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IORIS (Indian Ocean Regional Information Sharing platform) operational

Version 1.0 of IORIS operational 1st July 2018!

Initiated by EU CRIMARIO project, the new secure information sharing and incident management tool will enable member countries to set up a collaborative working environment to improve the understanding of the maritime domain and coordinate operations when incidents at sea occur. It expresses the cooperative approach that has been developed by the European Union to address piracy and new maritime security challenges faced by the Indian Ocean littoral states such as drugs and arms trafficking, illegal fishing, environmental damages, etc.

Development of IORIS based on user-oriented method

The IORIS development benefited from an intense and collaborative testing phase where CRIMARIO team, regional partners and the IT company (Polymorph Ltd) worked closely in synergy to ensure that all of the planned functionalities work efficiently, and to also incorporate post-evaluation improvements suggested by users into v.1.0.

During the three-month testing phase, 3 training sessions were conducted in Mahé, Seychelles and Mombasa, Kenya and included participants from two regional centres – [RCOC](#) and [RMIFC](#) - as well as multi-agency staff from Seychelles, Kenya and Mauritius. One of the training sessions included a basic 'Train the Trainer' course essential for staff to maintain continuity by internal knowledge transfer to their respective colleagues.

[RMIFC](#) (Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre) based in Madagascar and [RCOC](#) (Regional Centre for Operational Coordination) based in Seychelles were created with the support of IOC by the MASE programme covering the ESA-OI region (Eastern and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean).

IORIS designed to be a flexible and sustainable tool

The integrated modules are designed to achieve: (1) information sharing in a secure and flexible environment; (2) real time management of incidents at sea; (3) secure communications between users (national agencies, regional centres); allowing each to control members and access rights for their designated areas.

Key functions include:

- **Multiple areas:** ability to create a dedicated area for each regional centre, national centre, or local organisation to manage day to day information sharing, communications and operations within their respective maritime community in private, whilst remaining in a Single Information Sharing Environment (SISE) providing the instant capability to connect outside of their private community to any user on IORIS to collaborate as required; for example an area can be created to manage a specific incident.
- **Instant messaging** (public/private): users can utilise a public or private secure chat function within the secure areas to chat with members of any group for routine exchange of information or in support of an event.
- **Advanced mapping:** using OpenStreet map and dedicated nautical charts, the module allows the import and export of maps and navigation markers (location of vessels, tracking, etc.), to plot incidents and polygons in support of incidents or routine operations. It also shows the range of vessels based on the direction of travel and estimated speed to extrapolate where a vessel might be now.
- **Sharing of documents:** users can share any format of documents (image, text, ...) within the secure areas, with an additional option to encrypt where sensitive information requires.



- **Form creation:** any action can be easily documented and followed through the creation of on-line forms.
- **Area management:** only accessible to the designated national/regional administrator of each area, they will define the access rights and the membership of their dedicated area for centres, local organisations or incidents.

The development of IORIS was awarded to [Polymorph Ltd](#) after a global open tendering process. A second development phase of IORIS is planned which will follow a period of operational use to maximise valuable feedback from partners. The development and future phases of IORIS will be supported by EU CRIMARIO project which include running costs (hosting, maintenance and support) until March 2020.

Special attention to the security aspects

The IORIS platform is only accessible to authorized users designated by partners countries, maritime centres and regional organisations. The first centres to join IORIS are the two regional centres: [RMIFC](#) based in Madagascar and [RCOC](#) based in Seychelles. IORIS is also accessible to national maritime administrations and agencies of Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles. Comoros will follow very soon.

IORIS incorporates the latest technologies for ensuring a high level of security: including over-the-wire encryption, additional encryption of documents, two-factor authentication for mobile users, IP restrictions, etc. IORIS is a web-platform hosted in a secure environment to ensure the correct balance of availability vs security for regional users (detailed security specifications can be provided on request to authorised agencies).

Regional governance under discussion

The official launch for IORIS will be held in Mahé on 4th September 2018. The emphasis will be to demonstrate the added value of this unique information sharing and communications tool and prepare the governance of the platform among the Indian Ocean countries and beyond.

CRIMARIO team will continue to train centres and agencies involved and propose a set of draft policies initially recommended and agreed with the participants. Ultimately however the decision on all system and user policies will be agreed on a regional basis as the ownership is transferred to become a truly regional platform that will enhance **Maritime Situational Awareness** in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

More on EU CRIMARIO

Responding to the challenge, the European Union supported the implementation of a regional mechanism, the **Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC)** - agreed in 2009 by 21 littoral states of the Western IO, amended in January 2017 in Jeddah - and initiated the **Critical Maritime Routes (CMR) programme** and the EU NAVFOR-Atalanta operation.

Under CMR, EU CRIMARIO aims to strengthen maritime safety and security in the wider IO region by supporting coastal countries in enhancing maritime situational awareness (MSA). **MSA is the sharing and fusion of data from various sources** to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the maritime domain, whilst an effective and sustainable MSA enables maritime stakeholders to improve security, safety and environment of this domain.

To support this, CRIMARIO introduces various initiatives in the region such as a web based information sharing and incident management platform (**IORIS**), the creation of a regional AIS network, training & capacity building, and establishment of a set of standards for information sharing. The CRIMARIO project, managed by Expertise France with a budget of €5.5 million, began in January 2015 and will run until December 2019.

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MASE programme, RCOC & RMIFC

Initiated by MASE (Maritime security programme, EU-funded), and implemented by IOC (Indian Ocean Commission), **two regional centres** have been set up to promote maritime situational awareness of the coastal countries of ESA-IO (Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean); they were confirmed by the **Djibouti Declaration on Maritime Security and Safety** signed on May 15, 2016 by the Ministers of the ESA-IO region. The RCOC (Regional Centre for Operational Coordination) is hosted by Seychelles and the RMIFC (Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre) by Madagascar. The analysts of RMIFC are tasked with analysing suspicious navigation behaviour and then alerting RCOC and decision makers. The response at sea will be coordinated by RCOC; both centres will be staffed with seconded liaison officers from the ESA-IO countries and be equipped with the IORIS platform.

The MASE programme, EU funded, is coordinated by IGAD in association with EAC, COMESA and IOC (Indian Ocean Commission). Other partners include CRIMARIO, UNODC, FAO and INTERPOL.

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