can be an aircraft or a ship. Normally, SRUs having SAR as primary duty are used first. The following categories of vessels are used in maritime SAR incidents:-

(a) **Primary SAR Vessels**. A primary SAR vessel is a specially designed and equipped vessel with a trained crew that has SAR as its main task. These vessels are pre-positioned in areas with a high risk of SAR incidents. In Indian context, the Indian Coast Guard assets are used as the primary SRUs.

(b) **Secondary SAR Vessels**. Secondary SAR vessels are all other government vessels.

(c) **Vessels of Opportunity**. A vessel of opportunity is any other vessel not mentioned above, but in a location close enough to provide assistance to a vessel in distress.

56. **SAR Units/ SAR Resources**. The Resources available with Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and other resource agencies are given at Chapter 18 - SAR Resources of NMSAR Manual 2020.

Armed Forces - Civilian Relationships

57. Arrangements between Armed Forces and civilian agencies should provide for co-operation among themselves, consistent with statutory responsibilities and assigned SAR functions.

58. Co-operative arrangements involving Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard commands should provide for the effective use of their facilities for maritime SAR on a 'not-to-interfere' basis with military missions, consistent with statutory responsibilities and assigned agency functions.

59. Participants with operational responsibilities should develop plans and procedures for effective use of all available SAR facilities, and for contingencies to continue maritime SAR operations if military forces are withdrawn because of another emergency or a change in military missions.

60. Navy and Air force responsibilities under this Plan include support of maritime SAR on a 'not-to-interfere' basis with primary military duties, in accordance with applicable national directives, plans, guidelines, agreements, etc.

61. To optimise delivery of efficient and effective SAR services, and, where practicable and consistent with agency authorities, provide the organisations and persons interested in supporting these services the opportunity to do so, all available resources will be used for maritime SAR. Certain state and local governments, civil and volunteer organisations, and private enterprises have facilities, which contribute to the effectiveness of the over-all SAR network, although they are not participants to this Plan.

62. To help identify, locate and quantify primary SAR facilities, Navy, Air force and Coast Guard commands may designate facilities which meet international standards for equipment and personnel training as SAR units (SRUs). (Such facilities need not be dedicated exclusively to the associated type of operations, and this designation is not intended to preclude use of other resources).

63. Recognising the critical role of communication in receiving information about distress situations and co-ordinating responses, and noting that such responses sometimes involve multiple organisations and jurisdictions, the participants will work aggressively to develop suitable SAR provisions for :-

- (a) Interoperability.
- (b) Means of sending and receiving alerting.
- (c) Means of identification.

- (d) Effective provisions for equipment registration and continual access to registration data by SAR authorities.
- (e) Rapid, automatic, and direct routing of emergency communications.
- (f) High system reliability.
- (g) Pre-emptive or priority processing of distress communications.

Assistance During National Disasters

64. National Disasters Management (NDM) Policy, 2009 also stipulates general responsibilities for the armed forces during a national disaster. The NMSAR Board forms an important part of the Government's response capacity and the resource agencies are the immediate responders in all serious disaster situations along the coast and at sea. On account of its vast potential to meet any adverse challenge, speed of operational response and the resources and capabilities, the NMSAR Board through its resource agencies in past, has played a major role in emergency support functions including communication, search and rescue operations, health & medical facilities and transportation, especially in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. NMSAR Board will always remain prepared and will coordinate Search and Rescue (SAR) operation at sea by the resource agencies during national disasters like Tsunami and provide assistance to neighbouring countries whenever called upon by the Government.

Mass Rescue Operation (MRO)

65. Mass Rescue Operations (MROs) often need to be carried out and co-ordinated within a broader emergency response context that may involve hazards mitigation, damage control and salvage operations, pollution control, complex traffic management, larger-scale logistics, medical and coroner functions, accident-incident investigation, and intense public and political attention, etc. Efforts must often start immediately at an intense level and be sustainable for days or weeks.

66. SAR Authorities should co-ordinate MRO plans with companies that operate aircraft and ships designed to carry large number of persons. Such companies should share in preparation to prevent MROs and to help ensure success, if they become necessary.

67. Since opportunities to handle actual incidents involving mass rescues are rare and challenging, exercising MRO plans is particularly important.

Suspension or Termination of Operations

68. Maritime SAR operations shall normally continue until all reasonable hope of rescuing survivors or victims has lapsed.

69. The responsible MRCC/ MRSC concerned shall decide when to discontinue these operations. If no such centre is involved in coordinating the operations, the OSC may take this decision. If there is no OSC involved, the decision will be made at appropriate level of the chain-of-command of the SAR facility conducting the operations.

70. When a MRCC/ MRSC or an appropriate authority considers, on the basis of reliable information that a rescue or recovery operation has been successful, or that the emergency no longer exists, it shall terminate the SAR operations. The authority terminating should inform the authority, facility or service which has been activated or notified.

71. If an operation on scene becomes impracticable and the MRCC/MRSC or an appropriate authority concludes that survivors might still be alive, it may temporarily suspend the on-scene activities pending further developments. They should promptly inform the authority, facility or service which has been activated or notified. Information subsequently received shall be evaluated and operations resumed when justified based on the information.

Entry into Force Amendment or Termination

72. This Plan :-

- (a) Shall enter into force effective from 18 Nov 2022.
- (b) May be amended by written agreement among the Participants.
- (c) May be terminated or superseded by a new Plan or by written agreement among the Participant.
- (d) This Plan will be reviewed after five years.

MRCC/MRSC SAR POINT OF CONTACTS (SPOC)

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<u>ARABIAN SEA/ INDIAN OCEAN</u>			
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MRSC Jakhau	2831- 286302 MSAR Call 1554 (Toll free)	2831- 286432 2831-286304	Inmarsat C: 441900444 FBB : 773238483 (V)/ 783250469 (F) E-mail: mrsc-jakhau@indiancoastguard.nic.in cgs-jkh@indiancoastguard.nic.in
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