



DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY DOCUMENT
**INDIAN OCEAN MARITIME NETWORK
(IOMN)**

National Institute of Maritime Affairs
at Bahria University, Sector E-8, Islamabad

🌐 www.nimapak.org  [/nimaisb](https://www.facebook.com/nimaisb)  dnima@bahria.edu.pk  [nima_pakistan](https://www.instagram.com/nima_pakistan)  [/nimaisb](https://twitter.com/nimaisb)

Objective

1. Establishing a Pakistani-centric initiative modeled on existing regional frameworks such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) fostering strategic cooperation among Indian Ocean littoral states, positioning Pakistan as a key player in promoting regional stability, security, and economic growth & countering growing Indian influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Background

2. The Indian Ocean, the third-largest body of water in the world, holds immense strategic significance due to its role in global trade and security. It is home to vital sea lanes of communication (SLoCs) that account for about 40% of the world's trade and nearly half of global container traffic. The Indian Ocean region is undergoing unprecedented geopolitical shifts. From a historically bipolar world order, the region is transitioning to a multipolar environment, where regional cooperation between nations is becoming increasingly important. Countries with access to the Indian Ocean are realizing that strategic alignment and maritime collaboration are critical to ensuring regional stability, peace, and economic prosperity. The shifting geopolitical landscape, driven by rising powers and evolving national interests, makes maritime cooperation more necessary than ever.

3. The geopolitical rivalry between major powers like the United States and China adds complexity to the maritime dynamics in the Indian Ocean. Both the US and China are vying for influence in the region, as it is a critical juncture for global trade and maritime security. The United States has sought to solidify alliances with like-minded nations, as evidenced by the Democracy Conference in December 2021, which focused on collective security and regional governance.

4. On the other hand, China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, particularly through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its increasing naval footprint, has created tensions with other regional actors, including India and the United States. Pakistan's close ties with China, especially concerning the South China Sea, have strained its relations with some ASEAN countries, which increasingly align with the US in opposing China's maritime claims.

5. India's growing economic and military clout since the 1990s has positioned it as a key regional power within the Indian Ocean. As a counterweight to China, India has sought to expand its influence across the region, leveraging both its naval capabilities and diplomatic initiatives. India's revised naval strategy highlights its intent to safeguard maritime interests that stretch far beyond its immediate borders, with the United States recognizing India as a crucial ally in the Indo-Pacific region.

6. This rising influence has led to tensions between India and Pakistan, particularly in the maritime domain. India's growing hegemonic behavior, particularly its attempts to solidify its maritime control in the Indian Ocean, directly conflicts with Pakistan's maritime interests, especially in the North Arabian Sea. Additionally, India's relationships with other regional neighbors, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the

Maldives, have further diminished Pakistan's strategic influence, as these nations increasingly pivot towards India.

7. For Pakistan, with its extensive coastlines along the North Arabian Sea, accounting for 91% of its total trade volume, ensuring maritime security while countering India's influence in the region becomes an essential component of its broader foreign policy and security strategy. It is worthwhile to mention that Pakistan has trade relations with China, South Korea, Japan, and ASEAN bloc, which accounts for over 40% of total trade by volume handled by sea. The country's maritime strategy must not only address external threats but also foster internal regional cooperation to preserve its sovereignty and influence. Thus, navigating this complex web of alliances and rivalries is crucial in securing its maritime interests while balancing its partnerships with China and the United States. As the country's economic and maritime strategies evolve, it becomes essential for Pakistan to reevaluate its position in the shifting global order.

8. Pakistan's maritime trade is vital to its economy, with imports like crude oil, edible oil, coal, and gas coming primarily from the Middle East and ASEAN nations, while it exports goods to Europe, the Americas, and beyond. The Pakistan Navy (PN) plays a central role in safeguarding these interests, especially in the North Arabian Sea. PN plays a pivotal role in securing Pakistan's maritime interests, particularly in the North Arabian Sea. By fostering cooperation with both regional and extra-regional players, the PN works to safeguard national and international maritime interests. Despite geopolitical challenges, including the rivalry between the US and China, the PN has managed to maintain positive relations with key global powers, reinforcing Pakistan's strategic position in the region.

9. The PN's biannual exercise, AMAN, serves as a platform for enhancing maritime cooperation and peacebuilding among regional and international navies. However, there is a growing need to evolve the AMAN exercise to adapt to the changing dynamics of the maritime environment. The Pakistan International Maritime Exhibition and Conference (PIMEC) held in 2023 and the AMAN Dialogue in February 2025 are examples of Pakistan's efforts to enhance its maritime engagement and build stronger regional ties. As the region becomes increasingly strategic due to its growing economic importance, Pakistan must enhance its regional presence and secure its maritime interests.

Role of Existing Regional Organizations

10. A brief summary of the existing Regional organization is appended below:

a. **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):** IORA, founded in 1997, is a forum for promoting cooperation among the countries bordering the Indian Ocean. The organization focuses on fostering sustainable development and addressing issues like maritime security, trade, environmental protection, and climate change. It has 23 members and 11 Dialogue partners. Iran, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Oman, India, UAE, Yemen, Australia, etc are its prominent members. Its dialogue partners include China, KSA, USA & UK along with other major players. Its headquarters are in **Ebene, Mauritius**. IORA works on the principle of collective discussions, and veto by one country is taken as a No from IORA. India has opposed Pakistan's entry into IORA on the same principle.

b. **The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):** It's a voluntary initiative that brings together **navies of Indian Ocean littoral states** to promote **maritime security, stability, and cooperation**. Established in **2008** by the Indian Navy along with 14 founding members, it serves as a platform for dialogue and collaboration on naval issues. India, Australia, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Indonesia, Iran, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, Sri Lanka, UAE, United Kingdom, Yemen are a few of its members. It presently has 25 members. Pakistan officially became a member of the IONS during the Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) held in March 2014 in Australia.

c. **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC):** The Indian Ocean Commission, founded in 1982, focused on regional cooperation between the island nations of the southwestern Indian Ocean. The IOC emphasizes environmental sustainability, climate change, and regional maritime security. IOC has 5 Full Members) including Comoros, France (Reunion Island), Madagascar, Mauritius & Seychelles. Its headquarters is in Mauritius. Observer States & Partners include, but not limited to, China, European Union (EU), India, Japan, etc.

d. **China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development Cooperation (CIORFDC):** The China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development Cooperation (CIORFDC) is a multilateral initiative launched by the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) in November 2022. This forum aims to enhance economic cooperation, maritime connectivity, sustainable development, and disaster resilience among the littoral and island states of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It reflects China's growing strategic interest in the Indian Ocean and serves as a counter-narrative to India-led platforms such as IORA and IONS. The inaugural meeting was held in Kunming, China, and attended by representatives from over 19 countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Iran, Oman, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand, among others. Notably, India was not invited, reinforcing the forum's alignment with Chinese regional ambitions. The initiative promotes development-oriented cooperation in areas such as port development, maritime infrastructure, blue economy, climate resilience, and capacity-building. It does not function on a binding consensus mechanism but seeks voluntary cooperation and coordination in line with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

e. **China-Africa Blue Economy Cooperation:** The China-Africa Blue Economy Cooperation is a strategic component of the broader Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), focusing on the sustainable development of marine resources and infrastructure along the African coastlines of the Indian Ocean. This initiative supports projects in marine fisheries, port development, maritime logistics, coastal tourism, and marine environmental protection. It reflects China's long-term vision to integrate African littoral states into its 21st-century Maritime Silk Road framework. The cooperation primarily involves Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Seychelles, and Comoros, all of which are located in the Western Indian Ocean. Additional participating countries include South Africa, Djibouti, and island nations with strategic ports. China provides financial, technical, and institutional support through investments and capacity-building programs. While not a formal

intergovernmental organization, this framework functions through bilateral and multilateral agreements, aligning closely with China's objectives to strengthen maritime connectivity and influence in the Indian Ocean Region. Though Pakistan is not geographically in Africa, it benefits indirectly as a strategic maritime partner of China, particularly through shared naval engagement and the development of Gwadar Port.

Objective of Establishing a Pakistani-led Indian Ocean Maritime Network

11. Given this context, establishing a Pakistani-centric initiative modeled on existing regional frameworks such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) would foster strategic cooperation among Indian Ocean littoral states, positioning Pakistan as a key player in promoting regional stability, security, and economic growth. It is also important to mention that no state can single-handedly manage the maritime challenges of the 21st century, thus it needs collaboration/ cooperation and friendly working relations to cope with these challenges.

12. Since Pakistan is not currently a member of these organizations except IONS, it is unable to fully leverage these platforms to play a more proactive and influential role in the region. This limitation hinders Pakistan from contributing to or benefiting from collaborative maritime security efforts, trade facilitation, and environmental sustainability initiatives in the Indian Ocean. Given the growing geopolitical importance of the region and Pakistan's strategic position in the North Arabian Sea (NAS), it is imperative that Pakistan models a new platform that allows for greater engagement and leadership.

13. This new initiative, which can be named as 'Indian Ocean Maritime Network' (IOMN), would serve as an inclusive and flexible forum, with membership open to all willing nations. Unlike some existing associations where unanimous consent is required for the inclusion of new members, the IOMN would allow countries to join based on their willingness to contribute to and benefit from the shared goals of regional cooperation, ensuring a broader and more dynamic platform for all stakeholders in the Indian Ocean region.

14. The primary objective of this concept paper is to propose the creation of a Pakistani-led initiative that mirrors the frameworks of IORA, IOC, and IONS to enhance the Maritime influence of Pakistan in the Indian Ocean and particularly the North Arabian Sea (NAS) & Persian Gulf. This new network would serve as a platform for countries surrounding the Indian Ocean to foster cooperation on maritime security, trade, environmental protection, and climate resilience. However, other countries like Türkiye, China, Egypt, etc., can also become members, as this new organization will not restrict membership to only founding countries. By initiating such a network, Pakistan would:

- a. Solidify its Role as a Regional leader in maritime affairs by facilitating dialogue among littoral states.
- b. Enhance Regional Maritime Security by developing cooperative measures to counter piracy, illegal fishing, and human trafficking in the Indian Ocean.

- c. Promote sustainable development through the shared use of maritime resources, ensuring the protection of marine ecosystems and promoting the Blue Economy.
- d. Increase regional trade and investment by promoting connectivity and economic cooperation, similar to the goals of IORA, but tailored to Pakistan's strategic interests in the North Arabian Sea and beyond.
- e. Promote the role of universities, think tanks, media, international working groups, individuals who merit being part of the global maritime campaign, etc.

15. A well-structured Indian Ocean Maritime Network, led by Pakistan, would not only serve the country's maritime interests but also strengthen its relationships with key trading partners, offering a platform for bilateral and multilateral collaboration. By focusing on shared maritime goals, Pakistan can address regional challenges, including the protection of critical sea lanes and the security of energy transport routes that are vital to global trade.

Purpose Statement

16. This concept paper thus aims to propose significant amendments to the scope and conduct modalities of the AMAN exercise to effectively navigate the challenges of the evolving maritime environment and better position Pakistan in the global maritime order. By expanding its maritime engagement, enhancing collaborations, and capitalizing on existing strengths, Pakistan can secure its vital maritime interests in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. The IOMN will:

- a. Strengthen regional maritime security cooperation.
- b. Promote sustainable development and trade in the Indian Ocean.
- c. Increase Pakistan's engagement in global maritime diplomacy.
- d. Utilize academia and maritime professional to guide and provide linkages to the new setup based on their expertise

Proposal Framework /Structure and Governance

17. The broad framework of the proposal is as appended below:

- a. **Establishing of Indian Ocean Maritime Network (IOMN):** Implement the Indian Ocean Maritime Network (IOMN) as a permanent maritime forum led by Pakistan with a focus on contemporary maritime security threats by setting up enhanced bilateral and multilateral partnerships through maritime dialogues and other engagements, while investing in technological advancements for naval operations to support joint exercises and operations.
- b. **Leadership:** The IOMN is envisioned as a collaborative network with a streamlined governance structure to ensure effectiveness and inclusivity. In line with the concept of leveraging experienced maritime leadership, the IOMN will be headed by a senior officer. This leadership role will be filled by either a three-star Serving Naval Officer or a four-star Retired Officer of the Pakistan Navy (Indian Model), drawing upon their extensive operational experience and strategic insights in the Indian Ocean maritime domain. This leadership approach aligns with successful models of maritime institutions that benefit from seasoned naval expertise. The coordination and facilitation of IOMN's

academic and policy initiatives will be overseen by the Naval Headquarters (NHQ), with the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) serving as the Secretariat for all dimensions of IOMN activities. However, operational and naval exercises-related matters will remain the exclusive domain of NHQ, ensuring a clear division of responsibilities while maintaining strategic alignment across all maritime cooperation efforts.

c. **Secretariat:** The administrative and operational hub of the IOMN will be the IOMN Secretariat, located at the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA). NIMA's research capabilities and focus on maritime affairs make it a suitable location to support the IOMN's activities and facilitate coordination among member states. The Secretariat will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the AMAN Dialogue, AMAN Exercise, IMC, and PIMEC, as well as managing communication and administrative functions. The said secretariat will strengthen maritime cooperation, enhance maritime security, and promote regional stability. It will serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and policy coordination among like-minded nations, contributing to a secure and prosperous maritime future. The key functions of the secretariat are attached as **Annex A**. However, NIMA's existing infrastructure needs to be improved and uplifted to make it a worthwhile Secretariat of IOMN.

d. **Increased Participation:** Encourage participation from a wider array of regional and extra-regional navies and maritime stakeholders to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative training. These include think tanks, universities, academia, media, etc. Actively pursue diplomatic channels to allies and foster relationships with potential participants and stakeholders in the maritime domain & form strategic partnerships with key regional players and global maritime powers to create a unified approach to addressing emerging maritime threats.

e. **Incorporation of Technology:** It is proposed that targeted investments be made in modern maritime technologies to enhance the operational effectiveness of future AMAN Exercises. This includes the integration of advanced simulation-based training, unmanned systems, and smart surveillance tools into the AMAN framework to reflect emerging trends in maritime operations. Simultaneously, a focused effort should be made to build the capacity of Pakistan Navy personnel through specialized training programs, enabling them to lead and coordinate complex, technology-driven maritime exercises and multilateral operations with confidence and competence.

f. **Lessening of PN Financial Liabilities:** With an ever-increasing invitation list, it will be increasingly difficult for PN to continue sponsoring mega events like AMAN DIALOGUE & PIMEC. This concept would facilitate this avenue and ease this avenue. Although events would not be practically conducted in Pakistan, however, they would always be under the umbrella of Pakistan-led IOMN.

g. **Timeline:** The proposed implementation timeline is detailed in **Annex B**. The timeline is designed to facilitate effective planning, monitor progress, and enable timely interventions where necessary to ensure the successful realization of the concept.

Key Activities within the IOMN Umbrella

18. The IOMN will serve as the overarching framework for a series of interconnected activities designed to achieve its objectives (Tabular form of these exercises and propose a calendar of events are enclosed as **Annex C & D**, respectively).

a. **AMAN Dialogue**

(1) This will be a high-level dialogue, not a traditional conference, bringing together Heads of Navy and Coast Guard from participating nations. The focus will be on open and frank discussions to build mutual understanding, identify common challenges, and collaboratively shape the future of maritime cooperation. The AMAN Dialogue will be crucial in finalizing the agenda for the AMAN Exercise and identifying matters of a contemporary operational nature for further discussion and refinement within the IMC. In order to enhance regional maritime cooperation and build sustained momentum towards the AMAN Exercises, maritime dialogue forums will be institutionalized under the umbrella of the proposed Indian Ocean Maritime Network (IOMN). They will emphasize as enumerated below:

a. These forums will focus on key contemporary maritime issues such as counter-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), the implications of climate change on maritime security, marine environmental protection, and blue economy collaboration. These dialogues will not only foster mutual understanding and interoperability among participating nations but also provide a platform for joint policy development and knowledge-sharing on pressing maritime challenges.

b. In support of this initiative, the IOMN will establish a dedicated network of maritime think tanks and research institutions from like-minded nations that share a common vision for promoting global and regional maritime stability, safety, and sustainability. This intellectual network will enable the generation of thought leadership, strategic research, and policy recommendations in line with evolving maritime dynamics.

(2) The succinct purpose is as below

a. A high-level dialogue forum (not a traditional conference) where Heads of Navies and Coast Guards of AMAN Exercise nations finalize operational and thematic agendas for the upcoming AMAN Exercise and identify key contemporary operational challenges for the IMC to explore through academic and research work.

b. Finalize operational and thematic agenda for the upcoming **AMAN Exercise**.

- c. Identify key contemporary operational challenges and topics.
 - d. Formulate the agenda for the **IMC** to refine and explore these challenges through academic and research work.
 - e. Oversee the reports, past activities and give approvals to be adopted as IOM outcomes.
 - f. It will have sub-committees, i.e., security, training, technology, Blue Economy, International maritime law, environment, maritime trade, etc., under its umbrella.
- b. **AMAN Exercise:** A practical demonstration of regional cooperation and interoperability, the agenda for the AMAN Exercise will be derived from the discussions and priorities identified during the AMAN Dialogue. The exercise will focus on enhancing practical skills, improving communication protocols, and building joint response capabilities to maritime security threats and humanitarian emergencies. The mandate of Exercise AMAN is to promote collaboration and interoperability among friendly navies to strengthen maritime security and foster regional peace. The exercise emphasizes addressing non-traditional security challenges, encouraging comprehensive and multifaceted maritime cooperation. Additionally, AMAN serves as a strategic platform to project Pakistan as a responsible maritime stakeholder and a proactive regional leader in advancing cooperative maritime security within the broader framework of regional maritime organizations. Broadly, it shall be revamped as follows:
- (1) A multinational exercise conducted by the Pakistan Navy, focusing on maritime interoperability, collective security, and humanitarian coordination, with inputs taken from the AMAN Dialogue.
 - (2) Exercise AMAN is to be held biennially under the direct auspices of the Pakistan Navy. Alternatively, it may be organized in a member country under the framework of the Indian Ocean Maritime Network (IOMN). This approach would enhance the Pakistan Navy's image as a regional force and reinforce its presence across the region.
 - (3) The AMAN Dialogue shall be conducted in the year alternate to that of Exercise AMAN. It too will be hosted by a member country under the overarching framework of the IOMN.
 - (4) Focused on maritime interoperability, collective security, and humanitarian coordination.
 - (5) Inputs taken from AMAN Dialogue.
- c. **International Maritime Conference (IMC):** The IMC will serve as a platform for the exchange of maritime information and the refinement of operational concepts. Matters of a contemporary operational nature identified during the AMAN Dialogue will be brought to the IMC for in-depth analysis, discussion, and the development of refined approaches. This will involve the participation of academia, think tanks, and technical experts to provide

analytical support and contribute to research on complex maritime issues. The IMC will not be a decision-making body but rather a crucial element for informed operational planning and strategy development. It can be summarized as below:

- (1) A hybrid maritime policy forum composed of experts, think tanks, maritime academia, and practitioners. It receives prioritized themes/issues from the AMAN Dialogue for deeper analysis, policy formulation, and doctrinal contributions.
- (2) Receives prioritized themes/issues from the AMAN Dialogue for deeper analysis, policy formulation, and doctrinal contributions.
- (3) Outputs include working papers, research journals, and white papers for naval and national policy adaptation.

d. **Pakistan International Maritime Exhibition and Conference (PIMEC)**

: The PIMEC will continue to serve as a platform for showcasing maritime capabilities, fostering business-to-business interactions, and promoting investment in the maritime sector. Within the IOMN framework, the PIMEC Conference will be business-centric, aligning with the expo aspect of the event. This will provide a vital link between the operational and policy aspects of the IOMN and the economic potential of the Indian Ocean's maritime industries. While the AMAN Dialogue focuses on security and operational cooperation, the PIMEC will highlight the economic opportunities and technological advancements in the maritime domain. It can be summarized as below:

- (1) A business-oriented forum held in conjunction with the maritime expo, focusing on maritime industry partnerships, investment promotion in the blue economy, and tech and innovation in maritime domains.
- (2) Focuses on Maritime industry partnerships, Investment promotion in the blue economy, Tech and innovation in maritime domains & oriented toward the private sector, investors, and policymakers.

e. The above has also been formulated in tabular form and is attached as **Annexes F, G, H & J.**

19. The same is depicted in tabular form as below:

INITIATIVE	TYPE	FOCUS	PARTICIPANTS
AMAN Dialogue	Strategic Dialogue	Maritime security agenda setting; not a conference	Chiefs of the Navy, Coast Guard, Observers
AMAN Exercise	Multinational Naval Exercise	Operational execution based on AMAN Dialogue outputs	Participating Navies
IMC)	Research & Policy Forum	Identification and referral of contemporary maritime issues	Academics, Think Tanks, Maritime Strategists

PIMEC Conference	Business Conference & Expo	Maritime economy, investment, blue economy opportunities	Business Community, Investors, Innovators
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Pros and Cons of the Proposal

20. The detailed advantages and potential limitations of the proposed initiative have been comprehensively outlined in **Annex E**. This annex provides a balanced assessment of the proposal's strategic value, operational feasibility, and expected outcomes. It is intended to support informed decision-making by offering insights into both the opportunities presented by the initiative, such as enhanced regional cooperation, strengthened maritime presence, and improved interoperability, as well as the challenges that may arise in its implementation, including resource allocation, coordination mechanisms, and stakeholder alignment

Conclusion

21. The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean region cannot be overstated. As global trade increasingly relies on secure sea lanes, Pakistan's position along these routes places it at the center of regional maritime cooperation. By establishing the Indian Ocean Maritime Network (IOMN), Pakistan can serve as the driving force for regional dialogue, enhancing maritime security, promoting economic cooperation, and addressing environmental challenges that affect all nations in the region. This initiative would not only solidify Pakistan's position as a rising middle power in the Indian Ocean but also allow it to play a central role in shaping the future of maritime security and trade in one of the world's most crucial maritime spaces. Through a collaborative and multilateral approach, Pakistan can ensure the sustainable use of its maritime resources while contributing to regional and global stability.

FUNCTIONS OF SECRETARIAT

1. The proposed secretariat will strengthen maritime cooperation, enhance maritime security, and promote regional stability. It will serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and policy coordination among like-minded nations, contributing to a secure and prosperous maritime future. Its broad functions are appended below; however the list is not exhaustive:

a. **Maritime Cooperation**

- (1) **Idea Exchange and Research:** Facilitate the exchange of ideas and collaborative research on pressing maritime issues, such as climate change, maritime piracy, and illegal fishing.
- (2) **Capacity Building:** Promote the exchange of researchers, speakers, and training opportunities to enhance maritime expertise.
- (3) **Policy Coordination:** Develop a common stance on global maritime issues, such as freedom of navigation and maritime security.
- (4) **Strategic Planning:** Review annual progress and set future agendas for maritime cooperation.
- (5) **Knowledge Dissemination:** Publish books, articles, magazines, and journals based on high-quality research.

b. **Event Management**

- (1) **Calendar Development:** Create and maintain a calendar of maritime events, including conferences, seminars, and workshops.
- (2) **Exercise Planning:** Plan and conduct the biennial AMAN naval exercise in Pakistan or even on a rotational basis.

c. **Maritime Security Cooperation**

- (1) **Security Architecture:** Propose and plan the establishment of regional security organizations to address common maritime threats.
- (2) **International Coordination:** Collaborate with international organizations and forums to promote maritime security and stability.

d. **Geopolitical Analysis and Policy Recommendations**

- (1) **Strategic Assessment:** Analyze the geopolitical implications of major power competition, particularly the US-China rivalry, on maritime security.
- (2) **Policy Advice:** Provide policy recommendations to national and regional policymakers on maritime challenges and solutions.

(3) **Technological Trends:** Monitor emerging technologies and their impact on the maritime and naval domains.

e. **Public Diplomacy and Outreach**

(1) **Maritime Exhibitions:** Organize maritime exhibitions to showcase advancements in maritime technology and capabilities.

(2) **Transparency and Accountability:** Publish annual expenditure returns and activity reports.

f. **Miscellaneous**

(1) Identify fields of cooperation in maritime sectors.

(2) Exchange of ideas in maritime fields to propose a solution to new challenges to the maritime sector at the global level.

(3) To carry out joint research on subjects of common interest.

(4) Exchange of researchers, speakers, and training opportunities.

(5) Explore avenues of common stance on global maritime issues.

(6) To review the progress of the previous year and set the agenda for the coming year/years.

(7) Propose and plan seminars, conferences, symposiums, Webinars, and research topics of importance in coordination between think tanks.

(8) To publish books, articles, magazines, and journals based on the quality research output of all think tanks.

(9) Prepare a calendar of events and monitor the progress of the same.

(10) Plan and conduct bi-annual events of AMAN naval exercise in Pakistan.

(11) Plan and conduct "Conclave of Chief" events on a rotation basis within participating countries.

(12) Propose and plan security organizations/ set up at sea to guard against common threats to all participating nations' maritime interests.

(13) To coordinate with international organizations, other forums for the collective good of the global populace.

(14) Sea is the common heritage of mankind. Global economies re-linked to trade and peace at sea. It is therefore imperative to re-emphasize that coordination and cooperation are the only keys to

success for all. Against this backdrop, to propose advocacy of addressing the negative fallout of the US-China rivalry in the Indian Ocean and beyond for peace at sea.

(15) To help policymakers both at the national, regional, and global level to identify maritime challenges, possible remedies, and recommended solutions after a consultative process between think tanks, professionals, and security experts.

(16) To identify modern trends, the impact of technology on maritime and naval sectors and advise partner nations accordingly.

(17) To arrange maritime exhibitions.

(18) Publish annual expenditure returns and annual reports of all activities.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Short-Term (0-6 Months)

- a. **Conduct a comprehensive review of AMAN's objectives and current framework:** As an initial step, it is essential to undertake a thorough assessment of the existing structure, strategic objectives, and execution methodology of the AMAN Exercise. This review will identify areas for refinement in line with evolving maritime security dynamics, regional cooperation needs, and the broader vision of the proposed Indian Ocean Maritime Network (IOMN). The aim is to align AMAN with emerging non-traditional threats, technological advancements, and the growing demand for cooperative maritime governance.
- b. **Engage with potential partner nations to gauge interest in expanded participation:** In parallel, proactive diplomatic and naval outreach should be initiated to engage with current and prospective partner nations. This engagement will serve to assess their willingness to participate in an expanded AMAN framework—either through operational involvement, hosting dialogue forums, or contributing to the IOMN network of maritime think tanks. These discussions will lay the groundwork for broader multinational collaboration and ensure a shared commitment to the long-term goals of regional maritime security and cooperative engagement.

Medium-Term (6-12 Months)

- a. **Establish a forum for maritime dialogues and commence initial rounds of discussion on key issues:** During this phase, a dedicated platform for structured maritime dialogues will be formally established under the proposed IOMN framework. This forum will bring together maritime stakeholders, naval representatives, and strategic thinkers from member nations to initiate focused discussions on critical maritime security themes such as counter-piracy, maritime domain awareness, disaster response, and the impact of climate change on regional stability. These dialogues will not only promote shared understanding and interoperability but also help shape the agenda for future AMAN Exercises and related cooperative initiatives.
- b. **Begin necessary technological upgrades and training programs within the Pakistan Navy:** Concurrently, steps will be taken to initiate technological modernization within the Pakistan Navy. This includes upgrading operational platforms, integrating simulation-based training modules, and introducing cutting-edge systems for surveillance, communication, and data-sharing. To complement this modernization, tailored training and capacity-building programs will be launched to prepare PN personnel for leadership roles in complex, multi-national exercises and operations. These efforts will ensure that Pakistan Navy remains at the forefront of regional maritime security cooperation and is well-equipped to lead in the execution of the enhanced AMAN framework.

Long-Term (12-24 Months)

- a. **Execute the Redefined AMAN Exercise:** In this phase, the revised and strategically aligned AMAN Exercise will be conducted, reflecting the updated framework, expanded participation, and technological enhancements introduced in earlier stages. The exercise will incorporate lessons learned from the preceding maritime dialogues, capacity-building efforts, and partner nation engagements. It will serve as a practical demonstration of regional cooperation, operational interoperability, and the Pakistan Navy's leadership in addressing both traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges through a collaborative approach.
- b. **Evaluate the Outcomes of the Revised exercise and gather participant feedback for further improvement:** Following the execution of the exercise, a comprehensive evaluation process will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the revised AMAN framework. Feedback from participating navies and observers will be systematically collected to identify strengths, gaps, and areas for future enhancement. This post-exercise analysis will help refine planning for subsequent editions of AMAN, ensure the continued relevance of the initiative, and strengthen Pakistan's image as a credible, forward-looking maritime power committed to regional stability and cooperation.

Tabular Representation of Hierarchy/Relationship

Component	Role	Relationship to IOMN	Key Activities/Focus	Participants
IOMN Leadership	Provides overall strategic direction and guidance.	Heads the entire IOMN framework.	Strategic planning, high-level representation.	3-star Serving or 4-star Retired PN Officer
IOMN Secretariat	Manages the administrative and operational coordination of IOMN activities.	The administrative hub of the IOMN.	Activity coordination, communication, logistics.	Secretariat staff (at NIMA)
AMAN Dialogue	High-level forum for dialogue and decision-making on cooperation agenda.	Operates under the IOMN umbrella.	Finalizing AMAN Exercise agenda, identifying IMC discussion topics.	Heads of Navy and Coast Guard from participating nations.
AMAN Exercise	Practical application of cooperation principles through drills and scenarios.	Agenda derived from AMAN Dialogue, conducted under the IOMN framework.	Enhancing interoperability, joint response capabilities.	Naval and Coast Guard assets and personnel from participating nations.
IMC	Platform for in-depth discussion and refinement of operational issues and research.	Addresses topics identified by the AMAN Dialogue, operate under the IOMN umbrella.	Operational analysis, research, development of refined approaches.	Academia, Think Tanks, Technical Experts, potentially operational planners.
PIMEC Conference	Business-focused platform for industry engagement, showcasing capabilities, and promoting investment.	Operates under the IOMN umbrella, complements other activities.	Business-to-business networking, technology showcase, investment promotion.	Maritime industry representatives, businesses, potential investors.

PROPOSE CALENDER OF EVENTS

Activity	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
AMAN Dialogue	9 -10 Feb 25	Feb/Mar (Abroad)		Feb/Mar (Pakistan)	
AMAN Exercise	7-11 Feb 25	-	Feb/Mar (Abroad)		Feb/Mar (Pakistan)
IMC	4-5 Nov 25	Nov/Dec (Pakistan)		Nov/Dec (Abroad)	
PIMEC	3 -6 Nov 25		Pakistan		Abroad

INITIATIVE	TYPE	FOCUS	PARTICIPANTS
AMAN Dialogue	Strategic Dialogue	Maritime security agenda setting; not a conference	Chiefs of Navy, Coast Guards, Observers
AMAN Exercise	Multinational Naval Exercise	Operational execution based on AMAN Dialogue outputs	Participating Navies
IMC (Indian Ocean Maritime Council)	Research & Policy Forum	Identification and referral of contemporary maritime issues	Academics, Think Tanks, Maritime Strategists
PIMEC Conference	Business Conference & Expo	Maritime economy, investment, blue economy opportunities	Business Community, Investors, Innovators

PROS AND CONS OF THE PROPOSAL

Pros

- (1) Reduces isolation and enhances Pakistan Navy's (PN) leadership role in Indian Ocean affairs at the regional and global levels. PN initiative of "AMAN" will have a global appeal.
- (2) PN will continue to enjoy friendly, cordial, and practical relations with friendly countries.
- (3) Participating navies/ stakeholders/ institutions will share their rich experiences and expertise to deal with maritime challenges.
- (4) Pakistan / PN will not have to take distinctive positions at sea on issues of global importance. Cooperation and collaboration will dictate the outcome.
- (5) PN initiative of AMAN will be upgraded to all-year-round maritime activity & it will expand AMAN's impact to an all-year-round maritime activity, coordinated by a permanent AMAN Headquarters
- (6) "AMAN" Exercise will have a permanent headquarters to look after all year-round activities.
- (7) "AMAN" exercise will continue to be a bi-annual event, but will have the backing of maritime think tanks from around the world. Later, AMAN exercise can also be hosted on a rotational basis, if considered appropriate.
- (8) "AMAN" activities will be research-based, in which ideas will be conceived, discussed, finalized, and then put into action before adopting it permanently.
- (9) "AMAN" at present is only a "Pakistan-specific activity" whereas initializing it through combined Think Tanks will bring in more colours and flavours, ultimately bring more laurels to Pakistan and PN, and make it a global event.
- (10) PN will continue to have a positive/ lead role in setting the agenda for all maritime activities concerning Pakistan and Indian Ocean politics. However, the PN stance will be more acceptable at the global/ regional level, and the issue of isolation will be addressed.
- (11) Although activities under permanent setup will increase in many folds, which will require substantial financial support from the Government, the outcome and impact will be phenomenal on Pakistan's overall interests.
- (12) AMAN logo and the phrase "Together for Peace" will receive international recognition as well as appeal for the common good.
- (13) Will strengthen Pakistan's maritime diplomacy and reputation as a cooperative regional player.
- (14) Will provide a Comprehensive Security Approach to a broader spectrum of maritime security issues, improving regional stability.

(15) Will help in fostering closer ties with regional navies, potentially leading to collective security arrangements. Initially, 8-10 countries may be invited to have navy-to-navy relations. Turkey, Malaysia, Iran, Arab countries, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Japan, the UK, France, Germany, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Russia may be considered.

Cons

(1) Establishing a new maritime network and permanent headquarters will require significant funding. Initial investments in technology and capacity building might also strain existing budgets. The new structure will need a formal setup (building, resources, human resources, funds, transports, etc) to create an impact on a global audience. Establishing a new maritime network and permanent headquarters will require significant funding. Some countries may be hesitant to engage with Pakistan due to geopolitical considerations.

(2) Increased participation may complicate logistics and coordination among diverse naval forces.

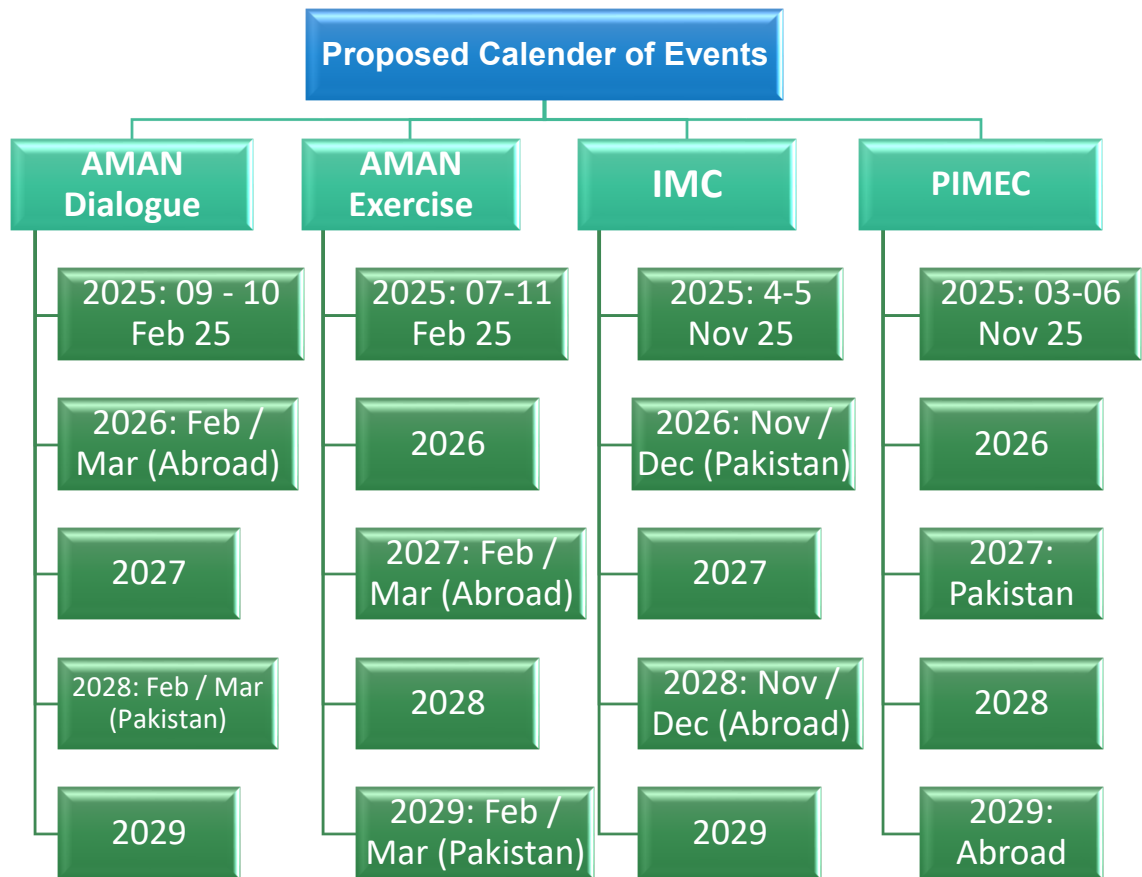
(3) Approval of the Government of Pakistan, including the Foreign Office, Ministries of Finance and Defense. The concept paper may also need the nod of the law ministry before finalization.

(4) JSHQs, sister services, and ISI must be on board; otherwise, the proposal may be opposed.

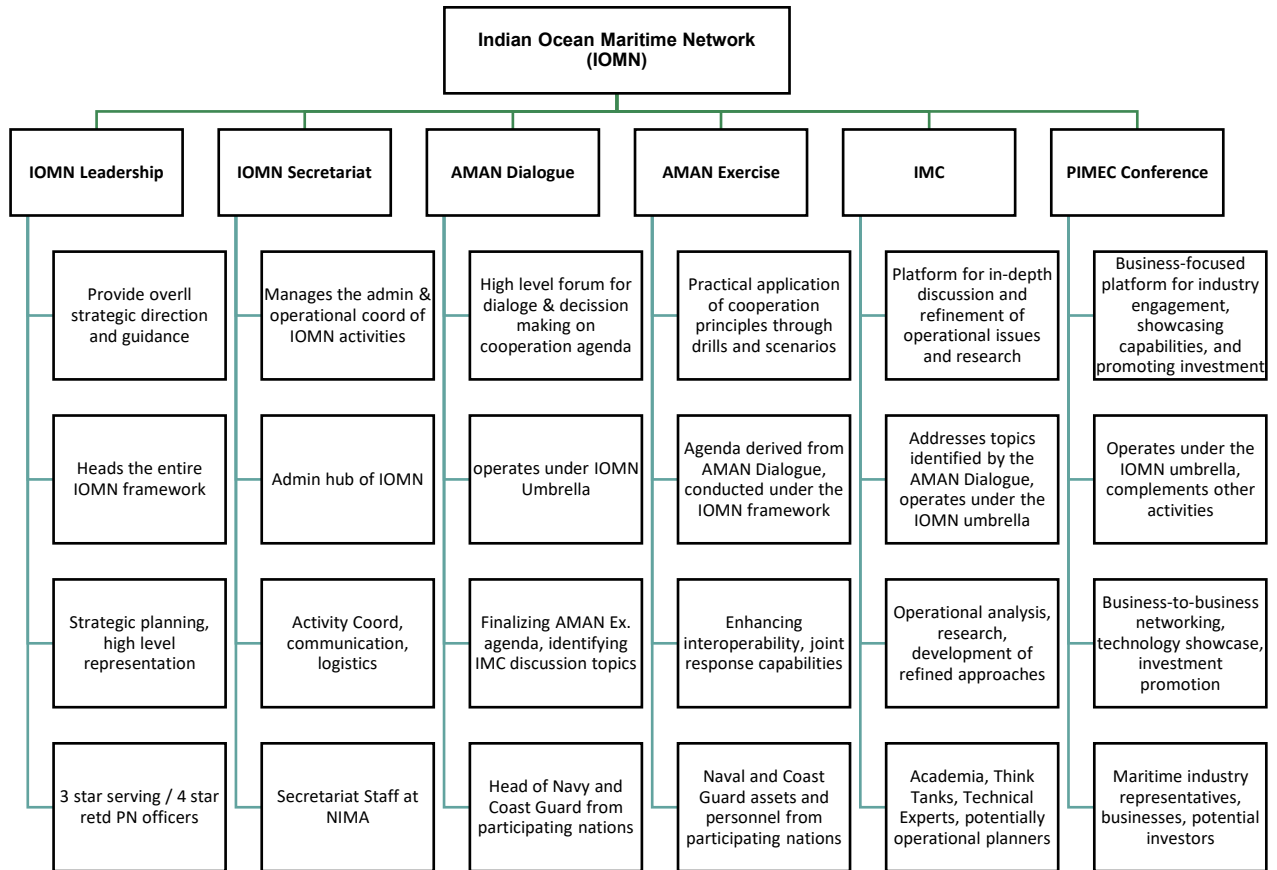
(5) Pakistan will act as host to all activities for the initial settling down period of 5-6 years, for which substantial financial support of the Government will be needed, however, once activities on a rotation basis will be initiated, then the funds requirement will reduce. Expenditure of permanent HQs for the AMAN Secretariat will be needed.

(6) It will be a diplomatic challenge for Pakistan/ PN to strategically balance the interests of both camps, i.e., USA & China and Iran & Saudi Arabia, etc. But the organization will provide a platform to understand divergent points of view and help in formulating the policies at the national level.

(7) To create an impact on national, regional, and global audiences, NHQ / DGPR will have to support the activities of AMAN Headquarters; thus, engaging ISPR will also be mandatory.

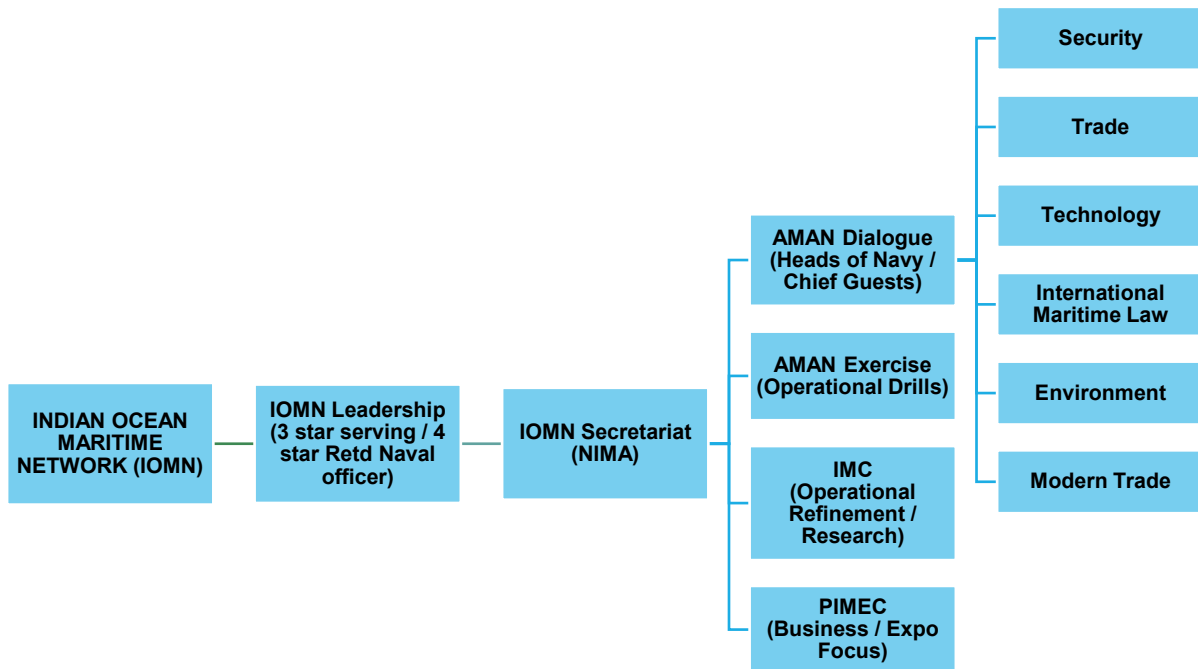


ANNEX G





Annex H



ANNEX J

