

World Ocean Day Webinar Concept Note – 08 Jun 2025

India-Japan Regional Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation: Blue Economy, Digital Transformation & Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Indian Ocean

As Indo-Pacific nations with strong maritime heritage, India and Japan share a strategic vision for ensuring a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based maritime order in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The blue economy has emerged as a key pillar of this vision, driving both sustainability and economic growth. With climate change, regional insecurity, and uncoordinated resource utilization, posing significant threats to ocean health and maritime livelihoods, coordinated and technology-enabled governance has become essential.

Japan, a global leader in maritime technology and innovation, and India, a geo-strategic maritime power with vast coastal and riverine communities, stand at a critical juncture. Strengthening bilateral cooperation through dialogue, shared platforms, and community-centered frameworks will enable both nations to co-develop solutions for complex maritime challenges. This webinar is proposed as a regional-level interaction aimed at aligning mutual interests through Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), digital transformation, and blue economy initiatives.

The upcoming webinar is designed to foster strategic cooperation between India and Japan in the IOR, with a specific focus on advancing a sustainable and inclusive blue economy. As two leading maritime nations in the Indo-Pacific, both countries are uniquely positioned to co-create frameworks that align ecological priorities with economic development, particularly through MSP, digital innovation, and stakeholder empowerment. The dialogue seeks to build on shared institutional strengths and knowledge to design effective policy and technological interventions for ocean governance.

A core objective of the webinar is to explore opportunities for India-Japan collaboration in nurturing the blue economy across the IOR. Discussions will examine how MSP can serve as a strategic governance tool to ensure smart, sustainable, and equitable utilization of marine resources. In parallel, the event will emphasize the importance of aligning digital transformation efforts with the grassroots empowerment of coastal and riverine communities, as envisioned through the “100 Coastal/River Warriors” initiative. This innovative program seeks to establish a digitally empowered network of local champions who can contribute to ocean data collection, resource stewardship, and participatory governance. The webinar will also explore how Japan’s technological expertise can be integrated with India’s Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) framework, developed by the Maritime Research Center (MRC), to strengthen regional maritime governance and security.

Key themes include the convergence of strategic interests between India and Japan in the Indian Ocean, particularly in maritime security, resilience of Sea Lines of

Communication (SLOCs), and the protection of critical trade routes. The Eastern Indian Ocean corridor, including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, holds strategic importance for both countries, offering avenues for maritime infrastructure development, joint surveillance, and ecosystem-sensitive operations. As vital nodes within the Indo-Pacific maritime domain, these regions require sustainable and collaborative management.

These discussions will be enriched by knowledge exchange on community-inclusive governance models, circular economy strategies, and nature-based solutions that enhance environmental resilience. Joint approaches to supporting Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Indian Ocean—such as the Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles—will also be addressed. These nations face unique vulnerabilities due to climate change and limited resources, and their inclusion in regional cooperation frameworks is essential for building adaptive and resilient marine governance systems.

Digital transformation for coastal empowerment will be another critical focus area. Opportunities to deploy acoustic sensors, AI-enabled biodiversity tracking, and real-time ocean observation systems will be explored. The development of user-friendly mobile applications, cloud-based community portals, and localized decision-support tools will help bridge the gap between centralized authorities and grassroots stakeholders. These digital platforms can foster two-way communication, promote transparency, and enable participatory MSP processes. Emphasis will be placed on democratizing access to ocean data and enhancing the capacities of marginalized communities to engage meaningfully with ocean governance.

Proposal

The Maritime Research Center (MRC), Pune and M/S NirDhwani Technologies Pvt (NDT) in collaboration with Ocean Policy Research Institute (OPRI), Sasakawa Peace Foundation, will host a webinar titled “India-Japan Regional Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation: Blue Economy, Digital Transformation & Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Indian Ocean”, on the occasion of The World Ocean Day on 08 Jun 2025 at 1030 hrs IST (1400 hrs Tokyo Time). The webinar will bring experts and strategic thinkers from both India and Japan to deliberate on this important topic.

A detailed report will be generated at the end of this webinar to provide a nuanced way forward in taking the UDA framework forward for the tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific strategic space.

Program

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| 1030 hrs (IST) | - | Welcome Remarks by Mrs. Cathrine J, |
| 1400 hrs (Tokyo) | | Head Research & Publication, MRC, Pune, India. |
| 1040 hrs (IST) | - | Opening Remarks by Dr. Emadul Islam (Nayan) |
| 1410 hrs (Tokyo) | | Ocean Policy Research Institute at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan. |
| 1100 hrs (IST) | - | Introductory Remarks by Dr (Cdr) Arnab Das, Founder & |
| 1430 hrs (Tokyo) | | Director, Maritime Research Center (MRC), Pune, India. |
| 1130 hrs (IST) | - | Remarks by Dr. Mengyao Zhu, Ocean Policy Research |
| 1500 hrs (Tokyo) | | Institute at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan. |
| 1150 hrs (IST) | - | Remarks by Prof Shankari Sundararaman, Centre for Indo |
| 1520 hrs (Tokyo) | | Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, JNU Delhi. |
| 1210 hrs (IST) | - | Closing Remarks by Amb Anup Mudgal, Former |
| 1540 hrs (Tokyo) | | Ambassador and Blue Economy Task Force Member. |
| 1230 hrs (IST) | - | Vote of Thanks by Shri Praful Talera, MRC Blue Economy |
| 1600 hrs (Tokyo) | | Advisor. |

Convenor

Dr(Cdr) Arnab Das, Founder & Director, MRC, Pune.

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