A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MARITIME STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Life on land in the 21st century is heavily reliant on the maritime domain. The oft-repeated statistics that **90% of world trade is by sea** and that **99% of international communication traverses submarine cables** really only give a small indication of how connected our terrestrial existence is to maritime activities and infrastructures. This global reliance on the maritime domain necessitates increased attention to maritime security, as any number of seemingly low-level concerns could easily have global impact. The March 2021 closure of the Suez Canal due to the grounding of the container ship EVER GIVEN provides an example of how a single incident involving a single vessel can have logistical, economic and security consequences that are felt around the world. It is for this reason – the inextricable connection between maritime activity and life on land – that maritime strategy has become a major focus in almost every coastal, island and archipelagic state.

While naval strategy remains an important discipline, the wisdom of the great naval strategists like Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan or Sir Julian Corbett does not often translate into the missions of today’s navies, coast guards and marine police forces. Maritime security requires a fundamentally different mindset to that for naval warfare; most maritime forces are unlikely to ever engage in the sort of activities on which traditional naval strategy is primarily focused. While academic arguments could examine how Mahan’s concept of sea control ties to the economic development of states or how Corbett’s emphasis on the relationship between land and naval forces applies to addressing the littoral divide, neither they nor most naval strategists have considered the constabulary functions of modern maritime forces. Simply put, the main role of most modern navies, coast guards and marine police forces is less about fighting wars and more about fighting crime, maintaining order, protecting the environment and securing the economic benefits of the maritime domain. In other words, maritime security is the means to other ends, not the end itself.

Despite a recent surge in activity around the development of maritime strategies, there is limited guidance on how to create them and even less guidance on how to use them. Furthermore, the literature on maritime strategy either extolls the virtues of having a strategy or critiques a specific one that has already been adopted. Regrettably, those critiques are also typically focused on the finished document rather than the process that produced it. Those who work in the space can instantly point to examples of failed processes where, for one reason or another, the strategy never reached adoption, but the literature generally does not cover them, nor does it address why so many have failed to cross the threshold from development to implementation. Beyond failure, however, the literature also does not cover the benefits of the process itself, regardless of whether any document is actually produced. A growing number of states and regions have found tremendous benefit just in bringing agencies and experts together to assess the maritime domain and discern collectively how to better secure, govern and develop it together. The value of the process cannot be overstated but, in much of the existing literature, has not been stated at all.

Most of that literature also fails to distinguish between: 1) a maritime security strategy that just focuses on securing the maritime domain; 2) a whole of government maritime strategy or “state action at sea” strategy that focuses both on securing and governing the maritime domain; and 3) an integrated maritime domain strategy that addresses economic development of the maritime space, as well as security and governance. Maritime strategies can have more pillars than those three, but security, governance and the maritime economy are the three key elements in terms of discerning the strategic posture. Which type of strategy a state is pursuing is not something that can be decided along the way – it needs to be a preliminary determination, as the process for strategy development differs greatly between each type. These distinctions hold at both the national and the regional level.

The purpose of this Framework, therefore, is to both provide a resource and reference point for thinking about maritime strategy, and offer procedural and substantive guidance on how to develop and implement each core variant of maritime strategy at both the national and regional levels.
THE LITERATURE

Given that the focus of this Framework is more practical than academic, this is by no means intended to be a comprehensive literature review. Rather it highlights key nuggets from the literature whose wisdom can help inform the strategy development and implementation processes. There are, however, some useful works that explore the more theoretical and historical aspects of maritime strategy development. Most of these works contextualize maritime strategy in relation to naval strategy, but a few help tease out how to approach maritime strategy today.

For a comprehensive, albeit concise, primer on maritime strategy, Dr. James R. Holmes’ “A Brief Guide to Maritime Strategy” (Naval Institute Press: 2020) looks beyond the doctrinal elements of Mahan and Corbett, as well as the historical debates between Hugo Grotius and John Selden on “free” versus “closed” seas, to explore what maritime strategy requires today. While the work is more focused on the naval components and less on law enforcement, it contains vital analysis for understanding why maritime strategy is so important to security, governance and economic activity.

Similarly, Dr. John B. Hattendorf provides a historical context for the evolution of modern maritime strategy. In “What is a Maritime Strategy?” (Soundings: 2013), he writes:

Both our experience of practicing maritime strategy and our historical examination of other maritime strategies during the last hundred years show that maritime strategy is a subset of a nation’s grand strategy because it touches on the whole range of activities and interests at sea. In its broadest sense, grand strategy is the comprehensive direction of power to achieve particular national goals. Within those terms, maritime strategy is the direction of all aspects of national power that relate to a nation’s interests at sea. The navy serves this purpose, but maritime strategy is not purely a naval preserve. Maritime strategy involves the other functions of state power that include diplomacy; the safety and defence of merchant trade at sea; fishing; the exploitation, conservation, regulation and defence of the exclusive economic zone at sea; coastal defence; security of national borders; the protection of offshore islands; as well as participation in regional and world-wide concerns relating to the use of oceans, the skies over the oceans and the land under the seas.

This list of extra-naval actors and elements is critical to understanding how to develop a maritime strategy. Furthermore, he continues with a critical insight: “The fundamental focus of the military element in maritime strategy centres on the control of human activity at sea through the use of armed force in order to contribute to the broad ends established in a national maritime policy. There are two parts to this: establishing control against opposition; and using control, once it has been established.” This is a crucial element: a maritime strategy cannot simply focus on stomping out undesirable activity; it must also provide a vision for what should be happening in the maritime domain.

This thinking is echoed by Dr. Christian Bueger in “What is Maritime Security?” (Marine Policy: 2015). In it, he depicts maritime security as existing in dynamic tension with four cardinal factors: national security, the marine environment, economic development and human security. Maritime strategy has a tendency to focus on different elements and Bueger analyses the center of gravity of different regional strategies including NATO’s Alliance Maritime Strategy, which excludes the “high end tasks” of national security, and the African Union’s Africa Integrated Strategy 2050, which “centers on the blue economy and argues that maritime security challenges are primarily relevant because they hamper economic growth.” As strategy is a subsidiary focus to his exposition on maritime security as a concept, it is worth noting his heavy emphasis on the term “blue economy” as a subset of the maritime economy.

This nexus between maritime security and economic development is a theme developed by Chris Trelwany in his chapter, “The IMO: Maritime Security: An Essential Feature for Sustainable Maritime Development and Global Ocean Governance” in The IMLI Treatise on Global Ocean Governance: Volume III: The IMO and Global Ocean Governance. Trelawny argues that many of the main maritime crimes like piracy and armed robbery at sea are land-based crimes with maritime symptoms. To that end, he argues that the development of sustainable economic activity – both on land and at sea – is a key element for combating maritime crime. Thus maritime security and the maritime economy, particularly the blue economy, become inextricably linked and mutually supportive.
The blue economy also features in Dr. Ian Ralby’s *Making Maritime Strategy Work: A New Taxonomy* (NMIOTC Journal: 2020). He argues that to be effectively implemented, a maritime strategy must have political will behind it. To get that political will, and thus the resources needed to pursue an articulated strategic vision, leaders must understand the nexus between security, governance and development. He writes:

“Maritime security” cannot just be about protecting the state against the unending array of maritime threats. That is an expensive proposition that will drain the state’s economy and focus attention on a part of the state where no one lives. Instead, maritime security must be seen as protecting the maritime space for the enrichment of the state and the betterment of life on land. It must be understood as the process of creating a safe and secure maritime domain to allow the blue economy to flourish. Only then will politicians be willing to spend both their own political capital and the state’s economic resources on maritime security. Understanding this reality is a prerequisite for identifying a strategic approach that will succeed.

From this starting point, Dr. Ralby goes on to identify the key differences between 1) a maritime security strategy, 2) a state action at sea strategy and 3) an integrated maritime strategy. While the analysis focuses on the national context, the concepts are equally applicable at the regional level. This short article also bridges the divide between literature about maritime strategy and a guide on how to develop one. It is helpful preliminary reading to ground the practical process of strategy development and implementation.

GUIDES

Despite all the literature on naval strategy and strategy writ large, there is relatively little in the way of direct guidance on developing and implementing maritime strategy that is not focused on warfare and sea control. Much of the guidance is specific to policy, rather than strategy, and is focused on one issue or another. It is important to note the difference between technical work and strategic work. For example, the “Model Maritime Service Code” is a US-developed guide on how to address a wide spectrum of issues necessary for a navy or coast guard to perform the range of maritime security functions. Similarly, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime’s National Submarine Cable Resilience Framework provides practical guidance on how to develop a national resilience plan which could be part of a maritime strategy, but is not a strategy in and of itself. More broadly, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has produced an excellent guide focused on Africa, but applicable elsewhere, titled: “Africa’s Blue Economy: A policy handbook.” Particularly for those pursuing integrated maritime strategies that have an economic pillar, that handbook can be useful.

The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) is a critical element of security for every coastal, island or archipelagic state, and thus for every region. While maritime security covers far more than what is covered by the ISPS Code, it is a competence that can effectively nest within that wider focus on maritime security. Consequently, the 2012 International Maritime Organization (IMO) Guide to Maritime Security and the ISPS Code is a useful, practical guide to addressing a major area of necessary compliance.

While Dr. Ralby’s *Making Maritime Strategy Work* does discuss the process of strategy development, one of the few guides is the Africa Center for Strategic Studies’ *National Maritime Security Strategy Toolkit.* Available in English, French and Portuguese, this is a useful resource, tailored to the African context, but applicable globally. It does not, however, differentiate between the different strategy options, nor does it address the regional context. It has, however, been used by a number of countries in pursuing national maritime security strategies.
APPROACH TO THIS FRAMEWORK

Rather than reviewing individual national or regional maritime strategies, this Framework will draw on experiences from around the world to highlight practical points that may be helpful for future strategy development and implementation. The point is not to champion one approach or another but to provide examples of what has worked elsewhere to give inspiration for what might be good practice to follow. As much as the literature is full of analysis of individual strategies, this Framework seeks to be as expansive as possible. This should not be seen, therefore, as a formula for how to create a strategy, but rather a set of questions that should be answered and topics that should be considered during the strategy development and implementation process. It is more of a toolkit than a template. While there are important variations in the various sorts of strategy, they all begin with the same core approach.
CORE APPROACH

This Framework seeks to provide practical assistance for engaging in maritime strategy development. While there are different options for what sort of maritime strategy will be developed at the national and regional levels, the initial steps, as well as some of the guiding principles, are identical between them. This section, therefore, provides the uniform starting point for developing a maritime strategy of any description.

Non-Duplication

Even before deciding what sort of strategy a state or region wishes to pursue, a set of threshold questions must be asked:

- What maritime strategic work has been done in the past?
- Is there any maritime strategic work that is currently underway?

It is a common mistake to think that any strategic undertaking is the first of its kind. In countless cases – at both the national and regional levels – there is already an extensive history of prior strategic efforts. Furthermore, stovepiping and lack of communication between agencies or even regional organizations can sometimes mean that at the outset of a strategy development process, there may already be one underway by a different agency or even a different arm of the same agency. A key principle, therefore, must be:

- Do Not Duplicate Effort

This does not mean that there is no scope for developing a new strategy if one has already been produced in the past. It also does not mean that there cannot be concurrent strategies. For example, there is no problem with concurrent development of a broader maritime security strategy at the same time as a maritime cybersecurity strategy. This is where the concept of "nesting," discussed below, comes in. Before getting to that, though, another set of threshold questions must be asked:

- If there has been previous maritime strategic activity, what happened to it?
- Was it implemented?
- Did it have any impact?
- What may have made it either succeed or fail?

Simply cataloguing prior efforts is not sufficient – the full history of those efforts should help inform the starting point for the present undertaking. If the previous strategy was successful, then the starting point should be to build on that success, making necessary adjustments as needed. If the previous strategy failed to produce meaningful results, that cautionary tale should help inform how to avoid the same pitfalls. If the previous strategy never got implemented at all, its content may still be valid, but bridging the divide from paper to practice must be a major focus. A hard look at the past will help with navigating the present. For example – did the strategy not get implemented because the government changed or because it was impractical? This brings up another core principle:

- Learn From Past Successes and Failures Alike

There is a tendency to learn from failures in the sense of avoiding the same mistakes. But there is often less rigor applied to understanding and emulating past successes. Both can be equally instructive and building on success can be very helpful in overcoming some of the hindrances that often curtail the impact of a strategy.
Nesting

As already noted, a strategy development process should never be considered in isolation. No matter how many pillars a maritime strategy has, it must always exist in relationship with other strategies—both national and regional. This is the concept of nesting. For example, a maritime security strategy must nest within the wider national security strategy, which itself should ideally nest within the regional security strategy. Furthermore, the economic pillar of an integrated maritime domain strategy cannot be incompatible with the national economic strategy. If the former sees fisheries as the main maritime contribution to the economy, while the latter focuses on ship building, the strategic visions are irreconcilable, making implementation impossible. A fundamental principle that should be remembered at all times, therefore, is:

•  **A Maritime Strategy Must Be Able to Nest Seamlessly Within Other National and Regional Strategies**

This is particularly important at the national level. If the national strategic vision is slightly out of line with the regional strategy, that is less problematic than if different national entities are moving in incompatible directions. While this concept is simple, it is easy to forget, and efforts should be made throughout the strategy development and implementation processes to remain cognizant of wider strategic aims.

Scope

With an understanding of what has been done and what is being done, the scope of the strategic undertaking can be determined. This effectively means choosing between the three main types of maritime strategy. Each one implicates different stakeholders and different assessments, so this is a preliminary decision that is not easy to change later. As a practical matter:

1. A Maritime Security Strategy is a single pillar strategy that is usually led by the maritime security and law enforcement agency or agencies. It can incorporate other stakeholders, but the focus is on security and law enforcement.

2. A State Action a Sea or Interagency Strategy may or may not also have security as its main focus, but it is broader in nature, and necessarily includes the full spectrum of government agencies that have maritime responsibilities including port authorities, maritime administrations, fisheries departments, customs, immigration and tax authorities. It has two pillars of security and governance.

3. An Integrated Maritime Strategy encompasses security, governance and the maritime economy. This means that not only must all the government agencies with maritime responsibilities be involved, but private sector and civil society groups must be as well. They can be involved in the other varieties of strategy, but they absolutely have to be involved in a credible integrated maritime strategy.

A lot of factors can go into deciding which sort of strategy to pursue. For a more extensive exploration of the different variants, see “Making Maritime Strategy Work: A New Taxonomy.” Generally, though, with each additional pillar comes additional challenges in terms of the amount of time it takes, the complexity of both drafting and implementing, and the amount of political agreement that is needed for adoption. That said, based on experience, the more extensive the strategy, and the more that security is tied to economic activity, the more likely it is to garner the political will needed to be adequately resourced and implemented. Each state and region, therefore, must decide, based on its unique context, which approach makes more sense. Under no circumstances, however, does it make sense to attempt a strategy that is unlikely to actually be implemented. This is not about making a document, it is about developing a common vision for the maritime space and then making that vision a reality. This is a critical principle:
A Strategy is Not Merely a Document; It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality

The point of any maritime strategy should be to improve the maritime domain, at least in some way. What that looks like will vary greatly depending on the context, but a strategy should not be considered either a paper exercise or a “tick in the box” matter. It is a process of continual improvement.

Core Considerations

Before embarking on any of the varieties of maritime strategy, there are some additional core considerations and principles, common to all of them.

Purpose

The first is the purpose of the strategy. Some will say that it sets forth the strategic ends, ways, and means – in other words it provides the vision and the process of achieving it. Another way of thinking of it, however, is that it answers the question as to “why” something is being done. In other words, any action that is taken should be related to the vision expressed in the strategy.

- A Good Strategy Should Provide an Answer to The Question “Why” Any Given Action is Being Taken.
- Any Action Being Taken Should be Done “In Order To” Accomplish or Uphold A Specific Portion of the Strategy.

When asking: “Why is X being done?,” the answer should be able to be expressed as “In order to” accomplish or uphold a specific portion of the strategy. This dynamic should be kept in mind throughout the development process.

Agility and Fitness for Purpose

Given this inextricable tie between the strategy and the real-world operations and activities on the water, two related considerations arise: the need for agility, and the importance of fitness for purpose. The world is always changing and the maritime context can evolve quite rapidly for any number of reasons. The 2020 global pandemic should serve as a long-term reminder of how dramatically things can shift in a very short period. Since a maritime strategy is not an academic exercise but a process with tangible consequences and implications, remaining agile is vital to maintaining its relevance.

- Agility is a Constant Requirement Throughout The Strategy Development and Implementation Process.
- A Maritime Strategy Must Always Be Fit for Purpose in the Particular Maritime Domain To Which it Applies.

A brilliant maritime strategy for one country may be largely useless to its neighbor – it has to actually apply to the specific country or region at issue. This is why there is a long list of failed “copy and paste” strategies that have not been sufficiently derived to meet the needs of the state or region for which they are supposed to apply.

Inclusiveness and Ownership

This issue of “copy and paste” brings up two further matters that are of critical concern. Based on experiences, inclusiveness is vital to the strategy development process. The more inclusive it is, the more the strategy becomes distinctive to the voice of the people and entities for whom it is developed. When people are excluded, no matter how good the document is, they do not feel ownership of it, and they are likely to attack it, criticize it or simply ignore it. Failure to include people and failure to engender ownership are the most common ways that a strategy process fails. External advisors can be very helpful in providing an objective assessment and a menu of options based on what has and has not worked elsewhere, but the state or region for whom the strategy applies must “hold the pen.”
• The Strategy Development Process Must Be Inclusive.
• The State or Region to Which the Strategy Applies Must Hold the Pen; They Must Own It.

Even if some leaders feel ownership of the strategy, it will not be as effectively realized unless the people who have to implement it feel that ownership, too. As strategy is not a top down directive; it is a collective and actionable vision that everyone must come together to achieve.

Implementation and Resourcing

Given the need for the strategy to be applied in the real world, a strategy development process will always be incomplete until there is an action plan attached to it that, at a minimum, sets realistic benchmarks for moving the state or region toward implementation. One of the biggest mistakes, however, is to apply resource constraints too early. In other words, a strategy should be realistic, but it should not start with a budget. A resource-driven strategy will always lack imagination and fall far short of what could be achieved. The maritime domain presents perhaps as many opportunities as it does constraints, so focusing on monetary limitations often creates a form of wealth blindness where the preliminary constraints prevent those involved from truly exploring the possibilities.

• A Strategy Must Also Have an Action Plan.
• A Strategy Should Never Be Resource Driven.

Even having a strategy that expresses a vision for the maritime domain and the initial steps to realizing it can help attract resources that the state or region would never have considered. For example, it may be in line with certain private sector interests where a public-private partnership could more quickly and affordably manage what both the government and industry want, but what neither could achieve in isolation.

The Goal

Finally, it is vital to make sure that the perfect does not become the enemy of the good – or more accurately, that the perfect does not become the enemy of the effective. It is better to have an “imperfect” strategy that is owned and implemented than a “perfect” strategy that sits on a shelf. Ultimately, a good process will produce tangible effect. In that respect, the goal of a strategic undertaking is neither the strategy itself nor an actionable implementation plan. Both are critical, to achieving the real goal:

• The Goal is not to Draft A Strategy or Even to Implement One; It is to Achieve the Strategic Vision.

Ultimately, there are many ways to arrive at a safe, secure, sustainable and prosperous maritime domain. Further, there are many variations on what a safe, secure, sustainable and prosperous maritime domain could look like, particularly as new technologies and economic activities allow for new engagement with the maritime domain. Regardless of the specific path, however, the most effective maritime strategic process will get there. As simplistic as it sounds, therefore, the most effective maritime strategy is the one that produces results: it has to work.

The Options

Building off this Core Approach, states and regions should proceed with the strategic variant most suited to their needs.

• For those focused primarily on security, the National or Regional Maritime Security Strategy may be most efficient.
• For those focused on both security and governance the National State Action at Sea Strategy or the Regional Maritime Interagency Strategy may be most effective.
• For those working to simultaneously address security, governance and the economy in the maritime domain, a National or Regional Integrated Maritime Strategy is most advisable. This may also be best suited to states and regions working to build political will toward investing in the maritime space, as the nexus between security, governance and prosperity will be a key focus.
States and regions should carefully consider the options and the likelihood of success before making the final decision, and may wish to consult with advisors through that decision-making process.

Once the decision is made, the state or region may proceed with the guidance contained in one of the following Annexes:

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ANNEX 1

NATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY
A National Maritime Security Strategy (NMSS) is a single pillar strategy that is likely to be primarily owned by the main maritime security force or forces of the country – usually a navy, coast guard and/or marine police force, along with the civilian leadership of the ministry of defense or national security agencies.

**INITIAL TEAM**

Once the state decides to pursue an NMSS, it must work to assemble an initial team to get the process started. That initial team will really only exist until the Strategy Development Team – the core group that will shepherd the strategy through to adoption – is established. Usually composed of navy, coast guard and/or ministry of defense/national security personnel, the initial team has a choice: it can either start by overseeing a series of preliminary assessments or by engaging key stakeholders with an eye to populating the Strategy Development Team.

If the initial team starts with the assessments, the results of those assessments may be helpful in shaping who needs to be a part of the Strategy Development Team. On the other hand, a preliminary stakeholder engagement can pave the way for a deeper assessment overseen by the Strategy Development Team. It can also be helpful to turn over the leadership of the process to the Strategy Development Team early to guard against claims that people were “left out” during the assessment process.

**PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

At the outset, it is important to remember a key principle:

- **Every Citizen of a State is a Stakeholder in the State’s Maritime Security**

With this in mind, it is useful to err on the side of inclusion. The initial team should be cautious not to pre-determine who has a voice in the maritime security of the state. There are almost always more ministries, agencies and departments that focus on security than is immediately apparent and, to be most effective, a strategy will at least account for them, even if they are not all involved in the drafting process. If they genuinely have a role in maritime security, then implementation will be difficult without taking them into consideration. Furthermore, involving the views of key private sector actors – such as port operators and shipping companies – can be critical to devising a realistic strategy. The same is true of civil society groups, including fishing communities, maritime labor unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose support can make or break the success of an NMSS.

Fundamentally – the aim of this exercise is to identify:

- Whose voice should be part of the strategy development process?

Understanding this can also help contribute to the self-assessment described below. How to answer this question is up to the initial team but, importantly, the stakeholders must actually be engaged. This will also help clarify who may be a hindrance to the strategy, so the more inclusive this process is, the better. This can be done directly by the team, or en masse.
**PRACTICAL POINT**
The initial team in São Tomé and Príncipe held a preliminary event to understand all the maritime stakeholders in the government. Each agency with maritime responsibilities gave a short presentation on who they were, what they did and what their main priorities and concerns were. Following this meeting, they realized there were other stakeholders who probably needed to be consulted as well, and thus a second meeting brought the additional actors – public and private – into the conversation. From this, the scope of the Strategy and the composition of the Strategy Development Team became clear.

**PRACTICAL POINT**
In almost every strategy development process, some government actors will find themselves meeting colleagues for the first time, sometimes even within their own agency. This is not a point about which to be embarrassed, but it is an indication of why the process of strategy development has value in and of itself. Maritime professionals getting to know each other better, getting to understand what each other does and devising ways of collaborating or coordinating are some of the key benefits of the stakeholder engagement process.

**Establishing the Strategy Development Team**

Through the process of this preliminary engagement, the initial team needs to clarify who should be on the Strategy Development Team. There is no formula for this. The end result could be that the initial team becomes the Strategy Development Team with no change. But, equally, it could hand over to an entirely new group. Ideally, at least some of the initial team will transition to the Strategy Development Team in order to maintain the continuity from the start of the process and the preliminary stakeholder engagement. Some key considerations include:

- Who has the capacity to conduct or oversee the assessments?
- Who has the contacts to engage with stakeholders to get their input?
- Who has the ability to draft the strategy?
- Who has the clout to build political will towards adoption?
- Who knows the maritime security situation the best?
- Who understands the existing strategic context to help navigate nesting?
- Who actually wants to be a part of the Strategy Development Team?

While most of these questions are obvious, the last one may seem superfluous, but is decidedly not. On the one hand, someone who is interested, but lacking in skills or qualities that would make them helpful should perhaps be excluded. On the other hand, even if someone has the ideal skills and qualities, their lack of interest could be fatal to the undertaking. No one should be forced into the role if they have no interest in the process.

There is no magic number for how many should be on the Strategy Development Team, but the key is to be big enough to have some diversity of abilities and perspectives, but small enough to be efficient and effective.

Once established the Strategy Development Team will either need to proceed to the Preliminary Assessments, if not already complete, or to begin the strategy development process.

**PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS**

One of the biggest mistakes in drafting maritime strategies of any sort has been the failure to conduct an honest assessment of the status quo. A fundamental principle of strategy development is that:

- **You Must First Know Where You Are Before Deciding Where to Go**

This is the point of the Preliminary Assessments – to provide a common, realistic understanding of where the state is so that it can discern where it needs to be.
There are three assessments that need to be conducted:

1. A Self-Assessment
2. A Threat Assessment
3. A Domain Assessment

The composite picture of these three assessments will help inform what needs to be done and what is achievable.

Conducting these assessments cannot be a pro forma exercise – the point is critical analysis of strengths on which the strategy can build, weaknesses the strategy can help address, and issues and opportunities that should be considered throughout the strategy development and implementation processes. As the Africa Center for Strategic Studies’ National Maritime Strategy Toolkit states:

> In any context, to set a credible direction for the future requires: first, knowing where one is; second, knowing what is possible, good and bad; and third, knowing what challenges are likely to arise. Similarly, to establish a vision for its maritime domain, a country must understand the status quo, must be realistic about the possibilities, and must be aware of the likely difficulties.

Whether the initial team or the Strategy Development Team is responsible for overseeing these Preliminary Assessments, they must make a critical choice at this stage:

- Is it more productive to conduct the assessments themselves or to seek external, objective assistance?

Both options have merit, but both come with challenges. In the first instance, it is often more difficult to be honest about where you are when you are assessing yourself. This is partly due to natural bias, but it can also be due to a lack of comparative references. In other words, if you do not know how other states operate, you may not even recognize some of your own shortcomings or see how things could be done differently. However, outside assistance can also bring bias, a lack of understanding of the national context, misguided efforts to make things fit either a narrative or checklist and, of course, potential added cost. That said, a good external advisor, with sufficient experience, can be helpful in pointing out areas that can be improved and offering some ideas about how similar matters have been resolved elsewhere.

**Self-Assessment**

There is no prescription for how to conduct a self-assessment, but no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant the findings are, the assessment must be honest. One way that a number of countries have found helpful is to submit a set of questions to the actors identified as having a stake in the maritime security of the state, together with a deadline for providing responses. The option for anonymous responses can help elicit what no one feels comfortable sharing openly, but which needs to be addressed by the strategy. Other approaches involve an external advisor conducting interviews, or a combination of interviews and written questions. Even off-the-record discussions conducted by the Strategy Development Team, however, tend not to bring all the issues to light. So no matter how it is done:

- **There Needs to be a Mechanism for Providing Anonymous Critical Feedback**

Since the goal of a strategy is to move from where things are to where they ought to be, truthful reflection on the status quo is vital.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides a useful list of questions that could be asked. Here, they are reproduced with amendments and additions in brackets:

- **What national agencies have maritime [security] responsibilities?**
  - What are those responsibilities?
  - Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
• What processes and mechanisms exist for interagency cooperation and coordination on maritime [security] matters?
• What non-maritime agencies are most affected by [security in] the maritime domain?
  • What processes or mechanisms exist for them to voice concerns or needs regarding maritime matters?
• What international maritime laws have been signed [that address maritime security]?
  • Have they been incorporated into domestic law?
  • [What security-related international maritime laws have not been signed?]
• [Are there regional maritime security laws?]
  • [Are they signed and implemented?]
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• What do the existing maritime [security] laws, regulations, and policies cover?
  • Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
• How is maritime law enforcement intended to work?
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  • What is their manpower?
  • What equipment do they have?
  • How have they been trained?
  • [What are their respective authorities and jurisdiction?]
  • Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
• What bilateral, regional, or international obligations exist regarding maritime [security] activities?
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• What resources are at the state’s disposal for use in the maritime domain?
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These questions provide useful guidance as to what questions should be answered, but they are by no means exhaustive. Furthermore, if the approach of circulating questions is used, they need to be reformulated to be more targeted.

PRACTICAL POINT
The following is the actual set of questions that were used by a state in conducting its Self-Assessment:

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• What maritime-related education or training is required for your agency or organization?
  • What maritime-related education or training would you like to have?
• Do you ever work with external parties on maritime matters? If so, which ones?
  • By what processes or mechanism do you coordinate with them?
• What other challenges do you confront in your maritime-related work?
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• What economic or other opportunities do you see in the maritime domain that could benefit [Country X]?
As Making Maritime Strategy Work notes:

Taking a strategy from paper to practice requires five key elements:

1. Capacity
2. Capability
3. Authority & Jurisdiction
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In practical terms: capacity is having a boat, capability is knowing how to use it, authority and jurisdiction provide the legal basis – both enabling and constraining – for interdiction operations, the legal framework provides both the laws to enforce and the process by which to achieve legal finish, and will is required to fund, operate and maintain all aspects within the law enforcement ecosystem.

In many respects, the Self-Assessment for an NMSS requires appraising the current status of those five elements. If it is helpful, questions can be developed to target each element and then grouped accordingly.

Too often, states are quick to conduct Threat Assessments, but less willing to engage in the Self-Assessment. It is, however, critical for effectively informing the strategy. So too is the Domain Assessment.

**Domain Assessment**

To know what needs to be protected, a state must know what it has. While this may seem obvious, maritime resources, infrastructure and activities are often invisible from land. More than just an inventory, a Domain Assessment also examines both the relative value of the various resources, infrastructure and activities to the state, and how to monitor them. It also includes getting a handle on the marine environment including how it has changed over time, what impact climate change is having, what weather patterns impact the state and whether there are any geographic features that are distinctive.

Conducting this assessment may require speaking with private actors, coastal communities and fishing communities to understand the maritime space and what needs protecting. Vague notions of how the maritime domain works are insufficient for discerning where to focus the NMSS. Questions that should be considered in conducting the Domain Assessment include:

- What is the current contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of the state’s maritime domain?
- How many people in the state work in the maritime domain across its spectrum of activities from shipping to fishing to tourism to ports and beyond?
- What maritime infrastructure currently exists, including:
  - Ports, harbors and marinas?
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  - Shipbuilding and ship repair facilities?
  - Submarine cables and pipelines?
  - Offshore extractive infrastructure?
  - Buoys, lighthouses and aids to navigation?
  - Recreational infrastructure?
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  - Patrols?
  - Other mechanisms?
• Is there a means of creating a reporting system for tips and information?
• How is information about the maritime space analyzed?
• How is information about the maritime domain shared?

The focus of this Domain Assessment is security, so the other key factor to understand is what could interfere with the state’s efforts to secure the maritime domain. Understanding things like the roughness of the water and the presence of hazards to navigation can be critical for identifying what sorts of vessels or equipment might be suitable. Ultimately, the Domain Assessment, in combination with both the Self-Assessment and Threat Assessment, should show the state what activities most need protecting, what gaps and deficiencies exist and what needs to be prioritized in the NMSS.

**Threat Assessment**

There are many different approaches to conducting a Threat Assessment, but the key is to be comprehensive. Maritime criminals are constantly looking for ways to avoid detection, and often they succeed for a time, meaning that some threats are not easily visible. When conducting a Threat Assessment for the purpose of developing an NMSS, the key is to identify areas that need to be addressed by the Strategy. While this list is by no means exhaustive, the Threat Assessment should note the extent to which the following matters are of concern:

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  - Humans and Migrants
  - Counterfeit Goods
  - Antiquities and Cultural Property
  - Oil and Fuel
  - Mineral Resources
  - Bulk Cash
  - Sand
  - Timber
  - Wildlife
  - Other Resources
- Illegal Extraction or Theft of:
  - Fish
  - Sand
  - Mineral Resources
  - Oil and Fuel
  - Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
  - Fisheries Crime
  - Illegal Transshipment at Sea

- Illegal Bunkering
- Maritime Cyber Concerns
- Use of Technology for Illegal Purposes (including drones or autonomous vessels)
- Threats to:
  - Submarine Cables
  - Ports
  - Offshore Infrastructure
  - Coastal Tourism
  - Underwater Cultural Heritage
  - The Marine Environment
- Dumping
- Pollution
- Marine Spatial Control:
  - Marine Protected Areas
  - Maritime Boundaries
- Financial Crimes Including:
  - Money Laundering
  - Financing of Terrorism
- Maritime Safety:
  - Search and Rescue
- Maritime Health Considerations:
  - Transfer of Disease
- Protection of Recreational Activities

Again, this list is for general reference. States may have more concerns than are on this list, or they may only have a few. But the nature of the threats is important to understand, at least in broad terms, so that the NMSS can focus on addressing the security concerns that actually threaten the state’s maritime domain.
THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Approach

Once the Preliminary Assessments are complete, the Strategy Development Team must decide how to proceed with developing the Strategy. There are three key sections:

1. “The Ends” or “The Vision” – how the maritime domain will look and function if the Strategy is completely implemented. These are usually expressed through either “goals” or “aims” and “objectives.” The goals/aims are higher-level statements, while the objectives are more specific.
2. “The Ways” – how the state will achieve The Ends or The Vision.
3. “The Means” - the resources that will be required to accomplish The Ends or The Vision.

Depending on the Strategy Development Team, there are a few approaches that have worked in producing realistic Ends, Ways and Means for an NMSS.

The first option is to seek early consultation from a broad range of stakeholders. This can be extremely helpful, as it often sparks ideas early in the process before the Team becomes committed to anything. It is also consistent with the principle of inclusivity, and can be extremely helpful for encouraging adoption later on.

The second option is to prepare the ideas first, and then seek consultation on them. This can be helpful if the stakeholders are unlikely to be forthcoming with their own ideas, but it tends to be slightly more limiting. Public comment periods, for example, tend not to make for a strong sense of ownership, particularly if the public comments are not thereafter incorporated.

Finally, the third option is to proceed with just the Strategy Development Team and certain key engagements for input. This may be the fastest approach, but it is also the least likely to engender widespread buy-in, which can be critical for implementation.

The approach that never works, however, is if the content is developed by an external actor and presented to the state. Outside experts can be helpful with any of the three workable options, offering examples of what has been done elsewhere and sharing cautionary tales. But the maritime domain belongs to the state, not the outside advisor, so The Vision for how to secure the maritime domain must come from within the state.

PRACTICAL POINT
At the first meeting of the Strategy Development Team in Côte d’Ivoire, the Team drafted a set of principles that were supposed to help guide and shape the drafting process. These principles were posted and reviewed at every subsequent meeting. Members of that Team continue to emphasize how helpful this simple action was in keeping them working as a team. This sort of approach may be useful for not only keeping focus and enhancing the spirit of collaboration, but also in setting an early precedent for coming to agreement.

The Drafting

In some regards, drafting is the least important of all the processes. While it is critical to clearly articulate the outcome of the work that has been done, the main effort will be complete by the time drafting starts. In some places, the drafting has been done by one lead individual with consultation and feedback from the Team. Elsewhere, different sections have been assigned to different individuals and the composite blended together over time. In other cases, the drafting has been done by the full Team during meetings as a group. While external advisors can assist with the drafting process, the Strategy Development Team must “hold the pen.” The voice of the strategy must be the voice of the state.
Importantly, the NMSS does not have to be long. In fact, the shorter it is, the more likely it is to be adopted and implemented. This does not mean that the Strategy Development Team should try to make it short and thin on content. The key is for the Team to be direct and clear.

The Content

The content of the NMSS must express The Ends or The Vision, The Ways and The Means for moving from the status quo to where the state wants to be on maritime security. Often, this means a summary of the findings of the assessments, and key points of process – for example, noting the stakeholder engagement – before focusing on the goals or aims and subordinate objectives. Often a state may wish to have a grand strategic goal from which all other goals flow. Subordinate to each of those goals are more concrete objectives as follows in one to two sentences each:

### Grand Strategic Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC GOAL ONE</th>
<th>STRATEGIC GOAL TWO</th>
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<td>Objective 1</td>
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<td>Objective 2</td>
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<td>Objective 3</td>
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There is flexibility in producing this, so the state can create further layers of subordinate objectives, becoming more and more specific. The following is a hypothetical example:

#### GRAND STRATEGY

**To preserve the peaceful, stable, safe and secure character of the state by ensuring the wherewithal to secure state interests at sea.**

**Objective 1: Securing The Maritime Economy.**

To maximize the Coast Guard’s capacity, capability, authority and jurisdiction to secure the state’s maritime economy from illegal activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, theft, dumping, pollution, terrorism, fisheries crime, IUU fishing and illicit extraction of marine resources.

To be delivered through the following sub objectives:

- Enforcement of national and international laws by professionally trained, qualified, equipped, coordinated and monitored personnel.
- Delivery of intelligence-led joint operations, coordinating maritime and land security agencies, to interdict criminal activity across the maritime threat and hazard spectrum, including noncompliant boardings and detention and prosecution of suspects.
- Development of effective command and control arrangements within and between cooperating agencies in order to create maritime domain awareness, and a secure, timely and effective method for collecting, processing, analyzing, integrating and interpreting information and intelligence.
- Ensuring that border control operations encourage and facilitate legitimate trade, and the collection of appropriate import/export duties, whilst gathering intelligence to deter, detect and disrupt illegal activity by mounting sustainable maritime patrols and surveillance operations and securing points of entry.
- Ensuring port, vessel and supply chain security in full accordance with international standards and being audited as such under the ISPS Code.

This example shows that the goal is not to say everything that needs to be done to have maritime security. Rather, it focuses on what is not currently adequate and indicates what adequacy would look like.

The next step is to identify The Ways each of these objectives will be achieved, and then what Means are required. Taking the last bullet point, for example, the Ways and Means may be:

To accomplish this, the state will request technical assistance from the Director of Technical Cooperation at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and will offer to provide accommodation and meals to the IMO consultant for the duration of the consultancy.
The Ways and The Means can either be separated out or combined, but both need to be evident. There also needs to be a review mechanism built into the document so that the iterative process of continual improvement can be achieved. An NMSS should be revisited within a certain amount of time.

**ACTION PLAN**

Before proceeding to final consultation and adoption, the Strategy Development Team should produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan, which ideally should be adopted with the NMSS, provides a benchmarked agenda for beginning implementation. It indicates the concrete tasks that need to be accomplished to begin moving the state from the status quo to the desired Ends or Vision for maritime security. This does not have to be a lengthy plan, but it does need to set the state on the right trajectory.

**CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION**

After drafting the NMSS, the Strategy Development Team should ideally seek consultation on it from key stakeholders. It may be worth having a public consultation of some sort with an option for feedback, but that is at the discretion of the Strategy Development Team.

Every state’s adoption process will differ, but the Strategy Development Team’s work is not finished until the NMSS is formally adopted. They need to shepherd the strategy through that process to completion.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

With the Action Plan as the starting point, the state must proceed immediately from Strategy Development to Strategy Implementation. Particularly in the context of security, criminals will not wait, so neither should the state.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

Some states begin Strategy Implementation with a strategic communications campaign, working to educate stakeholders – including both the maritime security actors and the general public – on the contents of the NMSS. This can be a helpful way of signaling the state’s intentions and building a national sense of purpose around Strategy implementation.

Recall the principle - A Strategy is Not Merely a Document; It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality. Consequently, the state must do all it can to make the Vision reality.

**FINAL REMINDER**

No state or region on earth has all the answers when it comes to securing, governing and developing the maritime space. The goal of an NMSS, therefore, is to help facilitate continual improvement toward a safer, more secure, more stable and more prosperous maritime domain.
ANNEX 2

NATIONAL STATE ACTION AT SEA STRATEGY
A National State Action at Sea Strategy (NSASS) is a double pillar strategy that focuses on both the security and the governance of the maritime domain. It necessarily involves all the government agencies that have either maritime security or maritime governance responsibilities. It is quite similar in process to a National Maritime Security Strategy, particularly with regard to the assessments required, but there are two important distinctions: 1) it places additional emphasis on governance and 2) it necessitates the development of an interagency or whole of government process for overseeing the maritime domain. Both added elements actually support greater security, and the work on security helps create the space for more effective governance.

**INITIAL TEAM**

Once the state decides to pursue an NSASS, it must work to assemble an initial team to get the process started. That initial team will really only exist until the Strategy Development Team – the core group that will shepherd the strategy through to adoption – is established. Usually, it is composed of both security personnel – navy, coast guard and/or ministry of defense/national security civilians – and maritime administration personnel. In most cases, one or the other agency will be the lead, but there has to be multi-agency involvement from the outset to truly be a NSASS. The initial team also has a choice – it can either start by overseeing a series of preliminary assessments or by engaging key stakeholders with an eye to populating the Strategy Development Team.

If the initial team starts with the assessments, the results of those assessments may be helpful in shaping who needs to be a part of the Strategy Development Team. On the other hand, a preliminary stakeholder engagement can pave the way for a deeper assessment overseen by the Strategy Development Team. It can also be helpful to turn over the leadership of the process to the Strategy Development Team early to guard against claims that people were “left out” during the assessment process.

**PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

At the outset, it is important to remember a key principle:

- **Every Citizen of a State is a Stakeholder in the State’s Maritime Security and Governance**

With this in mind, it is useful to err on the side of inclusion. The initial team should be cautious not to pre-determine who has a voice in the maritime security and governance of the state. There are almost always more ministries, agencies and departments that have important roles to play than are immediately apparent and, to be most effective, a strategy will at least account for them, even if they are not all involved in the drafting process. If they genuinely have a role in maritime security and governance, then implementation will be difficult without taking them into consideration. Furthermore, involving the views of key private sector actors – such as port operators and shipping companies – can be critical to devising a realistic strategy. The same is true of civil society groups, including fishing communities and maritime labor unions whose support can make or break the success of an NSASS. Ultimately, they are often the ones whose activities and livelihoods are what the strategy seeks to support the most.

Fundamentally – the aim of this exercise is to identify:

- Whose voice should be part of the strategy development process?

Understanding this can also help contribute to the self-assessment described below. How to answer this question is up to the initial team, but, importantly – the stakeholders must actually be engaged. This will also help clarify who may be a hindrance to the strategy, so the more inclusive this process is, the better. This can be done directly by the initial team, or en masse.
PRACTICAL POINT
The initial team in São Tomé and Príncipe held a preliminary event to understand all the maritime stakeholders in the government. Each agency with maritime responsibilities gave a short presentation on who they were, what they did, and what their main priorities and concerns were. Following this meeting, they realized there were other stakeholders who probably needed to be consulted as well, and thus a second meeting brought the additional actors – public and private – into the conversation. From this, the scope of the Strategy and the composition of the Strategy Development Team became clear.

PRACTICAL POINT
In almost every strategy development process, some government actors will find themselves meeting colleagues for the first time, sometimes even within their own agency. This is not a point about which to be embarrassed, but it is an indication of why the process of strategy development has value in and of itself. Maritime professionals getting to know each other better, getting to understand what each other does and devising ways of collaborating or coordinating are some of the key benefits of the stakeholder engagement process.

Establishing the Strategy Development Team

Through the process of this preliminary engagement, the initial team needs to clarify who should be on the Strategy Development Team. There is no formula for this. The end result could be that the initial team becomes the Strategy Development Team with no change. But equally, it could hand over to an entirely new group. Ideally, at least some of the initial team will transition to the Strategy Development Team in order to maintain the continuity from the start of the process and the preliminary stakeholder engagement. Some key considerations include:

- Who has the capacity to conduct or oversee the assessments?
- Who has the contacts to engage with stakeholders to get their input?
- Who has the ability to draft the strategy?
- Who has the clout to build political will towards adoption?
- Who knows the maritime security situation the best?
- Who understands the maritime laws on paper and in practice the best?
- Who has the best understanding of the maritime governance structures?
- Who understands the existing strategic context to help navigate nesting?
- Who actually wants to be a part of the Strategy Development Team?

While most of these questions are obvious, the last one may seem superfluous, but is decidedly not. On the one hand, someone who is interested, but lacking in skills or qualities that would make them helpful should perhaps be excluded. On the other hand, even if someone has the ideal skills and qualities, their lack of interest could be fatal to the undertaking. No one should be forced into the role if they have no interest in the process.

There is no magic number for how many should be on the Strategy Development Team, but the key is to be big enough to have some diversity of abilities and perspectives, but small enough to be efficient and effective. The key for a NSASS is that it has to be balanced between security-focused actors and governance-focused actors with a desire among all of them to work together to change the status quo.

Once established the Strategy Development Team will either need to proceed to the Preliminary Assessments, if not already complete, or to begin the strategy development process.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS

One of the biggest mistakes in drafting maritime strategies of any sort has been the failure to conduct an honest assessment of the status quo. A fundamental principle of strategy development is that:

- You Must First Know Where You Are Before Deciding Where to Go
This is the point of the Preliminary Assessments – to provide a common, realistic understanding of where the state is so that it can discern where it needs to be. There are three assessments that need to be conducted:

1. A Self-Assessment
2. A Threat Assessment
3. A Domain Assessment

The composite picture of these three assessments will help inform what needs to be done and what is achievable.

Conducting these assessments cannot be a pro forma exercise – the point is critical analysis of strengths on which the strategy can build, weaknesses the strategy can help address, and issues and opportunities that should be considered throughout the strategy development and implementation processes. As the *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*’ *National Maritime Strategy Toolkit* states:

> In any context, to set a credible direction for the future requires: first, knowing where one is; second, knowing what is possible, good and bad; and third, knowing what challenges are likely to arise. Similarly, to establish a vision for its maritime domain, a country must understand the status quo, must be realistic about the possibilities, and must be aware of the likely difficulties.

Whether the initial team or the Strategy Development Team is responsible for overseeing these Preliminary Assessments, they must make a critical choice at this stage:

- Is it more productive to conduct the assessments themselves or to seek external, objective assistance?

Both options have merit, but both come with challenges. In the first instance, it is often more difficult to be honest about where you are when you are assessing yourself. This is partly due to natural bias, but it can also be due to a lack of comparative references. In other words, if you do not know how other states operate, you may not even recognize some of your own shortcomings, or see how things could be done differently. However, outside assistance can also bring bias, a lack of understanding of the national context, misguided efforts to make things fit either a narrative or checklist, and of course, potential added cost. That said, a good external advisor, with sufficient experience, can be helpful in pointing out areas that can be improved and offering some ideas about how similar matters have been resolved elsewhere.

**Self-Assessment**

There is no prescription for how to conduct a self-assessment, but no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant the findings are, the assessment must be honest. One way that a number of countries have found helpful is to submit a set of questions to the actors identified as having a stake in the maritime security of the state, together with a deadline for providing responses. The option for anonymous responses can help elicit what no one feels comfortable sharing openly, but which needs to be addressed by the strategy. Other approaches involve an external advisor conducting interviews, or a combination of interviews and written questions. Even off-the-record discussions conducted by the Strategy Development Team, however, tend not to bring all the issues to light. So no matter how it is done:

- **There Needs to be a Mechanism for Providing Anonymous Critical Feedback**

Since the goal of a strategy is to move from where things are to where they ought to be, truthful reflection on the status quo is vital.

The *Africa Center for Strategic Studies* Toolkit provides a useful list of questions that could be asked. Here, they are reproduced with amendments and additions in brackets:

- What national agencies have maritime [security and governance] responsibilities?
  - What are those responsibilities?
• Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
• What processes and mechanisms exist for interagency cooperation and coordination on maritime matters?
• What non-maritime agencies are most affected by [security and governance in] the maritime domain?
  • What processes or mechanisms exist for them to voice concerns or needs regarding maritime matters?
• What international maritime laws have been signed [that address maritime security and governance]?
  • Have they been incorporated into domestic law?
  • [What maritime security and governance-related international maritime laws have not been signed?]
• [Are there regional maritime security or governance laws?]
• [Are they signed and implemented?]
• Can [either a citizen or] an outsider reasonably access the country’s maritime laws, regulations, and policies?
• What do the existing maritime laws, regulations, and policies cover?
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• What bilateral, regional, or international obligations exist regarding maritime [security and governance] activities?
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  • [What are the stumbling blocks within the state that hinder maritime security and governance?]

These questions provide useful guidance as to what questions should be answered, but they are by no means exhaustive. Furthermore, if the approach of circulating questions is used, they need to be reformulated to be more targeted.

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• What maritime-related education or training is required for your agency or organization?
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• Do you ever work with external parties on maritime matters? If so, which ones?
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In many respects, the Self-Assessment for an NSASS requires appraising the current status of those five elements. Furthermore, it examines who oversees maritime activities and what they can do to adequately govern the space. If it is helpful, questions can be developed to target each element and then grouped accordingly.

Too often, states are quick to conduct Threat Assessments, but less willing to engage in the Self-Assessment. It is, however, critical for effectively informing the strategy. So, too is the Domain Assessment.

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To know what needs to be protected and governed, a state must know what it has. While this may seem obvious, maritime resources, infrastructure and activities are often invisible from land. More than just an inventory, a Domain Assessment also examines both the relative value of the various resources, infrastructure and activities to the state, and how to monitor them. It also includes getting a handle on the marine environment including how it has changed over time, what impact climate change is having, what weather patterns impact the state, and whether there are any geographic features that are distinctive.

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The focus of this Domain Assessment is both security and governance, so the other key factor to understand is what could interfere with the state’s efforts to secure and govern the maritime domain. Understanding things like the roughness of the water and the presence of hazards to navigation can be critical for identifying what sorts of vessels or equipment might be suitable. Similarly, the size of the maritime sector and the relative power of actors within it may help indicate the extent to which governance measures need to be reconsidered. Ultimately, the Domain Assessment, in combination with both the Self-Assessment and Threat Assessment, should show the state what activities most need protecting, what areas need greater governance, what gaps and deficiencies exist and what needs to be prioritized in the NSASS.

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  - Counterfeit Goods
  - Antiquities and Cultural Property
  - Oil and Fuel
  - Mineral Resources
  - Bulk Cash
  - Sand
  - Timber
  - Wildlife
  - Other Resources
- Illegal Extraction or Theft of:
  - Fish
  - Sand
  - Mineral Resources
  - Oil and Fuel
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
- Fisheries Crime
- Illegal Transshipment at Sea
- Illegal Bunkering
- Maritime Cyber Concerns
- Use of Technology for Illegal Purposes (including drones or autonomous vessels)
- Threats to:
  - Submarine Cables
  - Ports
  - Offshore Infrastructure
  - Coastal Tourism
  - Underwater Cultural Heritage
  - The Marine Environment
  - Dumping
  - Pollution
  - Marine Spatial Control:
    - Marine Protected Areas
    - Maritime Boundaries
  - Financial Crimes Including:
    - Money Laundering
    - Financing of Terrorism
  - Maritime Safety:
    - Search and Rescue
  - Maritime Health Considerations:
    - Transfer of Disease
  - Protection of Recreational Activities

Again, this list is for general reference. States may have more concerns than are on this list, or they may only have a few. But the nature of the threats is important to understand, at least in broad terms, so that the NSASS can focus on addressing the security concerns that actually threaten the state’s maritime domain and impede the governance of it.
THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Approach

Once the Preliminary Assessments are complete, the Strategy Development Team must decide how to proceed with developing the Strategy. There are three key sections:

1. “The Ends” or “The Vision” – how the maritime domain will look and function if the Strategy is completely implemented. These are usually expressed through either “goals” or “aims” and “objectives.” The goals/aims are higher-level statements, while the objectives are more specific.
2. “The Ways” – how the state will achieve The Ends or The Vision.
3. “The Means” - the resources that will be required to accomplish The Ends or The Vision.

Depending on the Strategy Development Team, there are a few approaches that have worked in producing realistic Ends, Ways and Means for an NSASS.

The first option is to seek early consultation from a broad range of stakeholders. This can be extremely helpful, as it often sparks ideas early in the process before the Team becomes committed to anything. It is also consistent with the principle of inclusivity, and can be extremely helpful for encouraging adoption later on.

The second option is to prepare the ideas first, and then seek consultation on them. This can be helpful if the stakeholders are unlikely to be forthcoming with their own ideas, but it tends to be slightly more limiting. Public comment periods, for example, tend not to make for a strong sense of ownership, particularly if the public comments are not thereafter incorporated.

Finally, the third option is to proceed with just the Strategy Development Team and certain key engagements for input. This may be the fastest approach, but it is also the least likely to engender widespread buy-in, which can be critical for implementation.

The approach that never works, however, is if the content is developed by an external actor and presented to the state. Outside experts can be helpful with any of the three workable options, offering both examples of what has been done elsewhere and sharing cautionary tales. But the maritime domain belongs to the state, not the outside advisor, so The Vision for how to secure the maritime domain must come from within the state.

PRACTICAL POINT
At the first meeting of the Strategy Development Team in Côte d’Ivoire, the Team drafted a set of principles that were supposed to help guide and shape the drafting process. These principles were posted and reviewed at every subsequent meeting. Members of that Team continue to emphasize how helpful this simple action was in keeping them working as a team. This sort of approach may be useful for not only keeping focus and enhancing the spirit of collaboration, but also in setting an early precedent for coming to agreement.

The Drafting

In some regards, drafting is the least important of all the processes. While it is critical to clearly articulate the outcome of the work that has been done, the main effort will be complete by the time drafting starts. In some places, the drafting has been done by one lead individual with consultation and feedback from the Team. Elsewhere, different sections have been assigned to different individuals and the composite blended together over time. In other cases, the drafting has been done by the full Team during meetings as a group. While external advisors can assist with the drafting process, the Strategy Development Team must “hold the pen”. The voice of the strategy must be the voice of the state.

Importantly, the NSASS does not have to be long. In fact, the shorter it is, the more likely it is to be adopted and implemented. This does not mean that the Strategy Development Team should try to make it short and thin on content. The key is for the Team to be direct and clear.
The Content

The content of the NSASS must express The Ends or The Vision, The Ways and The Means for moving from the status quo to where the state wants to be on maritime security and governance. Often, this means a summary of the findings of the assessments, and key points of process – for example, noting the stakeholder engagement – before focusing on the goals or aims and subordinate objectives under each pillar. Often a state may wish to have a grand strategic goal from which all other goals flow. Subordinate to each of those goals are more concrete objectives as follows in one to two sentences each:

**Grand Strategic Vision**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC GOAL ONE</th>
<th>STRATEGIC GOAL TWO</th>
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<td>• Objective 1</td>
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<td>• Objective 2</td>
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<td>• Objective 3</td>
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There is flexibility in producing this, so the state can create further layers of subordinate objectives, becoming more and more specific. The following is a hypothetical example:

**GRAND STRATEGY**

**To preserve the peaceful, stable, safe and secure character of the state by ensuring the wherewithal to secure state interests at sea.**

**Objective 1: Securing The Maritime Economy.**

To maximize the Coast Guard’s capacity, capability, authority and jurisdiction to secure the state’s maritime economy from illegal activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, theft, dumping, pollution, terrorism, fisheries crime, IUU fishing and illicit extraction of marine resources.

To be delivered through the following sub objectives:

- Enforcement of national and international laws by professionally trained, qualified, equipped, coordinated and monitored personnel.
- Delivery of intelligence-led joint operations, coordinating maritime and land security agencies, to interdict criminal activity across the maritime threat and hazard spectrum, including noncompliant boardings and detention and prosecution of suspects.
- Development of effective command and control arrangements within and between cooperating agencies in order to create maritime domain awareness, and a secure, timely and effective method for collecting, processing, analyzing, integrating and interpreting information and intelligence.
- Ensuring that border control operations encourage and facilitate legitimate trade, and the collection of appropriate import/export duties, whilst gathering intelligence to deter, detect and disrupt illegal activity by mounting sustainable maritime patrols and surveillance operations and securing points of entry.
- Ensuring port, vessel and supply chain security in full accordance with international standards and being audited as such under the ISPS Code.

This example shows that the goal is not to say everything that needs to be done to have maritime security and governance. Rather, it focuses on what is not currently adequate and indicates what adequacy would look like.

The next step is to identify The Ways each of these objectives will be achieved, and then what Means are required. Taking the last bullet point, for example, the Ways and Means may be:

**To accomplish this, the state will request technical assistance from the Director of Technical Cooperation at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and will offer to provide accommodation and meals to the IMO consultant for the duration of the consultancy.**

The Ways and The Means can either be separated out or combined, but both need to be evident.
There also needs to be a review mechanism built into the document so that the iterative process of continual improvement can be achieved. An NSASS should be revisited within a certain amount of time.

**INTERAGENCY PROCESS**

Even if the state already governs its maritime domain via an interagency process, developing a NSASS is an occasion to review its fitness for purpose. Around the world, there is increasing recognition that maritime security and governance require interagency processes to be successful. While “Making Maritime Strategy Work” discusses some of the different layers of cooperation that should be considered, the interagency layer is critical for governance, especially for supporting both safety and security. Every coastal, island and archipelagic state likely has a catalogue of maritime disasters that could have been either avoided or mitigated with more effective interagency cooperation.

While a Framework longer than this one could be written on how to develop a functional interagency or whole of government process, there are a few key elements to making it work:

1. It has to be repeatable – in other words, the process needs to be clear enough that it is followed repeatedly and does not just devolve to ad hoc approaches;
2. It has to be documentable – as personnel rotate, there needs to be a way to look back on what has been done in the past to learn from the good and the bad alike.
3. It has to get salient information to the appropriate senior decision makers in a timely fashion – the whole point is to create a process for informed decision making, but timeliness is critical.

There are really three reasons for approaching interagency cooperation in this way. First, it enhances efficiency – as all the agencies know what the others are doing, it reduces duplication of effort and waste. Second, it enhances effectiveness – if all the agencies know their roles and responsibilities and those of the other agencies, they can work together as a team and be more effective in maritime governance and security. Finally, it increases transparency – with everyone working together, it limits the opportunities for ill-advised and corrupt practices which would otherwise undermine maritime governance and security.

Whether the interagency process is a full-time unit that has formal governance and oversight authorities with personnel from various agencies, or a responsive virtual cell that only operates upon a triggering event, the principles are the same. Regardless of the sort of mechanism, practicing is important, as the process should be able to exhibit the principle of agility and adapt to address changing maritime circumstances.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

The United States’ Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Process involves cooperation between 17 different agencies. It engages regularly in a scenario-based “war game” or “table top exercise” (TTX) to 1) practice its repeatable, documentable process, 2) ensure that there are no barriers to the timely flow of salient information to senior decision makers and 3) prepare for issues and concerns that are visible on the horizon. TTXs are a great way to work through to determine how processes should work. They are a safe but realistic setting, and can be critical for ensuring effective action when confronting real-world maritime security and governance issues.

A NSASS should clarify not only how the state’s interagency mechanism will function, but what its role in implementing the strategy will be. Importantly, it should also be tasked with overseeing the strategy’s review process.
ACTION PLAN

Before proceeding to final consultation and adoption, the Strategy Development Team should produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan, which ideally should be adopted with the NSASS, provides a benchmarked agenda for beginning implementation. It indicates the concrete tasks that need to be accomplished to begin moving the state from the status quo to the desired Ends or Vision for maritime security. This does not have to be a lengthy plan, but it does need to set the state on the right trajectory. It also needs to be part of the mission of the interagency process.

CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION

After drafting the NSASS, the Strategy Development Team should ideally seek consultation on it from key stakeholders. It may be worth having a public consultation of some sort with an option for feedback, but that is at the discretion of the Strategy Development Team.

Every state’s adoption process will differ, but the Strategy Development Team’s work is not finished until the NSASS is formally adopted. They need to shepherd the strategy through that process to completion.

IMPLEMENTATION

With the Action Plan as the starting point, the state must proceed immediately from Strategy Development to Strategy Implementation. Particularly in the context of security, criminals will not wait, so neither should the state.

PRACTICAL POINT
Some states begin Strategy Implementation with a strategic communications campaign, working to educate stakeholders – including both the maritime security actors and the general public – on the contents of the NSASS. This can be a helpful way of signaling the state’s intentions and building a national sense of purpose around Strategy implementation.

Recall the principle - A Strategy is Not Merely a Document; It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality. Consequently, the state must do all it can to make the Vision reality.

FINAL REMINDER

No state or region on earth has all the answers when it comes to securing, governing and developing the maritime space. The goal of an NSASS, therefore, is to help facilitate continual improvement toward a safer, more secure, more stable and more prosperous maritime domain.
ANNEX 3

NATIONAL INTEGRATED MARITIME STRATEGY
A National Integrated Maritime Strategy (NIMS) is a triple pillar strategy that focuses on 1) maritime security, 2) governance of the maritime domain and 3) the maritime economy. It necessarily involves all the government agencies that have either maritime security, maritime governance and economic responsibilities, along with the private actors who work in the maritime domain. It is quite similar in process to a National State Action at Sea Strategy, particularly with regard to the assessments required, but there are two important distinctions: 1) it places additional emphasis on economic activities and 2) it necessitates a process for engaging with the private sector and coastal and fisheries communities on economic matters. The aims of a NIMS are therefore to secure the maritime domain against undesirable activity, govern it effectively and encourage economic activity that benefits the state.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

In developing what it has termed a “Global Maritime Fulcrum Strategy”, Indonesia not only sought to address the three pillars of security, governance and the maritime economy, but a total of seven pillars, making it one of the most expansive Integrated Maritime Strategies today:

1. Marine and Human Resource Development
2. Maritime Security, Law Enforcement and Safety at Sea
3. Ocean Governance and Institutions
4. Maritime Economic Development
5. Sea Space Management and Marine Protection
6. Maritime Culture
7. Maritime Diplomacy

States can determine whether to include such matters as marine protection under security and governance or to have it as a separate pillar. Fundamentally, though, once a strategy has maritime security, maritime governance and the maritime economy included, it is an Integrated Maritime Strategy, no matter how many further pillars may be added.

**INITIAL TEAM**

Once the state decides to pursue a NIMS, it must work to assemble an initial team to get the process started. That initial team will really only exist until the Strategy Development Team – the core group that will shepherd the strategy through to adoption – is established. Usually, it is composed of security personnel, including personnel from the navy and ministry of defense, maritime administration personnel and personnel from either the economic or finance ministry or ministry of the blue economy. In most cases, one or another agency will be the lead, but there has to be multi-agency involvement across all three pillars from the outset to truly be a NIMS. The initial team also has a choice – it can either start by overseeing a series of preliminary assessments or by engaging key stakeholders with an eye to composing the Strategy Development Team.

If the initial team starts with the assessments, the results of those assessments may be helpful in shaping who needs to be a part of the Strategy Development Team. On the other hand, a preliminary stakeholder engagement can pave the way for a deeper assessment overseen by the Strategy Development Team. It can also be helpful to turn over the leadership of the process to the Strategy Development Team early to guard against claims that people were “left out” during the assessment process.

**PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

At the outset, it is important to remember a key principle:

- Every Citizen of a State is a Stakeholder in the State’s Maritime Security and Governance and Economic Activity
As the saying goes, "no shipping, no shopping". It is important throughout the NIMS development process to remember just how much the state relies on the maritime domain. With that in mind, it is useful to err on the side of inclusion. The initial team should be cautious not to pre-determine who has a voice in the maritime security, governance and economic activity of the state. There are almost always more ministries, agencies, departments and even private and other non-state actors that have important roles to play than are immediately apparent. To be most effective, a strategy will at least account for them, even if they are not all involved in the drafting process. If they genuinely have a role in maritime security, governance and economic activity then implementation will be difficult without taking them into consideration. Furthermore, involving the views of private sector actors – such as port operators and shipping companies - will be critical to devising a realistic NIMS. The same is true of civil society groups, including fishing communities, maritime labor unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose involvement is integral to the NIMS. Ultimately, they are often the ones whose activities and livelihoods are what the strategy seeks to support the most.

Fundamentally – the aim of this exercise is to identify:

- Whose voice should be part of the strategy development process?

Understanding this can also help contribute to the self-assessment described below. How to answer this question is up to the initial team, but, importantly – the stakeholders must actually be engaged. This will also help clarify who may be a hindrance to the strategy, so the more inclusive this process is, the better. This can be done directly by the team, or en masse.

**PRACTICAL POINT**
The initial team in São Tomé and Príncipe held a preliminary event to understand all the maritime stakeholders in the government. Each agency with maritime responsibilities gave a short presentation on who they were, what they did, and what their main priorities and concerns were. Following this meeting, they realized there were other stakeholders who probably needed to be consulted as well, and thus a second meeting brought the additional actors – public and private – into the conversation. From this, the scope of the Strategy and the composition of the Strategy Development Team became clear.

**PRACTICAL POINT**
In almost every strategy development process, some government actors will find themselves meeting colleagues for the first time, sometimes even within their own agency. This is not a point about which to be embarrassed, but it is an indication of why the process of strategy development has value in and of itself. Maritime professionals getting to know each other better, getting to understand what each other does, and devising ways of collaborating or coordinating are some of the key benefits of the stakeholder engagement process.

**Establishing the Strategy Development Team**

Through the process of this preliminary engagement, the initial team needs to clarify who should be on the Strategy Development Team. There is no formula for this. The end result could be that the initial team becomes the Strategy Development Team with no change. But equally, it could hand over to an entirely new group. Ideally, at least some of the initial team will transition to the Strategy Development Team in order to maintain the continuity from the start of the process and the preliminary stakeholder engagement. Some key considerations include:

- Who has the capacity to conduct or oversee the assessments?
- Who has the contacts to engage with stakeholders to get their input?
- Who has the ability to draft the strategy?
- Who has the clout to build political will towards adoption?
- Who knows the maritime security situation the best?
- Who understands the maritime laws on paper and in practice the best?
- Who has the best understanding of the maritime governance structures?
- Who understands the maritime economy?
- Who understands the principles of the blue economy?
Who has the contacts and credibility to engage the private sector and civil society?
Who understands the existing strategic context to help navigate nesting?
Who actually wants to be a part of the Strategy Development Team?

While most of these questions are obvious, the last one may seem superfluous, but is decidedly not. On the one hand, someone who is interested, but lacking in skills or qualities that would make them helpful should perhaps be excluded. On the other hand, even if someone has the ideal skills and qualities, their lack of interest could be fatal to the undertaking. No one should be forced into the role if they have no interest in the process.

There is no magic number for how many should be on the Strategy Development Team, but the key is to be big enough to have some diversity of abilities and perspectives, but small enough to be efficient and effective. The key for a NIMS is that it has to be balanced between security-focused actors, governance-focused actors and economy-focused actors, with a desire among all of them to work together to change the status quo.

Once established the Strategy Development Team will either need to proceed to the Preliminary Assessments, if not already complete, or to begin the strategy development process.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS

One of the biggest mistakes in drafting maritime strategies of any sort has been the failure to conduct an honest assessment of the status quo. A fundamental principle of strategy development is that:

- **You Must First Know Where You Are Before Deciding Where to Go**

This is the point of the Preliminary Assessments – to provide a common, realistic understanding of where the state is so that it can discern where it needs to be.

There are three assessments that need to be conducted:

1. A Self-Assessment
2. A Threat Assessment
3. A Domain Assessment

The composite picture of these three assessments will help inform what needs to be done and what is achievable.

Conducting these assessments cannot be a pro forma exercise – the point is critical analysis of strengths on which the strategy can build, weaknesses the strategy can help address, and issues and opportunities that should be considered throughout the strategy development and implementation processes. As the Africa Center for Strategic Studies’ National Maritime Strategy Toolkit states:

> In any context, to set a credible direction for the future requires: first, knowing where one is; second, knowing what is possible, good and bad; and third, knowing what challenges are likely to arise. Similarly, to establish a vision for its maritime domain, a country must understand the status quo, must be realistic about the possibilities, and must be aware of the likely difficulties.

Whether the initial team or the Strategy Development Team is responsible for overseeing these Preliminary Assessments, they must make a critical choice at this stage:

- Is it more productive to conduct the assessments themselves or to seek external, objective assistance?

Both options have merit, but both come with challenges. In the first instance, it is often more difficult to be honest about where you are when you are assessing yourself. This is partly due to natural bias, but it can also be due to a lack of comparative references. In other words, if you do not know how other
states operate, you may not even recognize some of your own shortcomings, or see how things could be
done differently. However, outside assistance can also bring bias, a lack of understanding of the national
context, misguided efforts to make things fit either a narrative or checklist, and of course, potential added
cost. That said, a good external advisor, with sufficient experience, can be helpful in pointing out areas
that can be improved and offering some ideas about how similar matters have been resolved elsewhere.

Self-Assessment

There is no prescription for how to conduct a self-assessment, but no matter how uncomfortable or
unpleasant the findings are, the assessment must be honest. One way that a number of countries have
found helpful is to submit a set of questions to the actors identified as having a stake in the maritime
security of the state, together with a deadline for providing responses. The option for anonymous
responses can help elicit what no one feels comfortable sharing openly, but which needs to be addressed
by the strategy. Other approaches involve an external advisor conducting interviews, or a combination of
interviews and written questions. Even off-the-record discussions conducted by the Strategy Development
Team, however, tend not to bring all the issues to light. So no matter how it is done:

• There Needs to be a Mechanism for Providing Anonymous Critical Feedback

Since the goal of a strategy is to move from where things are to where they ought to be, truthful reflection
on the status quo is vital.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides a useful list of questions that could be asked. Here,
they are reproduced with amendments and additions in brackets:

• What national agencies have maritime [security and governance] responsibilities?
  • Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
  • What processes and mechanisms exist for interagency cooperation and coordination on maritime
    matters?
  • What non-maritime agencies are most affected by [security and governance in] the maritime
    domain?
  • What processes or mechanisms exist for them to voice concerns or needs regarding maritime
    matters?
  • What international maritime laws have been signed [that address maritime security and
governance]?
  • Have they been incorporated into domestic law?
  • [What maritime security and governance-related international maritime laws have not been
    signed?]
  • [Are there regional maritime security or governance laws?]
  • [Are they signed and implemented?]
  • Can [either a citizen or] an outsider reasonably access the country’s maritime laws, regulations,
    and policies?
  • What do the existing maritime laws, regulations, and policies cover?
  • Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
  • How is maritime law enforcement intended to work?
  • Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
  • What institutions have naval or maritime law enforcement responsibilities?
  • What is their manpower?
  • What equipment do they have?
  • How have they been trained?
  • [What are their respective authorities and jurisdiction?]
  • Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
  • What bilateral, regional, or international obligations exist regarding maritime [security and
governance] activities?
  • Are there known deficiencies in meeting those obligations?
  • What resources are at the state’s disposal for use in the maritime domain?
  • [What are the stumbling blocks within the state that hinder maritime security and governance?]
These questions provide useful guidance as to what questions should be answered, but they are by no means exhaustive. Furthermore, if the approach of circulating questions is used, they need to be reformulated to be more targeted.

**PRACTICAL POINT**
The following is the actual set of questions that were used by a state in conducting its Self-Assessment:

- What are your maritime-related responsibilities?
- Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
- By what processes or mechanisms do you cooperate or coordinate with other agencies or organizations on maritime matters?
  - Which agencies or organizations do you work with the most?
  - Have you encountered any challenges working with other agencies or organizations?
- What maritime laws, if any, do you encounter in your work?
- Are there any legal gaps, problems or deficiencies you have encountered in your maritime-related work?
- Do you feel there are any problems regarding law enforcement in the maritime space?
- What maritime-related education or training is required for your agency or organization?
  - What maritime-related education or training would you like to have?
  - Do you ever work with external parties on maritime matters? If so, which ones?
- By what processes or mechanisms do you coordinate with them?
- What other challenges do you confront in your maritime-related work?
- What tools or resources would help you better meet your maritime-related responsibilities?
- What economic or other opportunities do you see in the maritime domain that could benefit [Country X]?

As *[Making Maritime Strategy Work]* notes:

Taking a strategy from paper to practice requires five key elements:

1. Capacity
2. Capability
3. Authority & Jurisdiction
4. A Legal Framework
5. Will

In practical terms: capacity is having a boat, capability is knowing how to use it, authority and jurisdiction provide the legal basis – both enabling and constraining – for interdiction operations, the legal framework provides both the laws to enforce and the process by which to achieve legal finish, and will is required to fund, operate and maintain all aspects within the law enforcement ecosystem.

In many respects, the Self-Assessment for a NIMS requires appraising the current status of those five elements. Furthermore, it examines who oversees maritime activities and what they can do to adequately govern and develop the space. If it is helpful, questions can be developed to target each element and then grouped accordingly.

Too often, states are quick to conduct Threat Assessments, but less willing to engage in the Self-Assessment. It is, however, critical for effectively informing the strategy. So, too is the Domain Assessment.

**Domain Assessment**

To know what needs to be protected and governed, a state must know what it has. While this may seem obvious, maritime resources, infrastructure and activities are often invisible from land. More than just an inventory, a Domain Assessment also examines both the relative value of the various resources, infrastructure and activities to the state, and how to monitor them. It also includes getting a handle on the marine environment including how it has changed over time, what impact climate change is having, what weather patterns impact the state, and whether there are any geographic features that are distinctive.
Conducting this assessment for a NIMS requires engaging with private actors, coastal communities and fishing communities to understand the maritime space and what needs protecting. Vague notions of how the maritime domain works are insufficient for discerning where to focus the NIMS. Questions that should be considered in conducting the Domain Assessment include:

- What is the current contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of the state’s maritime domain?
- How many people in the state work in the maritime domain across its spectrum of activities from shipping to fishing to tourism to ports and beyond?
- What maritime infrastructure currently exists, including:
  - Ports, harbors and marinas?
  - Canals?
  - Shipbuilding and ship repair facilities?
  - Submarine cables and pipelines?
  - Offshore extractive infrastructure?
  - Buoys, lighthouses and aids to navigation?
  - Recreational infrastructure?
  - Underwater cultural heritage or tourism?
- How is the maritime domain currently monitored?
  - Radar?
  - Vessel monitoring systems (VMS)?
  - Automatic Identification System (AIS)-based maritime domain awareness platforms?
  - Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT)?
  - Fisheries control systems?
  - Search and rescue systems?
  - Coast watch centers?
  - Patrols?
  - Other mechanisms?
- Is there a means of creating a reporting system for tips and information?
- How is information about the maritime space analyzed?
- How is information about the maritime domain shared?

These questions all target the existing economic, governance and oversight activities in the maritime domain. For a NIMS, however, the Strategy Development Team has to be working to look at how the economic value of the state’s maritime space could be enhanced. To that end, the Domain Assessment also has to explore potential. The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides some good questions on this front, reprinted below:

- What is the maximum sustainable exploitation of the local fishery at the artisanal, semi-industrial, and industrial levels?
  - What is the economic value of the fish at each of those levels?
- What, if any, potential does the state have for offshore mineral or oil and gas extraction?
  - Where are those minerals?
  - Is it cost-effective to extract them?
- Is there any potential use of the marine environment for green energy including wind, wave, and hydroelectric?
- How could port and shoreside infrastructure be most effectively used?
- What onshore agriculture requires maritime transport and how could its connectivity be improved and value increased?
- What onshore manufacturing requires maritime transport and how could its connectivity be improved?
- What onshore natural resource extraction requires maritime transport and how could its connectivity be improved?
- What shoreside storage facilities could add economic value to the maritime domain?
- What shoreside fish processing and packaging infrastructure could increase maritime economic activity?
- What is the local market’s reliance on maritime goods and how could value be added to the supply chain?
What maritime-related tourist infrastructure could be developed or enhanced?
What recreational and luxury maritime activities could be marketed?

Essentially, the Strategy Development Team needs to consider how to maximize the sustainable economic benefit that can be derived from the state's maritime domain.

The focus of this Domain Assessment is simultaneously on security, governance and the maritime economy, so the other key factor to understand is what could interfere with the state's efforts to secure, govern and develop the maritime domain. Understanding things like the roughness of the water and the presence of hazards to navigation can be critical for identifying what sorts of vessels or equipment might be suitable. Similarly, the size of the maritime sector and the relative power of actors within it may help indicate the extent to which governance measures need to be reconsidered. Even factors such as the general business and investment climate in the country can help identify how easy or difficult it may be to attract new investors and opportunities to pursue blue economic initiatives. Ultimately, the Domain Assessment, in combination with both the Self-Assessment and Threat Assessment, should show the state what activities most need protecting, what areas need greater governance, what possibilities should be pursued, what gaps and deficiencies exist and what needs to be prioritized in the NIMS.

Threat Assessment

There are many different approaches to conducting a Threat Assessment, but the key is to be comprehensive. Maritime criminals are constantly looking for ways to avoid detection and they often succeed for a time, meaning that some threats are not easily visible. When conducting a Threat Assessment for the purpose of developing NIMS, the key is to identify areas that need to be addressed by the Strategy. While this list is by no means exhaustive, the Threat Assessment should note the extent to which the following matters are of concern:

- Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea
- Slavery
- Illegal Broadcasting
- Maritime Terrorism
- Trafficking and Smuggling of:
  - Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances
  - Arms
  - Humans and Migrants
  - Counterfeit Goods
  - Antiquities and Cultural Property
  - Oil and Fuel
  - Mineral Resources
  - Bulk Cash
  - Sand
  - Timber
  - Wildlife
  - Other Resources
- Illegal Extraction or Theft of:
  - Fish
  - Sand
  - Mineral Resources
  - Oil and Fuel
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
- Fisheries Crime
- Illegal Transshipment at Sea
- Illegal Bunkering
- Maritime Cyber Concerns
- Use of Technology for Illegal Purposes (including drones or autonomous vessels)
- Threats to:
  - Submarine Cables
  - Ports
  - Offshore Infrastructure
  - Coastal Tourism
  - Underwater Cultural Heritage
  - The Marine Environment
- Dumping
- Pollution
- Marine Spatial Control:
  - Marine Protected Areas
  - Maritime Boundaries
- Financial Crimes Including:
  - Money Laundering
  - Financing of Terrorism
- Maritime Safety:
  - Search and Rescue
- Maritime Health Considerations:
  - Transfer of Disease
- Protection of Recreational Activities

Again, this list is for general reference. States may have more concerns than are on this list, or they may only have a few. But the nature of the threats is important to understand, at least in broad terms, so that the
NIMS can focus on addressing the security concerns that actually threaten the state’s maritime domain and impede both the governance and development of it.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Approach

Once the Preliminary Assessments are complete, the Strategy Development Team must decide how to proceed with developing the Strategy. There are three key sections:

1. “The Ends” or “The Vision” – how the maritime domain will look and function if the Strategy is completely implemented. These are usually expressed through either “goals” or “aims” and “objectives.” The goals/aims are higher-level statements, while the objectives are more specific.
2. “The Ways” – how the state will achieve The Ends or The Vision.
3. “The Means” – the resources that will be required to accomplish The Ends or The Vision.

Depending on the Strategy Development Team, there are a few approaches that have worked in producing realistic Ends, Ways and Means for a NIMS.

The first option is to seek early consultation from a broad range of stakeholders. This can be extremely helpful, as it often sparks ideas early in the process before the Team becomes committed to anything. It is also consistent with the principle of inclusivity, and can be extremely helpful for encouraging adoption later on.

The second option is to prepare the ideas first, and then seek consultation on them. This can be helpful if the stakeholders are unlikely to be forthcoming with their own ideas, but it tends to be slightly more limiting. Public comment periods, for example, tend not to make for a strong sense of ownership, particularly if the public comments are not thereafter incorporated.

Finally, the third option is to proceed with just the Strategy Development Team and certain key engagements for input. This may be the fastest approach, but it is also the least likely to engender widespread buy-in, which can be critical for implementation.

The approach that never works, however, is if the content is developed by an external actor and presented to the state. Outside experts can be helpful with any of the three workable options, offering examples of what has been done elsewhere and sharing cautionary tales. But the maritime domain belongs to the state, not the outside advisor, so The Vision for how to secure the maritime domain must come from within the state.

PRACTICAL POINT

At the first meeting of the Strategy Development Team in Côte d’Ivoire, the Team drafted a set of principles that were supposed to help guide and shape the drafting process. These principles were posted and reviewed at every subsequent meeting. Members of that Team continue to emphasize how helpful this simple action was in keeping them working as a team. This sort of approach may be useful for not only keeping focus and enhancing the spirit of collaboration, but also in setting an early precedent for coming to agreement.

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In some regards, drafting is the least important of all the processes. While it is critical to clearly articulate the outcome of the work that has been done, the main effort will be complete by the time drafting starts. In some places, the drafting has been done by one lead individual with consultation and feedback from the Team. Elsewhere, different sections have been assigned to different individuals and the composite blended together over time. In other cases, the drafting has been done by the full Team during meetings.
as a group. While external advisors can assist with the drafting process, the Strategy Development Team must “hold the pen”. The voice of the strategy must be the voice of the state.

Importantly, the NIMS does not have to be long. In fact, the shorter it is, the more likely it is to be adopted and implemented. This does not mean that the Strategy Development Team should try to make it short and thin on content. The key is for the Team to be direct and clear.

The Content

The content of the NIMS must express The Ends or The Vision, The Ways and The Means for moving from the status quo to where the state wants to be on maritime security, maritime governance and the maritime. Often, this means a summary of the findings of the assessments, and key points of process - for example, noting the stakeholder engagement – before focusing on the goals or aims and subordinate objectives under each pillar. Often a state may wish to have a grand strategic goal from which all other goals flow. Subordinate to each of those goals are more concrete objectives as follows in one to two sentences each:

Grand Strategic Vision

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There is flexibility in producing this, so the state can create further layers of subordinate objectives, becoming more and more specific. The following is a hypothetical example:

GRAND STRATEGY

To preserve the peaceful, stable, safe and secure character of the state by ensuring the wherewithal to secure state interests at sea.

Objective 1: Securing The Maritime Economy.
To maximize the Coast Guard’s capacity, capability, authority and jurisdiction to secure the state’s maritime economy from illegal activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, theft, dumping, pollution, terrorism, fisheries crime, IUU fishing and illicit extraction of marine resources.

To be delivered through the following sub objectives:
- Enforcement of national and international laws by professionally trained, qualified, equipped, coordinated and monitored personnel.
- Delivery of intelligence-led joint operations, coordinating maritime and land security agencies, to interdict criminal activity across the maritime threat and hazard spectrum, including noncompliant boardings and detention and prosecution of suspects.
- Development of effective command and control arrangements within and between cooperating agencies in order to create maritime domain awareness, and a secure, timely and effective method for collecting, processing, analyzing, integrating and interpreting information and intelligence.
- Ensuring that border control operations encourage and facilitate legitimate trade, and the collection of appropriate import/export duties, whilst gathering intelligence to deter, detect and disrupt illegal activity by mounting sustainable maritime patrols and surveillance operations and securing points of entry.
- Ensuring port, vessel and supply chain security in full accordance with international standards and being audited as such under the ISPS Code.

This example shows that the goal is not to say everything that needs to be done to have maritime security, governance and prosperity. Rather, it focuses on what is not currently adequate and indicates what adequacy would look like.
The next step is to identify the ways each of these objectives will be achieved, and then what means are required. Taking the last bullet point, for example, the ways and means may be:

To accomplish this, the state will request technical assistance from the Director of Technical Cooperation at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and will offer to provide accommodation and meals to the IMO consultant for the duration of the consultancy.

The ways and the means can either be separated out or combined, but both need to be evident.

There also needs to be a review mechanism built into the document so that the iterative process of continual improvement can be achieved. A NIMS should be revisited within a certain amount of time.

**INTERAGENCY PROCESS**

Even if the state already governs its maritime domain via an interagency process, developing a NIMS is an occasion to review its fitness for purpose. Around the world, there is increasing recognition that maritime security and governance require interagency processes to be successful. While “Making Maritime Strategy Work” discusses some of the different layers of cooperation that should be considered, including public-private, the interagency layer is critical for governance, especially for supporting both safety and security. It is also then a means by which integrated public-private cooperation for maritime economic activity can occur. Every coastal, island and archipelagic state likely has a catalogue of maritime disasters that could have been either avoided or mitigated with more effective interagency cooperation.

While a Framework longer than this one could be written on how to develop a functional interagency or whole of government process, there are a few key elements to making it work:

1. It has to be repeatable – in other words, the process needs to be clear enough that it is followed repeatedly and does not just devolve to ad hoc approaches;
2. It has to be documentable – as personnel rotate, there needs to be a way to look back on what has been done in the past to learn from the good and the bad alike.
3. It has to get salient information to the appropriate senior decision makers in a timely fashion – the whole point is to create a process for informed decision making, but timeliness is critical.

There are really three reasons for approaching interagency cooperation in this way. First, it enhances efficiency – as all the agencies know what the others are doing, it reduces duplication of effort and waste. Second, it enhances effectiveness – if all the agencies know their roles and responsibilities and those of the other agencies, they can work together as a team and be more effective in maritime governance and security. Finally, it increases transparency – with everyone working together, it limits the opportunities for ill-advised and corrupt practices which would otherwise undermine maritime governance and security.

Whether the interagency process is a full-time unit that has formal governance and oversight authorities with personnel from various agencies, or a responsive virtual cell that only operates upon a triggering event, the principles are the same. Regardless of the sort of mechanism, practicing is important, as the process should be able to exhibit the principle of agility and adapt to address changing maritime circumstances.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

The United States’ Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Process involves cooperation between 17 different agencies. It engages regularly in a scenario-based “war game” or “table top exercise” (TTX) to 1) practice its repeatable, documentable process, 2) ensure that there are no barriers to the timely flow of salient information to senior decision makers, and 3) prepare for issues and concerns that are visible on the horizon. TTXs are a great way to work through to determine how processes should work. They are a safe but realistic setting and can be critical for ensuring effective action when confronting real-world maritime security and governance issues.

A NIMS should clarify not only how the state’s interagency mechanism will function, but what its role in implementing the strategy will be. Part of that includes private sector engagement to effectuate the
goals and aims of the economic pillar. Importantly, as well, it should also be tasked with overseeing the strategy’s review process.

**ACTION PLAN**

Before proceeding to final consultation and adoption, the Strategy Development Team should produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan, which ideally should be adopted with the NIMS, provides a benchmarked agenda for beginning implementation. It indicates the concrete tasks that need to be accomplished to begin moving the state from the status quo to the desired Ends or Vision for maritime security, governance and economic prosperity. This does not have to be a lengthy plan, but it does need to set the state on the right trajectory. It also needs to be part of the mission of the interagency process.

**CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION**

After drafting the NIMS, the Strategy Development Team should ideally seek consultation on it from key stakeholders. It may be worth having a public consultation of some sort with an option for feedback, but that is at the discretion of the Strategy Development Team.

Every state’s adoption process will differ, but the Strategy Development Team’s work is not finished until the NIMS is formally adopted. They need to shepherd the strategy through that process to completion.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

With the Action Plan as the starting point, the state must proceed immediately from Strategy Development to Strategy Implementation. Particularly in the context of security, criminals will not wait, so neither should the state.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

Some states begin Strategy Implementation with a strategic communications campaign, working to educate stakeholders – including both the maritime security actors and the general public – on the contents of the NIMS. This can be a helpful way of signaling the state’s intentions and building a national sense of purpose around Strategy implementation.

Recall the principle - A Strategy is Not Merely a Document; It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality. Consequently, the state must do all it can to make the Vision reality.

**FINAL REMINDER**

No state or region on earth has all the answers when it comes to securing, governing and developing the maritime space. The goal of a NIMS, therefore, is to help facilitate continual improvement toward a safer, more secure, more stable and more prosperous maritime domain.
ANNEX 4

REGIONAL MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY
A Regional Maritime Security Strategy (RMSS) is a single pillar strategy that is likely to be primarily owned either by the maritime security arm of a regional organization or by the lead maritime security forces of the countries of the region – usually the navies, coast guards and/or marine police forces. Sometimes, it can also be the purview of the civilian defense and security leadership of the states of the region.

**INITIAL TEAM**

Once the region decides to pursue an RMSS, it must work to assemble an initial team to get the process started. That initial team will really only exist until the Strategy Development Team – the core group that will shepherd the strategy through to adoption – is established. Usually composed either of the regional organization’s maritime security leadership or of navy, coast guard and/or ministry of defense/national security civilians from all the states of the region, the initial team has a choice – it can either start by overseeing a series of preliminary assessments or by engaging key stakeholders with an eye to composing the Strategy Development Team.

If the initial team starts with the assessments, the results of those assessments may be helpful in shaping who needs to be a part of the Strategy Development Team. On the other hand, a preliminary stakeholder engagement can pave the way for a deeper assessment overseen by the Strategy Development Team. It can also be helpful to turn over the leadership of the process to the Strategy Development Team early to guard against claims that people were “left out” during the assessment process.

**PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

At the outset, it is important to remember a key principle:

- **Every Citizen of a Region is a Stakeholder in the Region’s Maritime Security**

With that in mind, it is useful to err on the side of inclusion, and, at a minimum, ensure that every state is represented in the process. The initial team should be cautious not to pre-determine who has a voice in the maritime security of the region. There are almost always more actors across the region who focus on security than is immediately apparent and, to be most effective, a strategy will at least account for them, even if they are not all involved in the drafting process. If they genuinely have a role in maritime security, then implementation will be difficult without taking them into consideration. Furthermore, involving the views of key private sector actors – such as port operators and shipping companies – can be critical to devising a realistic strategy. The same is true of civil society groups, including fishing communities, maritime labor unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose support can make or break the success of an RMSS.

Fundamentally – the aim of this exercise is to identify:

- Whose voice should be part of the strategy development process?

Understanding this can also help contribute to the self-assessment described below. How to answer this question is up to the initial team, but, importantly – the stakeholders must actually be engaged. This will also help clarify who may be a hindrance to the strategy, so the more inclusive this process is, the better. This can be done directly by the team, or en masse.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

In almost every regional strategy development process, some actors will find themselves meeting colleagues for the first time, sometimes even from their own country. This is not a point about which to be embarrassed, but it is an indication of why the process of strategy development has value in and of itself. Maritime professionals getting to know each other better, getting to understand what each other does and devising ways of collaborating or coordinating are some of the key benefits of the stakeholder engagement process.
Establishing the Strategy Development Team

Through the process of this preliminary engagement, the initial team needs to clarify who should be on the Strategy Development Team. There is no formula for this. The end result could be that the initial team becomes the Strategy Development Team with no change. But equally, it could hand over to an entirely new group. Ideally, at least some of the initial team will transition to the Strategy Development Team in order to maintain the continuity from the start of the process and the preliminary stakeholder engagement. Some key considerations include:

- Who has the capacity to conduct or oversee the assessments?
- Who has the contacts to engage with stakeholders to get their input?
- Who has the ability to draft the strategy?
- Who has the diplomatic clout to build political will towards adoption?
- Who knows the maritime security situation the best?
- Who understands the existing strategic context to help navigate nesting?
- Who actually wants to be a part of the Strategy Development Team?

While most of these questions are obvious, the last one may seem superfluous, but is decidedly not. On the one hand, someone who is interested, but lacking in skills or qualities that would make them helpful should perhaps be excluded. On the other hand, even if someone has the ideal skills and qualities, their lack of interest could be fatal to the undertaking. No one should be forced into the role if they have no interest in the process.

There is no magic number for how many should be on the Strategy Development Team, but the key is to be big enough to have some diversity of abilities and perspectives, but small enough to be efficient and effective.

Once established the Strategy Development Team will either need to proceed to the Preliminary Assessments, if not already complete, or to begin the strategy development process.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS

One of the biggest mistakes in drafting maritime strategies of any sort has been the failure to conduct an honest assessment of the status quo. A fundamental principle of strategy development is that:

- You Must First Know Where You Are Before Deciding Where to Go

This is the point of the Preliminary Assessments – to provide a common, realistic understanding of where the state is so that it can discern where it needs to be.

There are three assessments that need to be conducted:

1. A Self-Assessment
2. A Threat Assessment
3. A Domain Assessment

The composite picture of these three assessments will help inform what needs to be done and what is achievable.

Conducting these assessments cannot be a pro forma exercise – the point is critical analysis of strengths on which the strategy can build, weaknesses the strategy can help address, and issues and opportunities that should be considered throughout the strategy development and implementation processes. As the Africa Center for Strategic Studies’ National Maritime Strategy Toolkit states:

In any context, to set a credible direction for the future requires: first, knowing where one is; second, knowing what is possible, good and bad; and third, knowing what challenges are likely to arise. Similarly, to establish a vision for its maritime domain, a country must understand the status quo, must be realistic about the possibilities, and must be aware of the likely difficulties.
Whether the initial team or the Strategy Development Team is responsible for overseeing these Preliminary Assessments, they must make a critical choice at this stage:

- Is it more productive to conduct the assessments themselves or to seek external, objective assistance?

Both options have merit, but both come with challenges. In the first instance, it is often more difficult to be honest about where you are when you are assessing yourself. This is partly due to natural bias, but it can also be due to a lack of comparative references. In other words, if you do not know how other states operate, you may not even recognize some of your own shortcomings, or see how things could be done differently. However, outside assistance can also bring bias, a lack of understanding of the regional context, misguided efforts to make things fit either a narrative or checklist, and of course, potential added cost. That said, a good external advisor, with sufficient experience, can be helpful in pointing out areas that can be improved and offering some ideas about how similar matters have been resolved elsewhere.

**Self-Assessment**

There is no prescription for how to conduct a self-assessment, but no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant the findings are, the assessment must be honest. Drawing on the experience of states, one potentially helpful approach is to submit a set of questions to the actors identified as having a stake in the maritime security of the region, together with a deadline for providing responses. The option for anonymous responses can help elicit what no one feels comfortable sharing openly, but which needs to be addressed by the strategy. Other approaches involve an external advisor conducting interviews, or a combination of interviews and written questions. Even off-the-record discussions conducted by the Strategy Development Team, however, tend not to bring all the issues to light. So no matter how it is done:

- **There Needs to be a Mechanism for Providing Anonymous Critical Feedback**

Since the goal of a strategy is to move from where things are to where they ought to be, truthful reflection on the status quo is vital.

It is critical for a regional strategy to respect the sovereignty of the states of the region. While this principle holds throughout the process, it is most likely to be violated when conducting the Self-Assessment, so the Strategy Development Team must remember:

- **The Aim of a Regional Maritime Strategy of Any Sort is to Enhance the Region’s Maritime Domain without Diminishing the Sovereignty of the States of the Region**

Cooperative and collective action, therefore, must be a choice. The Strategy Development Team must discern what the region’s strongest incentives are for working together to enhance the maritime domain. This question of motivation should be in the back of their minds throughout the assessment, development and drafting processes.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides a useful list of questions that could be asked. Here, they are reproduced with amendments to make them regionally-applicable and additions in brackets:

- What national agencies have maritime [security] responsibilities [in each state]?
  - What are those responsibilities?
  - Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
- What processes and mechanisms exist for interagency cooperation and coordination on maritime [security] matters [across the region]?
- What international maritime laws have been signed [that address maritime security in each state in the region]?
  - Have they been incorporated into [each state’s] domestic law?
  - [What security-related international maritime laws have not been signed?]
- [Are there regional maritime security laws?]
  - [Are they signed and implemented?]
Can [either a citizen or] an outsider reasonably access the country’s maritime [security] laws, regulations, and policies?

What do the existing maritime [security] laws, regulations, and policies cover?
  - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?

How is maritime law enforcement intended to work [across the region]?
  - [Are there cooperative security agreements?]
  - [Status of Forces agreements?]
  - [Shiprider agreements?]
  - [Ship boarding agreements?]
  - [Information sharing agreements?]
  - [Regional or bilateral operational agreements?
    - [Do multinational operations take place?]
    - [Is information shared? If so, how?]
    - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
  - What institutions [in each state] have naval or maritime law enforcement responsibilities? [Are there any combined operational entities or mechanisms at the region’s disposal?]
    - What is their manpower?
    - What equipment do they have?
    - How have they been trained?
    - [What are their respective authorities and jurisdiction?]
    - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
  - What bilateral, regional, or international obligations exist regarding maritime [security] activities?
    - Are there known deficiencies in meeting those obligations?
  - What resources are at the [region’s] disposal for use in the maritime domain?
  - [What are the stumbling blocks within the region that hinder maritime security?]

These questions provide useful guidance as to what questions should be answered, but they are by no means exhaustive. Furthermore, if the approach of circulating questions is used, they need to be reformulated to be more targeted to the regional context. They also need to elicit an understanding of national interests and priorities to ensure that the region does not try to move in a manner incompatible with the states that comprise it.

As Making Maritime Strategy Work notes:

Taking a strategy from paper to practice requires five key elements:
1. Capacity
2. Capability
3. Authority & Jurisdiction
4. A Legal Framework
5. Will

In practical terms: capacity is having a boat, capability is knowing how to use it, authority and jurisdiction provide the legal basis – both enabling and constraining – for interdiction operations, the legal framework provides both the laws to enforce and the process by which to achieve legal finish, and will is required to fund, operate and maintain all aspects within the law enforcement ecosystem.

In many respects, the Self-Assessment for an RMSS requires appraising the current status of those five elements in each of the states and across the region as a whole. If it is helpful, questions can be developed to target each element and then grouped accordingly. Multinational security operations need clarity on these matters, as achieving legal finish in the form of a prosecution or penalty requires a firm grasp of how to leverage national maritime security elements for both national and regional benefit.

Too often, regions are quick to conduct Threat Assessments, but less willing to engage in the Self-Assessment. It is, however, critical for effectively informing the strategy. So, too is the Domain Assessment.
Domain Assessment

To know what needs to be protected, a region must know the significance of the maritime domain to the region as a whole. While this may seem obvious, maritime resources, infrastructure and activities are often invisible from land. More than just an inventory, a Domain Assessment also examines both the relative value of the various resources, infrastructure and activities to the state, and how to monitor them. It also includes getting a handle on the marine environment including how it has changed over time, what impact climate change is having, what weather patterns impact the region, and whether there are any geographic features that are distinctive.

Conducting this assessment may require speaking with private actors, coastal communities and fishing communities to understand the maritime space and what needs protecting. Such conversations can either be held by the Strategy Development Team or can be conducted by actors within each of the region’s states. Vague notions of how the maritime domain works are insufficient for discerning where to focus the RMSS. Questions that should be considered in conducting the Domain Assessment include:

- What is the current aggregate contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of the maritime domain across the states in the region?
- How many people in the state work in the maritime domain across its spectrum of activities from shipping to fishing to tourism to ports and beyond?
- What maritime infrastructure currently exists, including:
  - Ports, harbors and marinas?
  - Canals?
  - Shipbuilding and ship repair facilities?
  - Submarine cables and pipelines?
  - Offshore extractive infrastructure?
  - Buoys, lighthouses and aids to navigation?
  - Recreational infrastructure?
  - Underwater cultural heritage or tourism?
- How is the maritime domain currently monitored? Is there regional monitoring or is it only at the state level? Are there issues of interoperability between the states? What is used:
  - Radar?
  - Vessel monitoring systems (VMS)?
  - Automatic Identification System (AIS)-based maritime domain awareness platforms?
  - Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT)?
  - Fisheries control systems?
  - Search and rescue systems?
  - Coast watch centers?
  - Patrols?
  - Other mechanisms?
- Is there a means of creating a reporting system for tips and information?
- How is information about the maritime space analyzed?
- How is information about the maritime domain shared?
- Does the region have a common operating picture?

The focus of this Domain Assessment is security, so the other key factor to understand is what could interfere with the region’s efforts to secure the maritime domain. Understanding things like the roughness of the water and the presence of hazards to navigation can be critical for identifying what sorts of vessels or equipment might be suitable. Ultimately, the Domain Assessment, in combination with both the Self-Assessment and Threat Assessment, should show the region what activities most need protecting, what gaps and deficiencies exist and what needs to be prioritized in the RMSS.

Threat Assessment

There are many different approaches to conducting a Threat Assessment, but the key is to be comprehensive. Maritime criminals are constantly looking for ways to avoid detection, and often they succeed for a time, meaning that some threats are not easily visible. When conducting a Threat
Assessment for the purpose of developing an RMSS, the key is to identify areas that need to be addressed by the Strategy. The focus should therefore be on the transnational threats and the networks behind them, as states may only be seeing a portion of a criminal operation that could be undermining the security of the wider region. While this list is by no means exhaustive, the Threat Assessment should note the extent to which the following matters are of concern:

- Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea
- Slavery
- Illegal Broadcasting
- Maritime Terrorism
- Trafficking and Smuggling of:
  - Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances
  - Arms
  - Humans and Migrants
  - Counterfeit Goods
  - Antiquities and Cultural Property
  - Oil and Fuel
  - Mineral Resources
  - Bulk Cash
  - Sand
  - Timber
  - Wildlife
  - Other Resources
- Illegal Extraction or Theft of:
  - Fish
  - Sand
  - Mineral Resources
  - Oil and Fuel
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
- Fisheries Crime
- Illegal Transshipment at Sea
- Illegal Bunkering
- Maritime Cyber Concerns
- Use of Technology for Illegal Purposes (including drones or autonomous vessels)
- Threats to:
  - Submarine Cables
  - Ports
  - Offshore Infrastructure
  - Coastal Tourism
  - Underwater Cultural Heritage
  - The Marine Environment
- Dumping
- Pollution
- Marine Spatial Control:
  - Marine Protected Areas
  - Maritime Boundaries
- Financial Crimes Including:
  - Money Laundering
  - Financing of Terrorism
- Maritime Safety:
  - Search and Rescue
- Maritime Health Considerations:
  - Transfer of Disease
- Protection of Recreational Activities

Again, this list is for general reference. Regions may have more concerns than are on this list, or they may only have a few. But the nature of the threats is important to understand, at least in broad terms, so that the RMSS can focus on addressing the security concerns that actually threaten the region’s maritime domain.

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There is flexibility in producing this, so the region can create further layers of subordinate objectives, becoming more and more specific. The following is a hypothetical example:

**GRAND STRATEGY**

To preserve the peaceful, stable, safe and secure character of the state by ensuring the wherewithal to secure state interests at sea.

**Objective 1: Securing The Maritime Economy.**

To maximize the Coast Guard’s capacity, capability, authority and jurisdiction to secure the state’s maritime economy from illegal activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, theft, dumping, pollution, terrorism, fisheries crime, IUU fishing and illicit extraction of marine resources.

To be delivered through the following sub-objectives:

- Supporting the harmonization of laws and penalties across the region to ensure that no state is a magnet for crime.
- Providing common training for all navies and coast guards in conducting boardings at sea so as to ensure interoperability when engaging in regional combined operations at sea.
- Procuring a maritime domain awareness platform and developing rapid information sharing procedures to enable a common operating picture across the region.
- Supporting the development of cooperative memoranda of understanding and legal agreements, particularly shiprider and ship boarding agreements, to enhance region-wide maritime law enforcement capacity.
- Establishing a regional forum for public-private engagement on maritime matters to enhance the information-flow and critical relationships that support improved regional maritime security, governance and economic prosperity.

This example shows that the goal is not to say everything that needs to be done to have maritime security. Rather, it focuses on what is not currently adequate and indicates what adequacy would look like.

The next step is to identify The Ways each of these objectives will be achieved, and then what Means are required. Taking the first bullet point, for example, the Ways and Means may be:

To accomplish this, the region will request technical assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) Global Maritime Crime Program to provide training on regional harmonization of laws and penalties. The [regional body] will arrange for the meetings with the appropriate state actors and will provide accommodation and meals for the UNODC expert during these engagements.

The Ways and The Means can either be separated out or combined, but both need to be evident.

There also needs to be a review mechanism built into the document so that the iterative process of continual improvement can be achieved. An RMSS should be revisited within a certain amount of time.

**ACTION PLAN**

Before proceeding to final consultation and adoption, the Strategy Development Team should produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan, which ideally should be adopted with the RMSS, provides a benchmarked agenda for beginning implementation. It indicates the concrete tasks that need to be accomplished to begin moving the region from the status quo to the desired Ends or Vision for maritime security. This does not have to be a lengthy plan, but it does need to set the region on the right trajectory.

**CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION**

After drafting the RMSS, the Strategy Development Team should ideally seek consultation on it from key stakeholders. It may be worth having a public consultation of some sort with an option for feedback, but that is at the discretion of the Strategy Development Team.
Every region’s adoption process will differ, but the Strategy Development Team’s work is not finished until the RMSS is formally adopted. They need to shepherd the strategy through that process to completion.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

With the Action Plan as the starting point, the region must proceed immediately from Strategy Development to Strategy Implementation. Particularly in the context of security, criminals will not wait, so neither should the state.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

Some states begin Strategy Implementation with a strategic communications campaign, working to educate the stakeholders – including both the maritime security actors and the general public – on the contents of the Strategy. This can be a helpful at the regional level, as well, serving as a signal of the region’s intentions and building a regional sense of purpose around Strategy implementation.

Recall the principle - A Strategy is Not Merely a Document: It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality. Consequently, the region must do all it can to make the Vision reality.

**FINAL REMINDER**

No state or region on earth has all the answers when it comes to securing, governing and developing the maritime space. The goal of an RMSS, therefore, is to help facilitate continual improvement toward a safer, more secure, more stable and more prosperous maritime domain.
ANNEX 5

REGIONAL MARITIME INTERAGENCY STRATEGY
A Regional Maritime Interagency Strategy (RMIS) is a double pillar strategy that focuses on both the security and the governance of the maritime domain of the region. It necessarily involves the government agencies that have either maritime security or maritime governance responsibilities in each of the states across the region. It is quite similar in process to a Regional Maritime Security Strategy, particularly with regard to the assessments required, but there are two important distinctions: 1) it places additional emphasis on governance and 2) it necessitates the development of an interagency mechanism at the regional level. Both added elements actually support greater security, and the work on security helps create the space for more effective governance.

**INITIAL TEAM**

Once the region decides to pursue an RMIS, it must work to assemble an initial team to get the process started. That initial team will really only exist until the Strategy Development Team – the core group that will shepherd the strategy through to adoption – is established. Usually composed of the regional organization’s maritime security leadership (or of maritime security personnel from all the states of the region) together with regional political and diplomatic leaders, the initial team has a choice – it can either start by overseeing a series of preliminary assessments or by engaging key stakeholders with an eye to composing the Strategy Development Team.

If the initial team starts with the assessments, the results of those assessments may be helpful in shaping who needs to be a part of the Strategy Development Team. On the other hand, a preliminary stakeholder engagement can pave the way for a deeper assessment overseen by the Strategy Development Team. It can also be helpful to turn over the leadership of the process to the Strategy Development Team early to guard against claims that people were “left out” during the assessment process.

**PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

At the outset, it is important to remember a key principle:

- **Every Citizen of a Region is a Stakeholder in the Region’s Maritime Security and Governance**

With that in mind, it is useful to err on the side of inclusion, and, at a minimum, ensure that every state is represented in the process. The initial team should be cautious not to pre-determine who has a voice in the maritime security and governance of the region. There are almost always more actors across the region who focus on maritime security and governance than is immediately apparent, and to be most effective, a strategy will at least account for them, even if they are not all involved in the drafting process. If they genuinely have a role in maritime security or in governing and overseeing the functions of the maritime domain, then implementation will be difficult without taking them into consideration. Furthermore, involving the views of key private sector actors – such as port operators and shipping companies – can be critical to devising a realistic strategy. The same is true of civil society groups, including fishing communities, maritime labor unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose support can make or break the success of an RMIS. Ultimately, they are often the ones whose activities and livelihoods are what the strategy seeks to support the most.

Fundamentally – the aim of this exercise is to identify:

- Whose voice should be part of the strategy development process?

Understanding this can also help contribute to the self-assessment described below. How to answer this question is up to the initial team, but, importantly – the stakeholders must actually be engaged. This will also help clarify who may be a hindrance to the strategy, so the more inclusive this process is, the better. This can be done directly by the team, or en masse.
PRACTICAL POINT
In almost every regional strategy development process, some actors will find themselves meeting colleagues for the first time, sometimes even from their own country. This is not a point about which to be embarrassed, but it is an indication of why the process of strategy development has value in and of itself. Maritime professionals getting to know each other better, getting to understand what each other does, and devising ways of collaborating or coordinating are some of the key benefits of the stakeholder engagement process.

Establishing the Strategy Development Team

Through the process of this preliminary engagement, the initial team needs to clarify who should be on the Strategy Development Team. There is no formula for this. The end result could be that the initial team becomes the Strategy Development Team with no change. But equally, it could hand over to an entirely new group. Ideally, at least some of the initial team will transition to the Strategy Development Team in order to maintain the continuity from the start of the process and the preliminary stakeholder engagement. Some key considerations include:

- Who has the capacity to conduct or oversee the assessments?
- Who has the contacts to engage with stakeholders to get their input?
- Who has the ability to draft the strategy?
- Who has the diplomatic clout to build political will towards adoption?
- Who knows the maritime security situation the best?
- Who understands the maritime laws on paper and in practice the best?
- Who has the best understanding of the maritime governance structures?
- Who understands the regional mechanisms the best?
- Who understands the existing strategic context to help navigate nesting?
- Who actually wants to be a part of the Strategy Development Team?

While most of these questions are obvious, the last one may seem superfluous, but is decidedly not. On the one hand, someone who is interested, but lacking in skills or qualities that would make them helpful should perhaps be excluded. On the other hand, even if someone has the ideal skills and qualities, their lack of interest could be fatal to the undertaking. No one should be forced into the role if they have no interest in the process.

There is no magic number for how many should be on the Strategy Development Team, but the key is to be big enough to have some diversity of abilities and perspectives, but small enough to be efficient and effective. The key for a RMIS is that it has to be balanced between security-focused actors and governance-focused actors, either from within an existing regional organization or drawn from across the region, with a desire among all of them to work together to change the status quo.

Once established the Strategy Development Team will either need to proceed to the Preliminary Assessments, if not already complete, or to begin the strategy development process.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS

One of the biggest mistakes in drafting maritime strategies of any sort has been the failure to conduct an honest assessment of the status quo. A fundamental principle of strategy development is that:

- You Must First Know Where You Are Before Deciding Where to Go

This is the point of the Preliminary Assessments – to provide a common, realistic understanding of where the region is so that it can discern where it needs to be.
There are three assessments that need to be conducted:

1. A Self-Assessment
2. A Threat Assessment
3. A Domain Assessment

The composite picture of these three assessments will help inform what needs to be done and what is achievable.

Conducting these assessments cannot be a pro forma exercise – the point is critical analysis of strengths on which the strategy can build, weaknesses the strategy can help address, and issues and opportunities that should be considered throughout the strategy development and implementation processes. As the Africa Center for Strategic Studies’ National Maritime Strategy Toolkit states:

In any context, to set a credible direction for the future requires: first, knowing where one is; second, knowing what is possible, good and bad; and third, knowing what challenges are likely to arise. Similarly, to establish a vision for its maritime domain, a country must understand the status quo, must be realistic about the possibilities, and must be aware of the likely difficulties.

Whether the initial team or the Strategy Development Team is responsible for overseeing these Preliminary Assessments, they must make a critical choice at this stage:

- Is it more productive to conduct the assessments themselves or to seek external, objective assistance?

Both options have merit, but both come with challenges. In the first instance, it is often more difficult to be honest about where you are when you are assessing yourself. This is partly due to natural bias, but it can also be due to a lack of comparative references. In other words, if you do not know how other states operate, you may not even recognize some of your own shortcomings, or see how things could be done differently. However, outside assistance can also bring bias, a lack of understanding of the regional context, misguided efforts to make things fit either a narrative or checklist, and of course, potential added cost. That said, a good external advisor, with sufficient experience, can be helpful in pointing out areas that can be improved and offering some ideas about how similar matters have been resolved elsewhere.

**Self-Assessment**

There is no prescription for how to conduct a self-assessment, but no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant the findings are, the assessment must be honest. Drawing on the experience of states, one potentially helpful approach is to submit a set of questions to the actors identified as having a stake in the maritime security of the region, together with a deadline for providing responses. The option for anonymous responses can help elicit what no one feels comfortable sharing openly, but which needs to be addressed by the strategy. Other approaches involve an external advisor conducting interviews, or a combination of interviews and written questions. Even off-the-record discussions conducted by the Strategy Development Team, however, tend not to bring all the issues to light. So no matter how it is done:

- **There Needs to be a Mechanism for Providing Anonymous Critical Feedback**

Since the goal of a strategy is to move from where things are to where they ought to be, truthful reflection on the status quo is vital.

Critical for a regional strategy, however, is that it respects the sovereignty of the states of the region. While this principle holds throughout the process, it is most likely to be violated when conducting the Self-Assessment, so the Strategy Development Team must remember:

- **The Aim of a Regional Maritime Strategy of Any Sort is to Enhance the Region’s Maritime Domain without Diminishing the Sovereignty of the States of the Region**
Cooperative and collective action, therefore, must be a choice, so the Strategy Development Team must discern what the region's strongest incentives are for working together to enhance the maritime domain. This question of motivation should be in the back of their minds throughout the assessment, development and drafting processes.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides a useful list of questions that could be asked. Here, they are reproduced with amendments to make them regionally-applicable and additions in brackets:

- What national agencies have maritime [security and governance] responsibilities [in each state]?
  - What are those responsibilities?
  - Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
- What processes and mechanisms exist for interagency cooperation and coordination on maritime [security and governance] matters [across the region]?
- What international maritime laws have been signed [that address maritime security and governance in each state in the region]?
  - Have they been incorporated into [each state's] domestic law?
  - [What security-related international maritime laws have not been signed?]
- [Are there regional maritime security and governance laws?]
  - [Are they signed and implemented?]
- Can [either a citizen or] an outsider reasonably access the country's maritime [security and governance] laws, regulations, and policies?
- What do the existing maritime laws, regulations, and policies cover?
  - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
- How is maritime law enforcement intended to work [across the region]?
  - [Are there cooperative security agreements?]
  - [Status of Forces agreements?]
  - [Shiprider agreements?]
  - [Ship boarding agreements?]
  - [Information sharing agreements?]
- [Regional or bilateral operational agreements?]
  - [Do multinational operations take place?]
  - [Is information shared? If so, how?]
  - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
- What institutions [in each state] have naval or maritime law enforcement responsibilities? [Are there any combined operational entities or mechanisms at the region's disposal?]
  - What is their manpower?
  - What equipment do they have?
  - How have they been trained?
  - [What are their respective authorities and jurisdiction?]
  - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
  - [Is there a regional forum for collaborating on maritime security and governance at the political and diplomatic levels?]
- What bilateral, regional, or international obligations exist regarding maritime [security and governance] activities?
  - Are there known deficiencies in meeting those obligations?
- What resources are at the [region's] disposal for use in the maritime domain?
  - [What are the stumbling blocks within the region that hinder maritime security and governance?]

These questions provide useful guidance as to what questions should be answered, but they are by no means exhaustive. Furthermore, if the approach of circulating questions is used, they need to be reformulated to be more targeted to the regional context. They also need to elicit an understanding of national interests and priorities to ensure that the region does not try to move in a manner incompatible with the states that comprise it.
As Making Maritime Strategy Work notes:

Taking a strategy from paper to practice requires five key elements:

1. Capacity
2. Capability
3. Authority & Jurisdiction
4. A Legal Framework
5. Will

In practical terms: capacity is having a boat, capability is knowing how to use it, authority and jurisdiction provide the legal basis – both enabling and constraining – for interdiction operations, the legal framework provides both the laws to enforce and the process by which to achieve legal finish, and will is required to fund, operate and maintain all aspects within the law enforcement ecosystem.

In many respects, the Self-Assessment for an RMIS requires appraising the current status of those five elements in each of the states and across the region as a whole. If it is helpful, questions can be developed to target each element and then grouped accordingly. Multinational security operations need clarity on these matters, as achieving legal finish in the form of a prosecution or penalty requires a firm grasp of how to leverage national maritime security elements for both national and regional benefit. Further, cooperation on governance requires clear channels of communication between lead agencies to be able to work together.

Too often, regions are quick to conduct Threat Assessments, but less willing to engage in the Self-Assessment. It is, however, critical for effectively informing the strategy. So, too is the Domain Assessment.

Domain Assessment

To know what needs to be protected and governed, a region must know the significance of the maritime domain to the region as a whole. While this may seem obvious, maritime resources, infrastructure and activities are often invisible from land. More than just an inventory, a Domain Assessment also examines both the relative value of the various resources, infrastructure and activities to the state, and how to monitor them. It also includes getting a handle on the marine environment including how it has changed over time, what impact climate change is having, what weather patterns impact the region, and whether there are any geographic features that are distinctive.

Conducting this assessment may require speaking with private actors, coastal communities and fishing communities to understand the maritime space and what needs protecting. Such conversations can either be held by the Strategy Development Team or can be conducted by actors within each of the region’s states. Vague notions of how the maritime domain works are insufficient for discerning where to focus the RMSS. Questions that should be considered in conducting the Domain Assessment include:

- What is the current aggregate contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of the maritime domain across the states in the region?
- How many people in the state work in the maritime domain across its spectrum of activities from shipping to fishing to tourism to ports and beyond?
- What maritime infrastructure currently exists, including:
  - Ports, harbors and marinas?
  - Canals?
  - Shipbuilding and ship repair facilities?
  - Submarine cables and pipelines?
  - Offshore extractive infrastructure?
  - Buoys, lighthouses and aids to navigation?
  - Recreational infrastructure?
  - Underwater cultural heritage or tourism?
- How is the maritime domain currently monitored? Is there regional monitoring or is it only at the state level? Are there issues of interoperability between the states? What is used:
  - Radar?
• Vessel monitoring systems (VMS)?
• Automatic Identification System (AIS)-based maritime domain awareness platforms?
• Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT)?
• Fisheries control systems?
• Search and rescue systems?
• Coast watch centers?
• Patrols?
• Other mechanisms?
• Is there a means of creating a reporting system for tips and information?
• How is information about the maritime space analyzed?
• How is information about the maritime domain shared?
• Does the region have a common operating picture?

The focus of this Domain Assessment is both security and governance, so the other key factor to understand is what could interfere with the region’s efforts to secure and govern the maritime domain. Understanding things like the roughness of the water and the presence of hazards to navigation can be critical for identifying what sorts of vessels or equipment might be suitable. Similarly, the size of the maritime sector and the relative power of actors within it may help indicate the extent to which governance measures need to be reconsidered at the regional level. Ultimately, the Domain Assessment, in combination with both the Self-Assessment and Threat Assessment, should show the region what activities most need protecting, what areas need greater governance, what gaps and deficiencies exist and what needs to be prioritized in the RMIS.

**Threat Assessment**

There are many different approaches to conducting a Threat Assessment, but the key is to be comprehensive. Maritime criminals are constantly looking for ways to avoid detection and they often succeed for a time, meaning that some threats are not easily visible. When conducting a Threat Assessment for the purpose of developing an RMIS, the key is to identify areas that need to be addressed by the Strategy. The focus, therefore, should be on the transnational threats and the networks behind them, as states may only be seeing a portion of a criminal operation that could be undermining the security and governance of the wider region. While this list is by no means exhaustive, the Threat Assessment should note the extent to which the following matters are of concern:

• Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea
• Slavery
• Illegal Broadcasting
• Maritime Terrorism
• Trafficking and Smuggling of:
  • Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances
  • Arms
  • Humans and Migrants
  • Counterfeit Goods
  • Antiquities and Cultural Property
  • Oil and Fuel
  • Mineral Resources
  • Bulk Cash
  • Sand
  • Timber
  • Wildlife
  • Other Resources
• Illegal Extraction or Theft of:
  • Fish
  • Sand
  • Mineral Resources
  • Oil and Fuel
  • Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
  • Fisheries Crime
  • Illegal Transshipment at Sea
• Illegal Bunkering
• Maritime Cyber Concerns
• Use of Technology for Illegal Purposes (including drones or autonomous vessels)
• Threats to:
  • Submarine Cables
  • Ports
  • Offshore Infrastructure
  • Coastal Tourism
  • Underwater Cultural Heritage
  • The Marine Environment
• Dumping
• Pollution
• Marine Spatial Control:
  • Marine Protected Areas
  • Maritime Boundaries
• Financial Crimes Including:
  • Money Laundering
  • Financing of Terrorism
• Maritime Safety:
  • Search and Rescue
• Maritime Health Considerations:
  • Transfer of Disease
• Protection of Recreational Activities
Again, this list is for general reference. Regions may have more concerns than are on this list, or they may only have a few. But the nature of the threats is important to understand, at least in broad terms, so that the RMIS can focus on addressing the concerns that actually threaten the region’s maritime domain.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Approach

Once the Preliminary Assessments are complete, the Strategy Development Team must decide how to proceed with developing the Strategy. There are three key sections:

1. “The Ends” or “The Vision” – how the maritime domain will look and function if the Strategy is completely implemented. These are usually expressed through either “goals” or “aims” and “objectives.” The goals/aims are higher-level statements, while the objectives are more specific.

2. “The Ways” – how the state will achieve The Ends or The Vision.

3. “The Means” – the resources that will be required to accomplish The Ends or The Vision.

Depending on the Strategy Development Team, there are a few approaches that have worked in producing realistic Ends, Ways and Means for an RMIS.

The first option is to seek early consultation from a broad range of stakeholders across the states of the region. This can be extremely helpful, as it often sparks ideas early in the process before the Team becomes committed to anything. It is also consistent with the principle of inclusivity, and can be extremely helpful for encouraging adoption later on.

The second option is to prepare the ideas first, and then seek consultation on them. This can be helpful if the stakeholders are unlikely to be forthcoming with their own ideas, but it tends to be slightly more limiting. Public comment periods, for example, tend not to make for a strong sense of ownership by the states, particularly if the public comments are not thereafter incorporated, or if one state’s interests are perceived to be prioritized.

Finally, the third option is to proceed with just the Strategy Development Team and certain key engagements for input. This may be the fastest approach, but it is also the least likely to engender widespread buy-in, which can be critical for implementation. It can, however, work if the Team engages with the right stakeholders in each of the states so as to make them all feel a part of the process.

The approach that never works, however, is if the content is developed by an external actor and presented to the region. Outside experts can be helpful with any of the three workable options, offering examples of what has been done elsewhere and sharing cautionary tales. But the maritime domain belongs to the states and the region, not the outside advisor, so The Vision for how to secure and govern the maritime domain must come from within the region.

PRACTICAL POINT

At the first meeting of the Strategy Development Team in Côte d’Ivoire, the Team drafted a set of principles that were supposed to help guide and shape the drafting process. These principles were posted and reviewed at every subsequent meeting. Members of that Team continue to emphasize how helpful this simple action was in keeping them working as a team. This sort of approach may be useful at the regional level, as well, for not only keeping focus and enhancing the spirit of collaboration, but also in setting an early precedent for coming to agreement.
The Drafting

In some regards, drafting is the least important of all the processes. While it is critical to clearly articulate the outcome of the work that has been done, the main effort will be complete by the time drafting starts. In some places, the drafting has been done by one lead individual with consultation and feedback from the Team. Elsewhere, different sections have been assigned to different individuals and the composite blended together over time. In other cases, the drafting has been done by the full Team during meetings as a group. While external advisors can assist with the drafting process, the Strategy Development Team must “hold the pen.” The voice of the strategy must be the voice of the region.

Importantly, the RMIS does not have to be long. In fact, the shorter it is, the more likely it is to be adopted and implemented. This does not mean that the Strategy Development Team should try to make it short and thin on content. The key is for the Team to be direct and clear.

The Content

The content of the RMSS must express The Ends or The Vision, The Ways and The Means for moving from the status quo to where the state wants to be on maritime security and governance. Often, this means a summary of the findings of the assessments, and key points of process – for example, noting the stakeholder engagement – before focusing on the goals or aims and subordinate objectives. Often a region may wish to have a grand strategic goal from which all other goals flow. Subordinate to each of those goals are more concrete objectives as follows in one to two sentences each:

Grand Strategic Vision

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There is flexibility in producing this, so the region can create further layers of subordinate objectives, becoming more and more specific. The following is a hypothetical example:

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*To preserve the peaceful, stable, safe and secure character of the state by ensuring the wherewithal to secure state interests at sea.*

**Objective 1: Securing The Maritime Economy.**

To maximize the Coast Guard’s capacity, capability, authority and jurisdiction to secure the state’s maritime economy from illegal activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, theft, dumping, pollution, terrorism, fisheries crime, IUU fishing and illicit extraction of marine resources.

To be delivered through the following sub objectives:

- Supporting the harmonization of laws and penalties across the region to ensure that no state is a magnet for crime.
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This example shows that the goal is not to say everything that needs to be done to have maritime security and governance in the region. Rather, it focuses on what is not currently adequate and indicates what adequacy would look like.

The next step is to identify The Ways each of these objectives will be achieved, and then what Means are required. Taking the first bullet point, for example, the Ways and Means may be:

To accomplish this, the region will request technical assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) Global Maritime Crime Program to provide training on regional harmonization of laws and penalties. The [regional body] will arrange for the meetings with the appropriate state actors and will provide accommodation and meals for the UNODC expert during these engagements.

The Ways and The Means can either be separated out or combined, but both need to be evident.

There also needs to be a review mechanism built into the document so that the iterative process of continual improvement can be achieved. An RMIS should be revisited within a certain amount of time.

INTERAGENCY PROCESS

Developing an RMIS also requires developing or enhancing a regional interagency process. Around the world, there is increasing recognition that maritime security and governance require interagency processes to be successful. While “Making Maritime Strategy Work” discusses some of the different layers of cooperation that should be considered, the interagency layer is critical for governance, especially for supporting both safety and security, even at the regional level. Every coastal, island and archipelagic state likely has a catalogue of maritime disasters that could have been either avoided or mitigated with more effective interagency cooperation. One of the problems regions face in approaching the maritime domain is to attempt to promote regional security and governance through one agency from each country.

While a Framework longer than this one could be written on how to develop a functional interagency or whole of government process at the state level, the key elements to making it work nationally, also apply regionally:

1. It has to be repeatable – in other words, the process needs to be clear enough that it is followed repeatedly and does not just devolve to ad hoc approaches;
2. It has to be documentable – as personnel rotate, there needs to be a way to look back on what has been done in the past to learn from the good and the bad alike.
3. It has to get salient information to the appropriate senior decision makers in a timely fashion – the whole point is to create a process for informed decision making, but timeliness is critical.

There are really three reasons for approaching regional interagency cooperation in this way. First, it enhances efficiency – as all the agencies within each of the states can know what the others are doing, reducing the odds of duplicated effort and waste. Second, it enhances effectiveness – if all the agencies in each of the states know their roles and responsibilities and those of the other agencies and the other states, they can work together as a team and be more effective in maritime governance and security. Finally, it increases transparency – with everyone working together, it limits the opportunities for ill-advised and corrupt practices which would otherwise undermine maritime governance and security across the region.

Whether the regional interagency process is a full-time unit that has formal governance and oversight authorities with personnel from various agencies from each state, or a responsive virtual cell that only operates upon a triggering event, the principles are the same. For regions, budgetary constraints tend to favor thinner mechanisms, but multiple agencies from each state need to be able to be a part of the collective maritime security and governance efforts. There is room for flexibility and innovation on how to accomplish this. Regardless of the sort of mechanism, practicing is important, as the process should be able to exhibit the principle of agility and adapt to address changing maritime circumstances.
The United States' Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Process involves cooperation between 17 different agencies. It engages regularly in a scenario-based “war game” or “table top exercise” (TTX) to 1) practice its repeatable, documentable process, 2) ensure that there are no barriers to the timely flow of salient information to senior decision makers, and 3) prepare for issues and concerns that are visible on the horizon. TTXs are a great way to work through to determine how processes should work. They are a safe but realistic setting and can be critical for ensuring effective action when confronting real-world maritime security and governance issues. The same approach can be taken at the regional level.

A RMIS should clarify not only how the region's interagency mechanism will function, but what its role in implementing the strategy will be. Importantly, it should also be tasked with overseeing the strategy's review process.

Before proceeding to final consultation and adoption, the Strategy Development Team should produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan, which ideally should be adopted with the RMIS, provides a benchmarked agenda for beginning implementation. It indicates the concrete tasks that need to be accomplished to begin moving the region from the status quo to the desired Ends or Vision for maritime security and governance. This does not have to be a lengthy plan, but it does need to set the region on the right trajectory.

After drafting the RMIS, the Strategy Development Team should ideally seek consultation on it from key stakeholders. It may be worth having a public consultation of some sort with an option for feedback, but that is at the discretion of the Strategy Development Team.

Every region's adoption process will differ, but the Strategy Development Team's work is not finished until the RMIS is formally adopted. They need to shepherd the strategy through that process to completion.

With the Action Plan as the starting point, the region must proceed immediately from Strategy Development to Strategy Implementation. Particularly in the context of security, criminals will not wait, so neither should the state.

Some states begin Strategy Implementation with a strategic communications campaign, working to educate the stakeholders – including both the maritime security actors and the general public – on the contents of the Strategy. This can be helpful at the regional level, as well, serving as a signal of the region's intentions and building a regional sense of purpose around Strategy implementation.

Recall the principle - A Strategy is Not Merely a Document. It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality. Consequently, the region must do all it can to make the Vision reality.

No state or region on earth has all the answers when it comes to securing, governing and developing the maritime space. The goal of a RMIS, therefore, is to help facilitate continual improvement toward a safer, more secure, more stable and more prosperous maritime domain.
A Regional Integrated Maritime Strategy (RIMS) is a triple pillar strategy that focuses on 1) maritime security, 2) governance of the maritime domain and 3) the maritime economy of the region. It necessarily, therefore, involves all the government agencies that have either maritime security, maritime governance and economic responsibilities in each state of the region, along with the private actors who work in the maritime domain across the region. It is quite similar in process to a Regional Maritime Interagency Strategy, particularly with regard to the assessments required, but there are two important distinctions: 1) it places additional emphasis on economic activities and 2) it necessitates a process for engaging with the private sector and coastal and fisheries communities on economic matters. The aims of an RIMS are therefore to support efforts to secure the region’s maritime domain against undesirable activity, govern it effectively and encourage economic activity that benefits each state and the region as a whole.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

In developing what it has termed a “Global Maritime Fulcrum Strategy”, Indonesia not only sought to address the three pillars of security, governance and the maritime economy, but a total of seven pillars, making it one of the most expansive Integrated Maritime Strategies today:

1. Marine and Human Resource Development
2. Maritime Security, Law Enforcement and Safety at Sea
3. Ocean Governance and Institutions
4. Maritime Economic Development
5. Sea Space Management and Marine Protection
6. Maritime Culture
7. Maritime Diplomacy

States can determine whether to include such matters as marine protection under security and governance or to have it as a separate pillar. Fundamentally, though, once a strategy has maritime security, maritime governance and the maritime economy included, it is an Integrated Maritime Strategy, no matter how many further pillars may be added.

**INITIAL TEAM**

Once the region decides to pursue an RIMS, it must work to assemble an initial team to get the process started. That initial team will really only exist until the Strategy Development Team – the core group that will shepherd the strategy through to adoption – is established. Usually composed of the regional organization’s maritime security leadership (or of maritime security personnel from all the states of the region), together with regional political and diplomatic leaders and regional maritime economic or blue economy experts, the initial team has a choice – it can either start by overseeing a series of preliminary assessments or by engaging key stakeholders with an eye to composing the Strategy Development Team.

If the initial team starts with the assessments, the results of those assessments may be helpful in shaping who needs to be a part of the Strategy Development Team. On the other hand, a preliminary stakeholder engagement can pave the way for a deeper assessment overseen by the Strategy Development Team. It can also be helpful to turn over the leadership of the process to the Strategy Development Team early to guard against claims that people were “left out” during the assessment process.

**PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

At the outset, it is important to remember a key principle:

- **Every Citizen of a Region is a Stakeholder in the Region’s Maritime Security, Governance and Economic Activity**

As the saying goes: “no shipping, no shopping”. It is important throughout the RIMS development process to remember just how much the region relies on the maritime domain. With this in mind, it is useful to
err on the side of inclusion, and, at a minimum, ensure that every state is represented in the process. The initial team should be cautious not to pre-determine who has a voice in the maritime security, governance and economic activity of the region. There are almost always more ministries, agencies, departments and even private and other non-state actors that have important roles to play than are immediately apparent. To be most effective, a strategy will at least account for them, even if they are not all involved in the drafting process. If they genuinely have a role in maritime security, governance or economic activity, then implementation will be difficult without taking them into consideration. Furthermore, involving the views of key private sector actors – such as port operators and shipping companies – will be critical to devising a realistic strategy. The same is true of civil society groups, including fishing communities, maritime labor unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose support can make or break the success of an RMIS. Ultimately, they are often the ones whose activities and livelihoods are what the strategy seeks to support the most.

Fundamentally – the aim of this exercise is to identify:

- Whose voice should be part of the strategy development process?

Understanding this can also help contribute to the self-assessment described below. How to answer this question is up to the initial team, but, importantly – the stakeholders must actually be engaged. This will also help clarify who may be a hindrance to the strategy, so the more inclusive this process is, the better. This can be done directly by the team, or en masse.

**PRACTICAL POINT**

In almost every regional strategy development process, some actors will find themselves meeting colleagues for the first time, sometimes even from their own country. This is not a point about which to be embarrassed, but it is an indication of why the process of strategy development has value in and of itself. Maritime professionals getting to know each other better, getting to understand what each other does, and devising ways of collaborating or coordinating are some of the key benefits of the stakeholder engagement process.

**Establishing the Strategy Development Team**

Through the process of this preliminary engagement, the initial team needs to clarify who should be on the Strategy Development Team. There is no formula for this. The end result could be that the initial team becomes the Strategy Development Team with no change. But equally, it could hand over to an entirely new group. Ideally, at least some of the initial team will transition to the Strategy Development Team in order to maintain the continuity from the start of the process and the preliminary stakeholder engagement. Some key considerations include:

- Who has the capacity to conduct or oversee the assessments?
- Who has the contacts to engage with stakeholders to get their input?
- Who has the ability to draft the strategy?
- Who has the diplomatic clout to build political will towards adoption?
- Who knows the maritime security situation the best?
- Who understands the maritime laws on paper and in practice the best?
- Who has the best understanding of the maritime governance structures?
- Who understands the regional mechanisms the best?
- Who understands the maritime economy?
- Who understands the principles of the blue economy?
- Who has the contacts and credibility to engage the private sector and civil society?
- Who understands the existing strategic context to help navigate nesting?
- Who actually wants to be a part of the Strategy Development Team?

While most of these questions are obvious, the last one may seem superfluous, but is decidedly not. On the one hand, someone who is interested, but lacking in skills or qualities that would make them helpful should perhaps be excluded. On the other hand, even if someone has the ideal skills and qualities, their
lack of interest could be fatal to the undertaking. No one should be forced into the role if they have no interest in the process.

There is no magic number for how many should be on the Strategy Development Team, but the key is to be big enough to have some diversity of abilities and perspectives, but small enough to be efficient and effective. The key for a RMIS is that it has to be balanced between security-focused actors, governance-focused actors, and economy-focused actors either from within an existing regional organization or drawn from across the region, with a desire among all of them to work together to change the status quo.

Once established the Strategy Development Team will either need to proceed to the Preliminary Assessments, if not already complete, or to begin the strategy development process.

**PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS**

One of the biggest mistakes in drafting maritime strategies of any sort has been the failure to conduct an honest assessment of the status quo. A fundamental principle of strategy development is that:

- **You Must First Know Where You Are Before Deciding Where to Go**

This is the point of the Preliminary Assessments – to provide a common, realistic understanding of where the region is so that it can discern where it needs to be.

There are three assessments that need to be conducted:

1. A Self-Assessment
2. A Threat Assessment
3. A Domain Assessment

The composite picture of these three assessments will help inform what needs to be done and what is achievable.

Conducting these assessments cannot be a pro forma exercise – the point is critical analysis of strengths on which the strategy can build, weaknesses the strategy can help address, and issues and opportunities that should be considered throughout the strategy development and implementation processes. As the Africa Center for Strategic Studies’ National Maritime Strategy Toolkit states:

> In any context, to set a credible direction for the future requires: first, knowing where one is; second, knowing what is possible, good and bad; and third, knowing what challenges are likely to arise. Similarly, to establish a vision for its maritime domain, a country must understand the status quo, must be realistic about the possibilities, and must be aware of the likely difficulties.

Whether the initial team or the Strategy Development Team is responsible for overseeing these Preliminary Assessments, they must make a critical choice at this stage:

- Is it more productive to conduct the assessments themselves or to seek external, objective assistance?

Both options have merit, but both come with challenges. In the first instance, it is often more difficult to be honest about where you are when you are assessing yourself. This is partly due to natural bias, but it can also be due to a lack of comparative references. In other words, if you do not know how other states operate, you may not even recognize some of your own shortcomings, or see how things could be done differently. However, outside assistance can also bring bias, a lack of understanding of the regional context, misguided efforts to make things fit either a narrative or checklist, and of course, potential added cost. That said, a good external advisor, with sufficient experience, can be helpful in pointing out areas that can be improved and offering some ideas about how similar matters have been resolved elsewhere.
Self-Assessment

There is no prescription for how to conduct a self-assessment, but no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant the findings are, the assessment must be honest. Drawing on the experience of states, one potentially helpful approach is to submit a set of questions to the actors identified as having a stake in the maritime security of the region, together with a deadline for providing responses. The option for anonymous responses can help elicit what no one feels comfortable sharing openly, but which needs to be addressed by the strategy. Other approaches involve an external advisor conducting interviews, or a combination of interviews and written questions. Even off-the-record discussions conducted by the Strategy Development Team, however, tend not to bring all the issues to light. So no matter how it is done:

- **There Needs to be a Mechanism for Providing Anonymous Critical Feedback**

Since the goal of a strategy is to move from where things are to where they ought to be, truthful reflection on the status quo is vital.

Critical for a regional strategy, however, is that it respects the sovereignty of the states of the region. While this principle holds throughout the process, it is most likely to be violated when conducting the Self-Assessment, so the Strategy Development Team must remember:

- **The Aim of a Regional Maritime Strategy of Any Sort is to Enhance the Region’s Maritime Domain without Diminishing the Sovereignty of the States of the Region**

Cooperative and collective action, therefore, must be a choice, so the Strategy Development Team must discern what the region’s strongest incentives are for working together to enhance the maritime domain. This question of motivation should be in the back of their minds throughout the assessment, development and drafting processes.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides a useful list of questions that could be asked. Here, they are reproduced with amendments to make them regionally-applicable and additions in brackets:

- What national agencies have maritime [security, governance and economic] responsibilities [in each state]?
  - What are those responsibilities?
  - Where does the mandate for those responsibilities originate?
- What processes and mechanisms exist for interagency cooperation and coordination on maritime [security, governance and economic] matters [across the region]?
- What international maritime laws have been signed [in each state in the region]?
  - Have they been incorporated into [each state’s] domestic law?
  - [What international maritime laws have not been signed?]
- [Are there regional maritime laws?]
  - [Are they signed and implemented?]
- Can [either a citizen or] an outsider reasonably access the country’s maritime laws, regulations, and policies?
- What do the existing maritime laws, regulations, and policies cover?
  - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
- How is maritime law enforcement intended to work [across the region]?
  - [Are there cooperative security agreements?]
  - [Status of Forces agreements?]
  - [Shiprider agreements?]
  - [Ship boarding agreements?]
  - [Information sharing agreements?]
  - [Regional or bilateral operational agreements?]
  - [Do multinational operations take place?]
  - [Is information shared? If so, how?]
  - Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
- What institutions [in each state] have naval or maritime law enforcement responsibilities? [Are there any combined operational entities or mechanisms at the region’s disposal?]
- What is their manpower?
- What equipment do they have?
- How have they been trained?
- [What are their respective authorities and jurisdiction?]
- Are there known gaps or inadequacies?
- [Is there a regional forum for collaborating on maritime security and governance at the political and diplomatic levels?]
- What bilateral, regional, or international obligations exist regarding maritime [security, governance and economic] activities?
- Are there known deficiencies in meeting those obligations?
- What resources are at the [region’s] disposal for use in the maritime domain?
- [What are the stumbling blocks within the region that hinder maritime security, governance and economic prosperi?]

These questions provide useful guidance as to what questions should be answered, but they are by no means exhaustive. Furthermore, if the approach of circulating questions is used, they need to be reformulated to be more targeted to the regional context. They also need to elicit an understanding of national interests and priorities to ensure that the region does not try to move in a manner incompatible with the states that comprise it.

As Making Maritime Strategy Work notes:

Taking a strategy from paper to practice requires five key elements:

1. Capacity
2. Capability
3. Authority & Jurisdiction
4. A Legal Framework
5. Will

In practical terms: capacity is having a boat, capability is knowing how to use it, authority and jurisdiction provide the legal basis – both enabling and constraining – for interdiction operations, the legal framework provides both the laws to enforce and the process by which to achieve legal finish, and will is required to fund, operate and maintain all aspects within the law enforcement ecosystem.

In many respects, the Self-Assessment for an RIMS requires appraising the current status of those five elements in each of the states and across the region as a whole. If it is helpful, questions can be developed to target each element and then grouped accordingly. Multinational security operations need clarity on these matters, as achieving legal finish in the form of a prosecution or penalty requires a firm grasp of how to leverage national maritime security elements for both national and regional benefit. Further, cooperation on governance requires clear channels of communication between lead agencies to be able to work together. All of this supports collective prosperity, and given the regional and international nature of the maritime economy, it is critical that the RIMS be grounded in an accurate understanding of the region’s economy.

Too often, regions are quick to conduct Threat Assessments, but less willing to engage in the Self-Assessment. It is, however, critical for effectively informing the strategy. So, too is the Domain Assessment.

**Domain Assessment**

To know what needs to be protected and governed, a region must know the significance of the maritime domain to the region as a whole. While this may seem obvious, maritime resources, infrastructure and activities are often invisible from land. More than just an inventory, a Domain Assessment also examines both the relative value of the various resources, infrastructure and activities to the state, and examines how to monitor them. It also includes getting a handle on the marine environment including how it has changed over time, what impact climate change is having, what weather patterns impact the region, and whether there are any geographic features that are distinctive.
Conducting this assessment for an RIMS requires engaging with private actors, coastal communities and fishing communities to understand the maritime space and what needs protecting. Such conversations can either be held by the Strategy Development Team or can be conducted by actors within each of the region’s states. Vague notions of how the maritime domain works are insufficient for discerning where to focus the RIMS. Questions that should be considered in conducting the Domain Assessment include:

- What is the current aggregate contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of the maritime domain across the states in the region?
- How many people in the state work in the maritime domain across its spectrum of activities from shipping to tourism to ports and beyond?
- What maritime infrastructure currently exists, including:
  - Ports, harbors and marinas?
  - Canals?
  - Shipbuilding and ship repair facilities?
  - Submarine cables and pipelines?
  - Offshore extractive infrastructure?
  - Buoys, lighthouses and aids to navigation?
  - Recreational infrastructure?
  - Underwater cultural heritage or tourism?
- How is the maritime domain currently monitored? Is there regional monitoring or is it only at the state level? Are there issues of interoperability between the states? What is used:
  - Radar?
  - Vessel monitoring systems (VMS)?
  - Automatic Identification System (AIS)-based maritime domain awareness platforms?
  - Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT)?
  - Fisheries control systems?
  - Search and rescue systems?
  - Coast watch centers?
  - Patrols?
  - Other mechanisms?
- Is there a means of creating a reporting system for tips and information?
- How is information about the maritime space analyzed?
- How is information about the maritime domain shared?
- Does the region have a common operating picture?

These questions all target the existing economic, governance and oversight activities in the maritime domain. For an RIMS, however, the Strategy Development Team has to be working to look at how the economic value of the region’s maritime space could be enhanced. To that end, the Domain Assessment also has to explore potential. The Africa Center for Strategic Studies Toolkit provides some good questions on this front, reprinted below:

- What is the maximum sustainable exploitation of the regional fishery at the artisanal, semi-industrial, and industrial levels?
  - What is the economic value of the fish at each of those levels?
- What, if any, potential does the region have for offshore mineral or oil and gas extraction?
  - Where are those minerals?
  - Is it cost-effective to extract them?
- Is there any potential use of the marine environment for green energy including wind, wave, and hydroelectric?
- How could port and shoreside infrastructure be most effectively used?
- What onshore agriculture requires maritime transport and how could its connectivity be improved and value increased?
- What onshore manufacturing requires maritime transport and how could its connectivity be improved?
- What onshore natural resource extraction requires maritime transport and how could its connectivity be improved?
- What shoreside storage facilities could add economic value to the maritime domain?
- What shoreside fish processing and packaging infrastructure could increase maritime economic activity?
What is the local market’s reliance on maritime goods and how could value be added to the supply chain?
- What maritime-related tourist infrastructure could be developed or enhanced?
- What recreational and luxury maritime activities could be marketed?
- How could the region pursue collective prosperity through maritime economic activities?

Essentially, the Strategy Development Team needs to consider how to maximize the sustainable economic benefit that can be derived from the state’s maritime domain.

The focus of this Domain Assessment is simultaneously on security, governance and the maritime economy, so the other key factor to understand is what could interfere with the region’s efforts to secure and govern the maritime domain. Understanding things like the roughness of the water and the presence of hazards to navigation can be critical for identifying what sorts of vessels or equipment might be suitable. Similarly, the size of the maritime sector and the relative power of actors within it may help indicate the extent to which governance measures need to be reconsidered at the regional level. Even factors such as the general business and investment climate in the region can help identify how easy or difficult it may be to attract new investors and opportunities to pursue blue economic initiatives. Ultimately, the Domain Assessment, in combination with both the Self-Assessment and Threat Assessment, should show the region what activities most need protecting, what areas need greater governance, what possibilities should be pursued, what gaps and deficiencies exist and what needs to be prioritized in the RIMS.

**Threat Assessment**

There are many different approaches to conducting a Threat Assessment, but the key is to be comprehensive. Maritime criminals are constantly looking for ways to avoid detection and they often succeed for a time, meaning that some threats are not easily visible. When conducting a Threat Assessment for the purpose of developing an RMIS, the key is to identify areas that need to be addressed by the Strategy. The focus, therefore, should be on the transnational threats and the networks behind them, as states may only be seeing a portion of a criminal operation that could be undermining the security, governance and prosperity of the wider region. While this list is by no means exhaustive, the Threat Assessment should note the extent to which the following matters are of concern:

- Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea
- Slavery
- Illegal Broadcasting
- Maritime Terrorism
- Trafficking and Smuggling of:
  - Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances
  - Arms
  - Humans and Migrants
  - Counterfeit Goods
  - Antiquities and Cultural Property
- Oil and Fuel
- Mineral Resources
- Bulk Cash
- Sand
- Timber
- Wildlife
- Other Resources
- Illegal Extraction or Theft of:
  - Fish
  - Sand
  - Mineral Resources
  - Oil and Fuel
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
- Fisheries Crime
- Illegal Transshipment at Sea
- Illegal Bunkering
- Maritime Cyber Concerns
- Use of Technology for Illegal Purposes (including drones or autonomous vessels)
- Threats to:
  - Submarine Cables
  - Ports
  - Offshore Infrastructure
  - Coastal Tourism
  - Underwater Cultural Heritage
  - The Marine Environment
- Dumping
- Pollution
- Marine Spatial Control:
  - Marine Protected Areas
  - Maritime Boundaries
- Financial Crimes Including:
  - Money Laundering
  - Financing of Terrorism
- Maritime Safety:
  - Search and Rescue
- Maritime Health Considerations:
  - Transfer of Disease
- Protection of Recreational Activities
Again, this list is for general reference. Regions may have more concerns than are on this list, or they may only have a few. But the nature of the threats is important to understand, at least in broad terms, so that the RMIS can focus on addressing the concerns that actually threaten the region’s maritime domain.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Approach

Once the Preliminary Assessments are complete, the Strategy Development Team must decide how to proceed with developing the Strategy. There are three key sections:

1. “The Ends” or “The Vision” – how the maritime domain will look and function if the Strategy is completely implemented. These are usually expressed through either “goals” or “aims” and “objectives.” The goals/aims are higher-level statements, while the objectives are more specific.
2. “The Ways” – how the state will achieve The Ends or The Vision.
3. “The Means” – the resources that will be required to accomplish The Ends or The Vision.

Depending on the Strategy Development Team, there are a few approaches that have worked in producing realistic Ends, Ways and Means for an RIMS.

The first option is to seek early consultation from a broad range of stakeholders across the states of the region. This can be extremely helpful, as it often sparks ideas early in the process before the Team becomes committed to anything. It is also consistent with the principle of inclusivity, and can be extremely helpful for encouraging adoption later on.

The second option is to prepare the ideas first, and then seek consultation on them. This can be helpful if the stakeholders are unlikely to be forthcoming with their own ideas, but it tends to be slightly more limiting. Public comment periods, for example, tend not to make for a strong sense of ownership by the states, particularly if the public comments are not thereafter incorporated, or if one state’s interests are perceived to be prioritized.

Finally, the third option is to proceed with just the Strategy Development Team and certain key engagements for input. This may be the fastest approach, but it is also the least likely to engender widespread buy-in, which can be critical for implementation. It can, however, work if the Team engages with the right stakeholders in each of the states so as to make them all feel a part of the process.

The approach that never works, however, is if the content is developed by an external actor and presented to the region. Outside experts can be helpful with any of the three workable options, offering examples of what has been done elsewhere and sharing cautionary tales. But the maritime domain belongs to the states and, thus, the region, not the outside advisor, so The Vision for how to secure and govern the maritime domain must come from within the region.

PRACTICAL POINT

At the first meeting of the Strategy Development Team in Côte d’Ivoire, the Team drafted a set of principles that were supposed to help guide and shape the drafting process. These principles were posted and reviewed at every subsequent meeting. Members of that Team continue to emphasize how helpful this simple action was in keeping them working as a team. This sort of approach may be useful at the regional level, as well, for not only keeping focus and enhancing the spirit of collaboration, but also in setting an early precedent for coming to agreement.

The Drafting

In some regards, drafting is the least important of all the processes. While it is critical to clearly articulate the outcome of the work that has been done, the main effort will be complete by the time drafting starts.
In some places, the drafting has been done by one lead individual with consultation and feedback from the Team. Elsewhere, different sections have been assigned to different individuals and the composite blended together over time. In other cases, the drafting has been done by the full Team during meetings as a group. While external advisors can assist with the drafting process, the Strategy Development Team must “hold the pen.” The voice of the strategy must be the voice of the region.

Importantly, the RIMS does not have to be long. In fact, the shorter it is, the more likely it is to be adopted and implemented. This does not mean that the Strategy Development Team should try to make it short and thin on content. The key is for the team to be direct and clear.

The Content

The content of the RMSS must express The Ends or The Vision, The Ways and The Means for moving from the status quo to where the state wants to be on maritime security and governance. Often, this means a summary of the findings of the assessments, and key points of process – for example, noting the stakeholder engagement – before focusing on the goals or aims and subordinate objectives. Often a region may wish to have a grand strategic goal from which all other goals flow. Subordinate to each of those goals are more concrete objectives as follows in one to two sentences each:

**Grand Strategic Vision**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC GOAL ONE</th>
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There is flexibility in producing this, so the region can create further layers of subordinate objectives, becoming more and more specific. The following is a hypothetical example:

**GRAND STRATEGY**

*To preserve the peaceful, stable, safe and secure character of the state by ensuring the wherewithal to secure state interests at sea.*

**Objective 1: Securing The Maritime Economy.**

To maximize the Coast Guard’s capacity, capability, authority and jurisdiction to secure the state’s maritime economy from illegal activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, theft, dumping, pollution, terrorism, fisheries crime, IUU fishing and illicit extraction of marine resources.

To be delivered through the following sub objectives:

- Supporting the harmonization of laws and penalties across the region to ensure that no state is a magnet for crime.
- Providing common training for all navies and coast guards in conducting boardings at sea so as to ensure interoperability when engaging in regional combined operations at sea.
- Procuring a maritime domain awareness platform and developing rapid information sharing procedures to enable a common operating picture across the region.
- Supporting the development of cooperative memoranda of understanding and legal agreements, particularly shiprider and ship boarding agreements, to enhance region-wide maritime law enforcement capacity.
- Establishing a regional forum for public-private engagement on maritime matters to enhance the information-flow and critical relationships that support improved regional maritime security, governance and economic prosperity.

This example shows that the goal is not to say everything that needs to be done to have maritime security, governance and prosperity in the region. Rather, it focuses on what is not currently adequate and indicates what adequacy would look like.
The next step is to identify The Ways each of these objectives will be achieved, and then what Means are required. Taking the first bullet point, for example, the Ways and Means may be:

To accomplish this, the region will request technical assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) Global Maritime Crime Program to provide training on regional harmonization of laws and penalties. The [regional body] will arrange for the meetings with the appropriate state actors and will provide accommodation and meals for the UNODC expert during these engagements.

The Ways and The Means can either be separated out or combined, but both need to be evident.

There also needs to be a review mechanism built into the document so that the iterative process of continual improvement can be achieved. An RIMS should be revisited within a certain amount of time.

**INTERAGENCY PROCESS**

Developing an RMIS also requires developing or enhancing a regional interagency process. Around the world, there is increasing recognition that maritime security and governance require interagency processes to be successful. While “Making Maritime Strategy Work” discusses some of the different layers of cooperation that should be considered, the interagency layer is critical for governance, especially for supporting both safety and security, even at the regional level. Every coastal, island and archipelagic state likely has a catalogue of maritime disasters that could have been either avoided or mitigated with more effective interagency cooperation. One of the problems regions face in approaching the maritime domain is to attempt to promote regional security and governance through one agency from each country.

While a Framework longer than this one could be written on how to develop a functional interagency or whole of government process at the state level, the key elements to making it work nationally, also apply regionally:

1. It has to be repeatable – in other words, the process needs to be clear enough that it is followed repeatedly and does not just devolve to ad hoc approaches;
2. It has to be documentable – as personnel rotate, there needs to be a way to look back on what has been done in the past to learn from the good and the bad alike.
3. It has to get salient information to the appropriate senior decision makers in a timely fashion – the whole point is to create a process for informed decision making, but timeliness is critical.

There are really three reasons for approaching regional interagency cooperation in this way. First, it enhances efficiency – as all the agencies within each of the states can know what the others are doing, reducing the odds of duplicated effort and waste. Second, it enhances effectiveness – if all the agencies in each of the states know their roles and responsibilities and those of the other agencies and the other states, they can work together as a team and be more effective in maritime governance, security and development. Finally, it increases transparency – with everyone working together, it limits the opportunities for ill-advised and corrupt practices which would otherwise undermine maritime governance, security and prosperity across the region.

Whether the regional interagency process is a full-time unit that has formal governance and oversight authorities with personnel from various agencies from each state, or a responsive virtual cell that only operates upon a triggering event, the principles are the same. For regions, budgetary constraints tend to favor thinner mechanisms, but multiple agencies from each state need to be able to be a part of the collective maritime security and governance efforts. There is room for flexibility and innovation on how to accomplish this. Regardless of the sort of mechanism, practicing is important, as the process should be able to exhibit the principle of agility and adapt to address changing maritime circumstances.
PRACTICAL POINT
The United States' Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) Process involves cooperation between 17 different agencies. It engages regularly in a scenario-based “war game” or “table top exercise” (TTX) to 1) practice its repeatable, documentable process, 2) ensure that there are no barriers to the timely flow of salient information to senior decision makers, and 3) prepare for issues and concerns that are visible on the horizon. TTXs are a great way to work through to determine how processes should work. They are a safe but realistic setting and can be critical for ensuring effective action when confronting real-world maritime security and governance issues. The same approach can be taken at the regional level.

An RIMS should clarify not only how the region’s interagency mechanism will function, but what its role in implementing the strategy will be. Importantly, it should also be tasked with overseeing the strategy’s review process.

ACTION PLAN

Before proceeding to final consultation and adoption, the Strategy Development Team should produce an Action Plan. The Action Plan, which ideally should be adopted with the RIMS, provides a benchmarked agenda for beginning implementation. It indicates the concrete tasks that need to be accomplished to begin moving the region from the status quo to the desired Ends or Vision for maritime security, governance and prosperity. This does not have to be a lengthy plan, but it does need to set the region on the right trajectory.

CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION

After drafting the RIMS, the Strategy Development Team should ideally seek consultation on it from key stakeholders. It may be worth having a public consultation of some sort with an option for feedback, but that is at the discretion of the Strategy Development Team.

Every region’s adoption process will differ, but the Strategy Development Team’s work is not finished until the RIMS is formally adopted. They need to shepherd the strategy through that process to completion.

IMPLEMENTATION

With the Action Plan as the starting point, the region must proceed immediately from Strategy Development to Strategy Implementation. Particularly in the context of security, criminals will not wait, so neither should the state.

PRACTICAL POINT
Some states begin Strategy Implementation with a strategic communications campaign, working to educate the stakeholders – including both the maritime security actors and the general public – on the contents of the Strategy. This can be helpful at the regional level, as well, serving as a signal of the region’s intentions and building a regional sense of purpose around Strategy implementation.

Recall the principle - A Strategy is Not Merely a Document: It is the Process of Developing a Common Vision for the Maritime Space and then Making that Vision a Reality. Consequently, the region must do all it can to make the Vision reality.

FINAL REMINDER

No state or region on earth has all the answers when it comes to securing, governing and developing the maritime space. The goal of an RIMS, therefore, is to help facilitate continual improvement toward a safer, more secure, more stable and more prosperous maritime domain.
If you would like to know more about what the UNODC is doing to support states in combating maritime crime:


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