



CHARTER OF BUSINESS

Version 2.0

13 January 2016

The Navies of the Littoral States of the Indian Ocean:

Considering the long-standing friendly relations between them;

Desiring to promote new avenues for enhancing friendship and professional cooperation;

Recognising that this cooperation needs to be carried out in an effective and purposeful manner, on the basis of equality, reciprocity, and mutual benefit;

Jointly Accept a regional forum to be designated the 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS), wherein the 'Chiefs of Navy' (*which term will hereinafter, in instances where there is no formally constituted 'Navy', automatically mean the head of the designated principal agency responsible for maritime security*) of all littoral nation states of the Indian Ocean (*which term will hereafter be taken to mean the water body named the "Indian Ocean" with limits as defined in the International Hydrographic Organisation Special Publication 23, entitled "Limits of Oceans and Seas"*) may regularly meet to promote measures and mechanisms for constructive engagement that bear upon issues of regional maritime security and cooperation in the maritime domain; and

Agree that the functioning of the IONS forum shall be governed by this Charter of Business.

Charter of Business

Purpose

1.0 The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation amongst navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues. IONS endeavours to generate a flow of information between naval professionals resulting in common understanding and possibly agreements on the way ahead. *(In instances where there is no formally constituted 'Navy', the term 'navy' shall automatically mean the designated principal agency responsible for maritime security).*

Aim

2.0 The primary aim of IONS is to attain mutually beneficial maritime security outcomes within the Indian Ocean. These outcomes will be achieved through the cooperation of all Members in determining remedies relevant to regional maritime security.

Objectives

3.0 The principal objectives envisaged for IONS are as follows:

3.1 To promote a shared understanding of the maritime issues facing the littoral nation states of the Indian Ocean and the formulation of strategies designed to enhance regional maritime security.

3.2 To strengthen the capability of all littoral nation states of the Indian Ocean to address present and anticipated challenges to maritime security.

3.3 To establish a variety of multilateral maritime cooperative mechanisms designed to mitigate maritime security concerns among Members.

3.4 To develop interoperability in terms of doctrines and procedures, so as to provide speedy, responsive, and effective Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) throughout the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Fundamental Principles

4.0 IONS will function in an open, inclusive, consultative, cooperative and consensual basis, and will uphold the following fundamental principles:

4.1 Equality. All Members are to be treated equally.

4.2 Decisions on all matters and issues will be decided through a process of consensus building amongst all Members. Consensus¹ will be required of those Members present when the decision is made.

4.3 IONS will focus on multilateral solutions.

4.4 All Members accept the principles of equality, cooperation and mutual benefit upon which this Charter is based.

Types and Criteria of Membership

5.0 IONS will have two categories of membership, namely Members and Observers, as explained below:

5.1 Members

5.1.1 A nation state with permanently held territory that abuts or lies within the Indian Ocean and which maintains a Navy or maritime agency² and formally agrees to this Charter of Business, may become a Member of IONS by making a formal application to the chair of IONS³.

5.1.2 Members will promote and support the purpose, aim and objectives of IONS and demonstrate willingness to contribute constructively by engaging other Members and Observers navies or maritime agencies.

5.2 Observers

5.2.1 A Navy or maritime agency, which has been constituted by a nation state with permanently held territory that abuts or lies within the Indian Ocean, may opt to be an IONS Observer by making a formal application to the chair of IONS.

5.2.2 A Navy or maritime agency, which has been constituted by a nation state without permanently held territory that abuts or lies within the Indian Ocean, but with significant strategic interest in the region, could qualify as an Observer if it submits an application to the Chair of IONS for consideration at the next Conclave of Chiefs, and has its application agreed through consensus when the decision is made.

¹ Consensus is understood to mean “no opposition”.

² A ‘maritime agency’ is the principal agency for maritime security such as a navy, coastguard, marine police force or enforcement agency.

³ To formally agree to the Charter, a Chief of Navy/Maritime Agency is to write to the Chair of IONS and confirm their agreement to the Charter.

5.2.3 Observers will agree to support and encourage the purpose, aim and objectives of IONS, and demonstrate willingness to contribute constructively by engaging other Member and Observer nations.

Chairmanship

6.0 The Chair of IONS will be rotated every two years amongst Members, with consensus on the selection of the Chair reached through mutual consultation.

6.1 The Chair may rotate in the following geographical order: (i) South Asian; (ii) West Asian; (iii) East African; and (iv) South East Asian and Australian Littorals.⁴

Secretariat

7.0 The Secretariat will rotate with the Chair, and maintain a set of IONS Business Rules and Secretariat Guidelines, providing detailed roles and responsibilities of the IONS Secretariat and Secretariats to Workshops or Working Group meetings.

Types of Activity and Frequency of Occurrence

8.0 An indicative (but not exhaustive) listing of the type of cooperative mechanisms and activities that are envisaged under the aegis of IONS is as follows:

8.1 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposiums' will be held once every two years and will comprise of an assembly of Members and Observers at the level of the Chiefs of Navy.

8.2 Each successive meeting of the 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' will incorporate a 'Conclave' of the Chiefs-of-Navy. Such 'Conclaves' may include 'Observers', provided that a consensus in this regard is arrived-at amongst the 'Members'.

8.3 The Members will designate the host country for the next two IONS Preparatory Workshops, and the next two IONS chairmanships. Additional meetings of the Conclave of Chiefs may be held between each Seminar.

⁴ **South Asian Littorals:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom.

West Asian Littorals: Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates

East African Littorals: France, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.

South East Asian and Australian Littorals: Australia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

8.4 IONS Seminars may be held as deemed appropriate by the 'Members', either in conjunction with or independent of meetings of the IONS and/or IONS Preparatory Workshops.

8.5 In each intervening year between successive Seminars, an IONS Preparatory Workshop will be held, with Members and Observers both being represented at an appropriate level. The deliberations will be aimed, at discussing the theme of the next Seminar and drafting the agenda for the next meeting of the Conclave of Chiefs.

8.6 Meetings of workshops and working groups on specific topics of interest to IONS may be conducted as required.

8.7 Exercises and associated planning meetings may occur as frequently as required.

8.8 Other specialised maritime cooperation, such as, but not limited to hydrographic survey, salvage, submarine-rescue, search and rescue, and marine meteorology, may be discussed at IONS.

8.9 Enhancement of collective awareness of the maritime domain.

Responsibilities of Members and Observers

9.0 All Members and Observers of IONS will have the following responsibilities:

9.1 Nomination of a permanent Point of Contact (POC) and timely notification to the IONS Secretariat of changes in this regard.

9.2 Attendance at and support to the various activities and mechanisms designed to help IONS achieve its aims and objectives.

9.3 Presentation of papers and other contributions to any Seminar, Conclave, Workshop or Working Group meeting as appropriate.

9.4 Hosting a Workshop, Working Group meeting, Seminar or Exercise and associated planning meetings as agreed upon by consensus of the Members.

Financing of Activities

10.0 As a general principle:

10.1 Attendees at the various activities organised under IONS would be required to pay for their travel to and from the host country, subsistence and local accommodation in the host country.

10.2 The Host Navy would bear the costs of hospitality and in-country transportation commensurate with the guidelines provided by its

government and would indicate, with adequate notice, the scope of such facilitation’.

10.3 These general principles will not preclude the provision of financial assistance by any Member or Observer that is willing and able to fund or underwrite a portion or all the expenses of one or more Member or Observer to attend or host any given activity or set of activities of IONS.

Provision and Sharing of Information

11.0 The following stipulations will govern the provision and sharing of any information regardless of form or type, including but not limited to that of a scientific, technical, business or financial nature, and also including photographs, reports, manuals, threat data, experimental data, test data, designs, specifications, processes, techniques, inventions, drawings, technical writings, sound recordings, pictorial representations and other graphical presentations, whether in magnetic tape, computer memory or any other form and whether or not subject to intellectual property rights or other legal protection between Members and/or Observers:

11.1 The provision and sharing of information will occur on a voluntary and goodwill basis and in accordance with the respective national laws, regulations and policies of the navies concerned, without any obligation being placed upon any Member or Observer to disclose any information.

11.2 The provision of information will not, by itself, transfer any proprietary rights to that information and will not affect the rights of the Member or Observer providing the information.

11.3 The receiving Members or Observers will not sell, transfer title to, disclose or transfer possession of, any information, without the prior written consent of the providing Members or Observers.

11.4 Information exchanged between the Members and Observers prior to termination of this Charter shall continue to be protected as provided for under this Charter notwithstanding the termination of this Charter.

Intellectual Property

12.0 Members and Observers will ensure that they respect one another’s intellectual property rights and take no action that might be construed as an infringement of these rights. However, any Member or Observer may, while providing/sharing information and/or material, stipulate such additional and/or more specific restrictive and/or prescriptive conditions relating to the protection of its intellectual property rights as it deems appropriate and all such restrictive and/or prescriptive conditions will be respected by all Members and Observers.

Legal Status of the Charter of Business

13.0 This Charter is non-legally binding in international law and will not create any legal rights or obligations between the Members or Observers.

Amendments to the Charter of Business

14.0 Amendments to this Charter may be proposed by any Member. However, the amendment will need to be accepted through consensus by all the Members represented at the Conclave of Chiefs.

14.1 The version history is explained in the table below.

Version	Date	Description of changes	Affected Sections
1.0	28 March 2014	New document	All
1.1	28 March 2014	Footnote added	5.1.1
2.0	13 January 2016	Document Review	All

List of Members and Observers

Member Nations	Date of Membership
Australia	10 May 2014
Bangladesh	04 July 2014
France	10 March 2015
India	28 February 2015
Indonesia	10 November 2014
Iran	16 March 2015
Kenya	09 December 2015
Maldives	22 October 2014
Mauritius	11 November 2014
Mozambique	16 March 2015
Myanmar	26 November 2014
Oman	31 August 2014
Pakistan	27 October 2014
Saudi Arabia	24 August 2014
Seychelles	28 November 2014
Singapore	05 August 2014
South Africa	27 October 2014
Sri Lanka	20 October 2014
Tanzania	10 June 2014
Thailand	19 December 2014
Timor Leste	04 December 2014
United Arab Emirates	11 November 2014
United Kingdom	18 June 2014

Observer Nations	Date of Membership
China	28 March 2014
Germany	13 January 2016
Italy	13 January 2016
Japan	28 March 2014
Madagascar	23 March 2015
Malaysia	21 October 2014
Netherlands	13 January 2016
Russia	13 January 2016
Spain	13 January 2016