



SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE WITH REGARDS TO WHOLE-OF- GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO MARITIME CAPACITY BUILDING

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AIM

To present brief overview of South Africa's (SA's) national perspective with regards to Whole-of-Government (WoG) approach to maritime capacity-building to enhance cooperation, coordination, trust and C2 in support of maritime sector



SCOPE

- SA's WoG Approach National Perspective
- Building Capacity, Cooperation, Coordination Trust and C2
- Successes
- Challenges
- Operation COPPER – Lessons and Recommendations for Cooperation and Coordination
- Conclusion



SA'S WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (1/3)

- SA's vast maritime domain is strategic asset essential to its national security, economic growth, and regional influence
- Requires an integrated approach to governance and security – National Security Strategy (2024 – 2028) supports integrated security outcomes
- SA supports and implements a WoG approach to maritime capacity building as maritime threats are multi-dimensional
- SA recognizes that no single institution can effectively govern such a vast and complex domain – therefore requires an integrated legal, law-enforcement, defence, diplomatic and civil-service approach
- Reflects deliberate effort to break down institutional silos and ensure coherent maritime policy implementation across defence, transport, fisheries, environment, intelligence, and policing agencies



SA'S WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (2/3)



- **This WoG approach establishes:**
 - National governance
 - Enables interoperable command & control (C2)
 - Builds trust between agencies and with regional partners
 - Focuses capacity building on sustainable institutional outcomes rather than one-off projects (operations)
- **In practice SA's WoG approach emphasises:**
 - Integration of civil and military maritime role players
 - Cooperation bmo information-sharing via Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) networks and fusion centres
 - Joint operations and capacity-building bmo multi-agency deployment of naval, air and intelligence assets through Operation PHAKISA Initiative 5 launched in 2014 to promote interdepartmental cooperation, maritime security and environmental protection



SA'S WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (3/3)



- **Key institutions in maritime domain:**
 - SA Navy (SAN)
 - SA Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA)
 - Department of Transport (DoT)
 - Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)
 - SA African Police Service (SAPS)
 - National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICOC)
 - Customs & Border Management Authority (BMA)
- Entities operate within inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms and joint structures
- Use of the WoG model reflects recognition that maritime threats and opportunities (e.g., the “Blue Economy”) require holistic responses



BUILDING CAPACITY, COOPERATION, COORDINATION, TRUST AND C2 (1/4)

- **Building Capacity in the Maritime Sector**
 - Capacity building is a cornerstone of SA's WoG approach
 - SA government promotes stakeholder collaboration (PPPs), inter-agency training, technological integration and environmental protection (by expanding through the MDA system), ocean governance and training, etc.



BUILDING CAPACITY, COOPERATION, COORDINATION, TRUST AND C2 (2/4)



- **Strengthening Cooperation and Coordination**
 - SA's maritime governance relies on cooperation across government and with regional partners
 - Coordination is institutionalized through bodies such as the National Maritime Security Coordination Centre (NMSCC), Maritime Security Advisory Committee (MSAC) and NATJOINTS for civil-military coordination
 - Operational cooperation is demonstrated through Operation COPPER, a counter-piracy deployment in the Mozambique Channel since 2010 involving multiple agencies and Mozambique
 - Regionally SA promotes cooperation and coordination through the SADC Maritime Security Strategy, the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC), and the African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy



BUILDING CAPACITY, COOPERATION, COORDINATION, TRUST AND C2 (3/4)



- **Building Trust and Interagency Integration**
 - SA's approach emphasizes shared operational experiences, transparency, and community engagement
 - Institutional trust and interagency integration are strengthened through regular information exchanges and inter-agency exercises
 - Regional trust building is strengthened via joint patrols and shared operational information e.g. through Operation COPPER which has reduced piracy risk in the Mozambique Channel and built confidence among partner states



BUILDING CAPACITY, COOPERATION, COORDINATION, TRUST AND C2 (4/4)

- **Command and Control within the WoG Framework**
 - C2 is not centralized in a single agency, but rather functions as a coordinated network of authorities, responsibilities, and communication channels
 - Key C2 entities in the WoG Framework:
 - **Strategic Command:** Led by Cabinet-level structures such as the National Security Council (NSC) and the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster
 - **Operational Control:** Managed by interdepartmental Joint Operational Committees, often hosted by the SANDF Joint Operations Division or Maritime Security Coordination Centre (MSCC)
 - **Tactical Coordination:** Executed by joint task forces during operations or exercises



SUCSESSES (1/2)

• Interagency Cooperation and Coordination

- Operation PHAKISA institutionalizes cooperation and coordination between departments such as the DoT, SAMSA, DFFE, SAPS through workshops which promote joint planning and information sharing
- Operation PHAKISA's MDA network improves situational awareness and real-time information sharing among agencies such as vessel monitoring, port management, and environmental enforcement
- Operation PHAKISA objectives are achieved through cooperation between government departments and the SAN conducting Operation CORONA (maritime security patrols in national waters)
- Operation COPPER demonstrated good cooperation between SAN, SA Air Force aircraft, intelligence services, SAPS and Mozambican counterparts, operating under a unified C2 structure
- Operation COPPER's joint operations centres and maritime patrols facilitated tactical coordination between SA and Mozambique



SUCCESSSES (2/2)



- **Maritime Command and Control (C2)**
 - Operation COPPER provides an operationally proven C2 model, with the SAN leading surveillance and patrol missions under the SADC Maritime Security Strategy
 - This ensures tactical coordination, MDA and rapid response capacity
 - Cooperation with the Mozambique navy has further strengthened joint patrols and trust-building measures



CHALLENGES

- **Fragmented Coordination and Institutional Silos**
 - Interagency coordination remains hampered by overlapping mandates and limited data integration between civilian and defence entities
 - Absence of permanent NMCC limits unified command and situational awareness
- **Resource and Capability Constraints**
 - Operation COPPER faces sustainability challenges due to cost of prolonged naval deployments and availability of deployable assets
 - Inconsistent funding undermines patrol regularity and operational reach
- **Information Sharing and Trust Deficits**
 - Agencies maintain different information security protocols, which restrict data exchange
 - Competition for operational authority creates friction and weakens interdepartmental trust
 - Some agencies remain reluctant to share sensitive data due to classification rules and institutional culture, limiting full MDA integration



OPERATION COPPER – LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION AND COOPERATION (1/4)

- Operation COPPER initiated in 2010 through SADC SMC to deter piracy in Mozambique Channel bmo of joint maritime patrols involving RSA and Mozambique
- Authorised annually by Presidential Note and SA Navy then tasked by SANDF Joint Operations Division to plan and conduct patrols
- Patrols are conducted with SA Navy vessels with SA Air Force helicopters and naval boarding teams embarked



OPERATION COPPER – LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION AND COOPERATION (2/4)



- **Strategic-Level Cooperation**

- Operation COPPER was initiated from SADC Heads of State mandate that authorized a multinational anti-piracy deployment
- This high-level agreement ensured political legitimacy and access to Mozambique's territorial waters under a memorandum of understanding (MoU)

- **Recommendations:**

- Secure political and legal frameworks before deployment, such as bilateral or multilateral MoUs and Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs)
- Align joint operations with regional strategies (e.g. AU 2050 AIM Strategy and SADC Maritime Security Strategy) to promote legitimacy and continuity
- Designate a lead nation on a rotational basis for command and coordination to reduce duplication and confusion



OPERATION COPPER – LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION AND COOPERATION (3/4)



- **Operational-Level Coordination**

- Operation COPPER demonstrated how coordinated planning enhances effectiveness
- SAN, SA Air Force, and Mozambique Defence Forces shared operational responsibilities through a joint task group structure, with defined command relationships

- **Recommendations:**

- Conduct joint planning conferences (Initial, Main, and Final) before deployment to define roles, communication protocols, and logistics
- Establish combined operational centers linked to regional fusion hubs (e.g., RMIFC Madagascar, IFC Kenya) for situational awareness
- Use liaison officers to maintain real-time coordination between national task forces
- Develop common Rules of Engagement (ROE) and incident reporting formats to ensure interoperability



OPERATION COPPER – LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION AND COOPERATION (4/4)



- **Logistics and Sustainment Cooperation**
 - Major success factor in Operation COPPER was SA provided naval and shared logistics and sustainment coordination
 - air assets, while Mozambique offered port facilities and refuelling points in Pemba and Nacala
- **Recommendations:**
 - Pre-identify host-nation support sites for refuelling, resupply, and maintenance
 - Share logistical burdens through cost-sharing or asset rotation models
 - Include medical, SAR and environmental support plans in joint operation orders
 - Maintain contingency arrangements for mechanical failure or emergency assistance



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DCoC MEMBERS (1/3)



- **National WoG approaches should be considered and incorporated in all aspects of DCoC maritime security activities**
- **Ensure support for regional MDA interoperability (technical and data sharing)** - Integrated MDA framework allows signatories to detect, verify, and respond to maritime threats more rapidly, while promoting transparency and operational trust among partners
- **Ensure funding to build capacity where national funding resources are insufficient**
- **Joint regional training/exercises under the WoG templates** – capacity building must extend beyond equipment acquisition to encompass knowledge systems, leadership development, and institutional resilience



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DCoC MEMBERS (2/3)



- **Ensure legal assistance for prosecutions and fisheries enforcement**
 - Establish a Regional Legal and Prosecution Support Mechanism for an effective deterrence which requires legal follow-through
 - Shared legal frameworks and MOUs improve consistency in prosecution, reduce impunity, and enhance mutual legal trust
- **Establish mechanisms for DCoC peer reviews and shared SOPs**
- **Conduct regular joint operations and exercises** – transforms MOU into working relationships and enhances real-time coordination in crises
- **Enhance regional command and control integration** – clear and interoperable command structures reduce confusion during operations



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DCoC MEMBERS (3/3)



- **Promote transparency, confidence and trust-building**
 - Trust is built incrementally through openness, peer engagement, and demonstrated reliability
 - Transparent processes sustain cooperation beyond political cycles
- **Align and coordinate donor and partner assistance** – Harmonised partner assistance ensures efficient resource utilisation and reinforces national ownership of maritime security programmes
- **Monitor and evaluate progress** – Measurable results create accountability, enable benchmarking, and justify continued investment by both national treasuries and international donors
- **Foster a culture of regional solidarity** – Sustainable maritime security depends on a community of trust. Regional solidarity transforms cooperation from obligation into shared identity



QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

