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## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

### Creation of South Asia centre of excellence for sustainable Maritime transport (SACE-SmarT)

#### INDIA

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* This document shares the concept proposal to establish a South Asia Centre for Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT), envisioned as an Indian national centre of excellence with a regional dimension which India wants to extend to the regional partners of the South Asia region. This paper also aims to find potential synergy with IMO work for sustainable maritime transport and seeks support of the Global MTCC Network in the formation of this centre of excellence in South Asia region.

*Strategic direction, if applicable:* SD 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 and OW

*Output:* 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 3.2, 3.4, 3.7 & OW1

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 10 & 11

*Related documents:* TC61/8/1, TC74/9, A.1166(32), A.1173(33), MEPC.377(80)

#### Introduction

1. In addition to its technical and regulatory roles, IMO, as the specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) responsible for regulating international shipping, has a pivotal role in helping Member States to meet wider UN objectives as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. IMO Resolution A.1166 (32) promulgates IMO Strategy for Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030. The Strategy recognises the need for the Organization to assist Member States including developing countries, to achieve the maritime aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, through

support to robust national maritime policies and strategies predicated on harnessing the full potential of the blue and maritime economies.

3. The strategy affirms that IMO will assist Member States to improve the capacity of their national maritime institutions based on needs assessments and priority identification, and to develop jointly tailor-made programmes and projects on policy setting and technology transfers, training and development in such States.
4. The Strategy acknowledges that the Global Network of Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCC) has made a significant contribution in promoting technologies and operations to improve energy efficiency in the maritime sector. India through this document highlights the urgent need for this Committee to consider expanding presence of MTCCs to more regions and to widen its scope to capacity-building activities including research, development, technology transfer and delivery of regional training.

#### **Need for more focused Technical Cooperation activities in South Asia:**

5. The IMO's Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030 strategy underscores the significance of coordinated efforts to prevent duplication of resources and maximize the impact of assistance provided. In line with this strategy, there is a compelling need to enhance TC activities in the South Asia Region, where maritime development holds immense potential for economic growth and sustainable prosperity.
6. To achieve this goal, India through this document urges this Committee for a focused approach that involves strengthening the existing capacity building initiatives in the South Asia region through proactive initiatives such as the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCC) and establishing an IMO Regional Presence Office (RPO) in the Region. By considering these mechanisms, IMO can enhance the delivery of technical assistance, capacity-building programs, and knowledge-sharing activities tailored to the specific needs of countries in the region.
7. Establishing an MTCC in South Asia will help the IMO to achieve its sustainable development goals, increase its presence in the regional marine industry, and encourage environmental stewardship throughout the South Asian region. It would act as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and capacity development in global marine industry.

#### **South Asia Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMaRT)**

8. Reaffirming its mandate to the Technical Cooperation Committee to devise effective and innovative means of attracting and securing financial and in-kind support for the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), the IMO Strategy for Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030, invites Member States, the industry and partner organizations to continue, and if possible, increase their support for the ITCP and maritime technical cooperation in general.
9. Responding positively to the above appeal from the Organization, India through this document proposes establishment of **South Asia Centre for Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMaRT)**, envisioned as an Indian national centre of excellence with a regional dimension which will act as the hub for knowledge, innovation, and collaboration within the maritime sector in the South Asia region, and a bridge connecting to the International Maritime Organization's global network of Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCSs).
10. The primary goal of the SACE-SMaRT is to transform the maritime sector in India and South Asia into a technologically advanced, environmentally sustainable, and digitally proficient industry. This national centre of excellence with a regional dimension will focus

on the latest technologies and practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fostering technical cooperation, capacity building, and the digital transition of the maritime sector in India specifically and South Asia broadly.

11. India is in the advance stages of establishing a South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT) in Mumbai India with a self-sustainable financial model and plans to expand it to regional partners of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries. India intends to work closely and integrate the SACE-SmarT with IMO's Global MTCC Network to acquire direction, discuss concepts, and align with IMO's goals. India also considers developing potential synergies with existing IMO initiatives and projects. Establish strong relationships with the IMO's MTCCs, particularly those in Asia and the Pacific. SACE-SmarT wants to use MTCCs' experience and skills to improve capabilities and foster regional collaboration.

#### **The IMO Regional Presence Office (RPO) scheme for South Asia:**

12. The IMO's Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030 strategy, further recognises that the Regional Presence Office (RPO) will be important points of contact in assisting IMO with respect to the assessment of the technical cooperation needs of Member States and for leveraging local expertise and support in providing solutions, both with respect to IMO instruments and wider maritime development initiatives.
13. In the longer term, the Strategy envisages that all IMO Member States will be covered by one or more RPOs, but, the rate of expansion of the RPO scheme will be determined by the willingness of development partners to invest in the Capacity-Building Decade initiative and for Member States to provide in-kind support.
14. To align with the objectives of the Strategy to make the RPO scheme more financially self-supporting through development of larger and longer-term projects and partnerships, India proposes to establish a Regional Presence Office (RPO) of the IMO in India along with the South Asia Centre for Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT), proposed in the preceding paragraphs of this document.

#### **Resources for the Centre and expected Collaboration with IMO:**

15. Utilizing India's strategic location and robust infrastructure in maritime training, the SACE-SMarT is proposed to be in a lead Maritime Training Institute (MTI) at Mumbai, which is the heart of South Asian maritime activities. Existing port facilities and the maritime ecosystem will act as live laboratories for implementing, testing, and refining new technologies and practices.
16. India will make use of its vast human resource pool to source a diverse team of experts in maritime law, engineering, environmental science, digital technologies, among other fields. This will ensure a holistic approach to tackle the complexities and multi-faceted challenges of the maritime sector.
17. India envisages SACE-SMarT as a financially self-sustainable institution and has drawn up suitable financial models for driving research and development, supporting capacity-building initiatives, facilitating technological adoption, and promoting the green and digital transition of the sector.
18. Although there is no expectation of direct financial support from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), IMO can play a significant role in assisting India to establish the SACE-SMarT, based on the Organization's wealth of knowledge and experience

accumulated through the establishment of Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCs) globally.

19. By integrating SACE-SMarT into its global network of MTCCs, IMO can enable the Centre in sharing of knowledge and technologies across regions and promote collaborative projects, creating a more effective global response to the maritime sector's challenges. IMO can assist with aligning SACE-SMarT's initiatives with the organization's own strategies for decarbonisation, digitalization, and the human element.

#### **Action requested of the Committee**

20. South Asia region, with its dense population, huge coastlines and strategic maritime locations, plays a vital role in world trade and transportation. However, the marine industry in the region faces a number of issues, including environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, and compliance with international standards. It is thus imperative for this Organization to initiate for focussed technical cooperation activities in the South Asia region to address the unique challenges and opportunities within the region's maritime sector.
21. As responsible member state, India is committed to creating an environment conducive to research, training, and capacity building for sustainable maritime transport and the transition to new zero-carbon fuels and renewable energy in the South Asia region. As part of this maritime cooperation efforts, India plans to establish a South Asia Centre for Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT) in India and wishes to collaborate and expand this Centre of Excellence to regional partners from South Asia, including the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries.
22. The Committee is invited to take note of the information provided in paragraphs 8 to 12 of this document and requests guidance from the IMO Department of Partnerships and Projects (DPP) on establishing a South Asia Centre for Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT) in India, developing collaboration with IMO, integrating the Centre with the Global MTCC network, and providing recognition and support for its future activities.
23. The Committee is also requested to take note of the proposal provided in paragraphs 12 to 14 of this document for establishing a Regional Presence Office (RPO) of the IMO in India along with the proposed SACE-SMarT, without any financial liability to the Organization.

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