

RESTRICTED



4 April 2025

OC2500201

Hon James Meager

Action required by:

Associate Minister of Transport (Lead Minister for Maritime Security)

Cc Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Transport

Wednesday, 2 April 2025

## MARITIME SECURITY BRIEFING FOR INCOMING MINISTER

### Purpose

Brief you on maritime security issues, existing capability gaps and growing risks.

### Key points

- The sea is important to New Zealanders, economically, environmentally, and culturally. Our area of interest covers 1/12th of the globe, so our management of it has critical domestic and international impacts.
- s 6(a), s 6(c)
- The sector has developed a Maritime Security Strategy (the Strategy) to respond to these threats. As the Lead Minister for Maritime Security, you are responsible for the Strategy's implementation. This is a National Security function, distinguished from Maritime New Zealand's responsibilities (eg port security).
- The Strategy sets out three key investments in People, Systems and Tools. Two of these have been implemented. We recommend you discuss these investments with officials, as we will soon seek your direction on next steps for the third and final Tools investment.
- Our approach throughout these investments has been to partner with New Zealand companies for them to deliver world-class solutions to our security challenges. We can arrange for you to visit some of these companies, should you wish.
- On 1 July 2025 the Ministry of Transport (Ministry) will become the Capability Owner of the second Strategy investment: the Data Fusion System (which falls under the System investment). This will create some ongoing obligations for the Ministry as the contract owner, and for you as the Minister accountable for the Budget Appropriation. Officials consider this to be low-risk and will advise you when it is completed.

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**Recommendations**

We recommend you:

- 1 s 6(a), s 6(c)
- 2 **Discuss** next steps on a potential maritime security tools Budget bid with officials.
- 3 **Indicate** if you would be interested in visiting New Zealand companies delivering maritime security solutions. Yes / No

Natasha Rave  
**Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Policy**  
2 / April / 2025

Hon James Meager  
**Associate Minister of Transport**  
**(Lead Minister Maritime Security)**  
..... / ..... / .....

- Minister's office to complete:**
- Approved
  - Declined
  - Seen by Minister
  - Not seen by Minister
  - Overtaken by events

**Comments**

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**Contacts**

Name	Telephone	First contact
Natasha Rave, Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Policy Group	s 9(2)(a)	
Gavin Birrell, National Strategic Coordinator for Maritime Security		✓
Josh Bullivant, Policy Lead Maritime Security		

## MARITIME SECURITY BRIEFING FOR INCOMING MINISTER

### Background

- 1 You are Lead Minister for Maritime Security. Figure 1 depicts your role within the National Resilience System. You will be primarily supported in your role by:
- 1.1 the Ministry of Transport (the Ministry) through its role as chair of the Maritime Security Oversight Committee (MSOC/the Committee) and its role as the Strategic Coordination Agency<sup>1</sup> for Maritime Security within the National Resilience System, and
  - 1.2 the Committee and its 11 maritime security agencies, which incorporates governance, policy, intelligence, and operational coordination functions for the sector.<sup>2</sup>

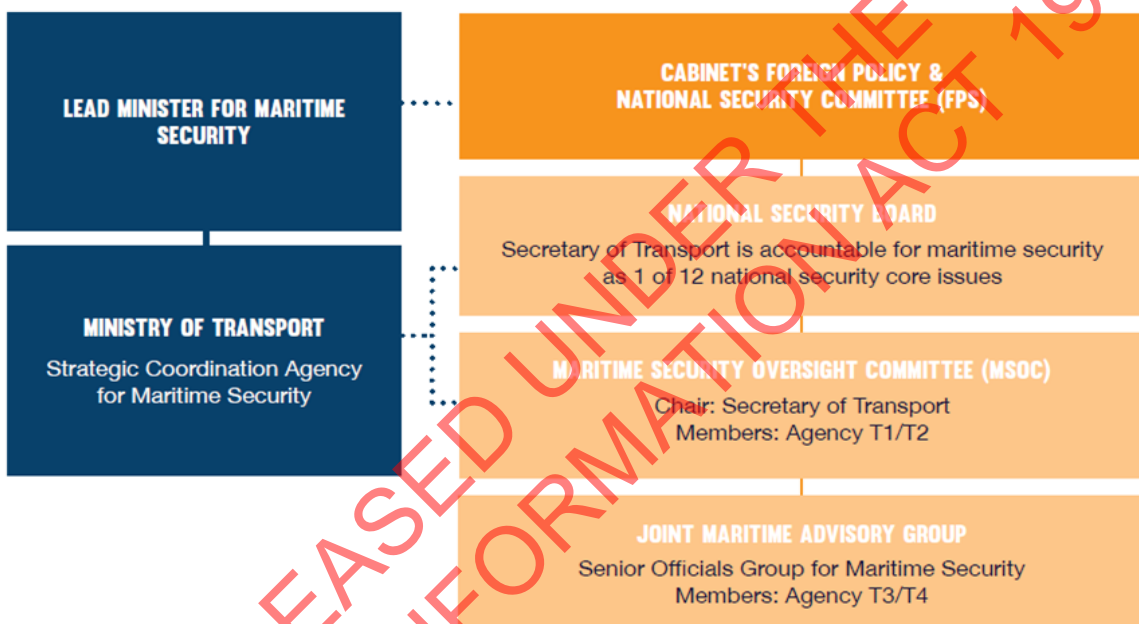


Fig 1: Maritime Security Governance

### The sea is important to New Zealand

- 2 Securing our maritime area is important because the sea is important to us. With approximately 99% of our freight carried by sea, 99% of our international internet traffic travelling by undersea cable, and multiple economic opportunities<sup>3</sup> available in our waters, our significant **maritime economy** depends on effective maritime security<sup>4</sup>. Our marine **environment** provides a source of recreation, supports over 65,000 species, regulates our climate and offers opportunities for expanded carbon capture. It is important **culturally** to New Zealanders, holding a central place in the history of our arrival here, our way of life and sense of identity.

<sup>1</sup> The National Security Strategy designates a Strategic Coordination Agency for each of the 12 core issues. These agencies deliver a strategic approach to each issue. The Ministry leads maritime security policy and implementation of the Maritime Security Strategy.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Transport, Maritime New Zealand, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Customs Service, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police, Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation.

<sup>3</sup> The mineral deposits in New Zealand's maritime area are estimated to be potentially worth up to \$500 billion.

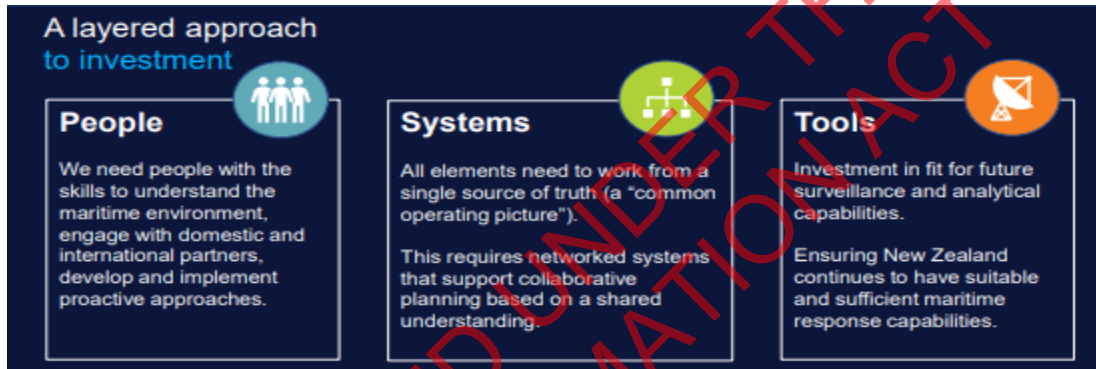
<sup>4</sup> At 40 million square kilometres, New Zealand's maritime area of interest is 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the globe.

**The Maritime Security Strategy guides the maritime security sector**

- 3 To recognise the sea’s importance, and to protect it against growing maritime security pressures, the Committee created the Maritime Security Strategy (the Strategy, summarised in Annex 1). The Strategy retains single agency responsibilities for specific aspects of maritime security (eg, Customs retains responsibility for stopping the entry of prohibited imports, such as narcotics), but introduced a common approach, coordinated investment and effective resource prioritisation to deliver a whole far greater than the sum of its parts.
- 4 The Strategy was approved by Cabinet in 2019 and refreshed by the Lead Minister for Maritime Security in 2024. The United Nations’ International Maritime Organization has adopted the Strategy as the international exemplar.

**Implementing the Strategy**

- 5 The Strategy identified capability gaps in three areas: People, Systems, and Tools.



*Fig 2: Maritime Security Strategy’s investment approach*

- 6 **People:** This investment was funded in Budget 2023, with a three-person Secretariat<sup>5</sup> based in the Ministry and a twelve-person National Maritime Coordination Centre<sup>6</sup> based at Headquarters Joint Forces in Trentham, Wellington.
- 7 **Systems:** This investment comprises the Budget 2024-funded Data Fusion System (DFS) (which provides automated, world class anomaly-detection), and joining the European Union-created Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing platform (IORIS), which connects us securely to over 25 maritime countries (refer Annex 4 for further information on the use of IORIS) . We have partnered with New Zealand companies from the outset, with them developing world-class solutions to our security problems. Their solutions are now being exported widely. Budget appropriation for the DFS will move from Vote Defence Force to Vote Transport by 1 July 2025.<sup>7</sup> This transfer includes contract management responsibilities for the Ministry, and you will become accountable for the Appropriation. This transfer is low-risk and officials will advise you when it is completed.

8 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

<sup>5</sup> Provides the National Strategic Coordinator, governance support, implementation of the Strategy and policy development.  
<sup>6</sup> Responsible for the provision of All-of-Government Maritime Domain Awareness and coordination of maritime security assets.  
<sup>7</sup> The Public Finance Act 1989 requires that the Ministry of Defence can only procure on behalf of Defence, so this transfer to the Ministry of Transport was included as part of the DFS project.

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

The sector has continued to work proactively with New Zealand companies developing world-class solutions to our security problems (eg Wanaka-based Restore Lab which is researching how to reduce space-based surveillance false alarm rates). We can discuss opportunities for you to visit some of these companies.

s 6(a), s 6(c)

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The impact of these illegal activities flows into our communities, damaging wellbeing, resilience, and social cohesion. The supply of illicit drugs by organised crime feeds addiction and mental health issues and drives increases in other crimes, such as violence, burglary, and theft to fund addiction. In Q4 2024, the social harm attributable to methamphetamine alone equated to an estimated weekly cost of \$37.8 million.<sup>9</sup>

12

s 6(a), s 6(c)

*Officials are preparing an Underwater Infrastructure Threat Assessment and Options Briefing*

13

The Minister for National Security and Intelligence received an introductory briefing on maritime security (June 2024, OC240394 refers) and directed that we prepare a briefing on how we secure our underwater infrastructure. We have commissioned a threat assessment and will brief you on the outcomes of the assessment in July.

s 6(a), s 6(c)

14

<sup>9</sup> National Drugs in Wastewater Testing Programme - Quarter 4, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Subject to Cabinet approval of a Defence Capability Plan option in 2025.

15 s 6(a), s 6(c)

**It is not just about investment**

16 The maritime security sector has other actions underway to try and address gaps, including through the following policy interventions:

- i. s 9(2)(f)(iv)
- ii.

17 s 6(a), s 6(c) he MSOC Secretariat led the development of the *Guide to the Use of Autonomous Surface Vessels in New Zealand Waters*. Working across government, we rapidly developed a one-stop information source for partners to easily navigate our multi-agency regulations.<sup>11</sup> This approach upholds the law without discouraging appropriate innovation and economic opportunity. We understand this remains a world-first.

18 The sector has been working closely with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as it leads the National Risk and Resilience Framework refresh. Aligning with this system-level approach to risk management, the sector is now developing a Maritime Security Risk Framework to inform the Committee’s oversight and management of maritime security threats at the sector-level.

19 s 6(a), s 6(c)

20 s 9(2)(f)(iv) For example, joining the IORIS platform, which has given New Zealand unique, secure, information exchange capabilities with 25 maritime countries (see Annex 4), and supporting agreement negotiations such as Vietnam’s Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement.

- 21 We will keep you informed about other work underway by sector agencies, including:
- i. **Supporting partners to develop their maritime security**, eg Solomon Islands and Fiji, where the MSOC Secretariat will assist in the drafting of their maritime security strategies.
  - ii. **Engaging the Public**, which recognises the important role that all New Zealanders play in maritime security and includes agency information campaigns and the publication of a *Guide to New Zealand’s Maritime Security Arrangements*.

<sup>11</sup> This guidance summarised the statutory responsibilities of eight agencies including three international instruments, fourteen Acts of Parliament, and eight separate regulations.

<sup>12</sup> Economically, our ability to act as an Antarctic gateway through port visits to Lyttelton and flights in and out of Christchurch brings significant regional (\$329 million per annum / 3276 jobs) and national (\$560 million per annum / 5937 jobs) benefits.

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

# Annex 1 – Maritime Security Strategy Overview

## OVERVIEW OF THE MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY

The vision and approach that secures New Zealand's maritime security interests.

### The Vision

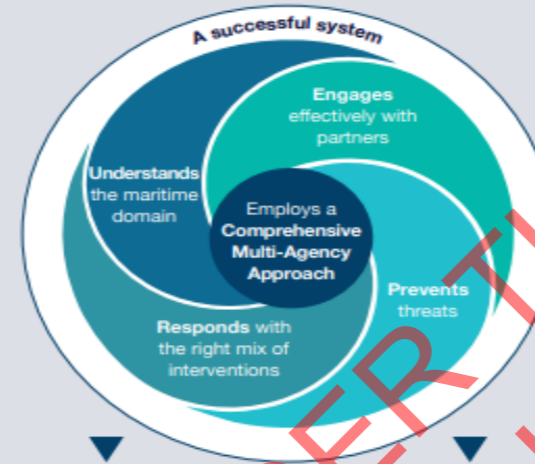
A maritime security sector that secures New Zealand's significant maritime economic, cultural and environmental interests, is better able to deter adversaries, reduce harm to New Zealand communities and exert effective kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of the sea.

### The Approach

The maritime security sector's contribution to national security is guided by four interlocking pillars: Understand, Engage, Prevent, Respond.

These pillars describe how an efficient and effective system goes about achieving maritime security.

The pillars are underpinned by two supporting principles: The comprehensive multi-agency approach and kaitiakitanga.



**Kaitiakitanga**  
New Zealand's stewardship and protection of our maritime domain for future generations.

### Chartered Course to 2029



## THE FUTURE MARITIME SECURITY SYSTEM

ACHIEVED BY

## IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Sets the strategic direction for the sector and ensures system-wide execution through supporting working groups



**Priority 1**  
Enable the comprehensive multi-agency response

- Minister of Transport is the Lead Minister
- Ministry of Transport is the lead maritime security policy and strategic coordination agency
- Sufficient policy coordination, assessment, communications and campaign planning capacity and capability.

► Achieved: 2023

**Priority 2**  
Establish sector planning and assessment expectations

- A biennial Maritime Security Assessment that identifies emerging threats and opportunities
- An annual Prevention and Response Campaign Plan that sets an integrated approach to the deployment of resources.

► Priority: 2024

**Priority 3**  
Coordinated investment across the sector

- Determine the approach to investing in the right mix of people, systems and tools to achieve best effect.

► Priority: 2024-2029

## A LAYERED APPROACH TO INVESTMENT

**People**

We need people with the skills to understand the maritime environment, engage with domestic and international partners, develop and implement proactive approaches.

**Systems**

All elements need to work from a single point of truth (a "common operating picture"). This requires networked systems that support collaborative planning based on a shared understanding.

**Tools**

Investment in fit for the future surveillance and analytical capabilities. Ensuring New Zealand continues to have suitable and sufficient maritime response capabilities.

# MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY 2024

Guardianship of Aotearoa  
New Zealand's Maritime Waters

Te Kaitiakitanga o Tangaroa

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This table is provided as a guide and is likely to evolve as lessons are identified during real world issues and government sponsored exercises. Suggestions for amendment will be considered by MSOC for occasional Strategy amendments.

	THREAT / INTEREST	POLICY / STRATEGY		INTELLIGENCE		OPERATIONAL DELIVERY	
		LEAD	SUPPORT	LEAD	SUPPORT	LEAD	SUPPORT
<b>SECTOR GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION</b>	Maritime Security	Ministry of Transport	MSOC Agencies	NMCC	MSOC Agencies	Maritime Security Agencies	NMCC
<b>MARITIME SECURITY THREATS AND INTERESTS</b>	Prohibited imports and exports	NZ Customs	NZ Police, NZIC, MFAT, DPMC, MOD	NZ Customs	NZIC, NZ Police, NDIB, MBIE, NZDF, MNZ, GNZ, NMCC, ITOC	NZ Customs	NZ Police, NMCC, MNZ, ITOC
	Prevention of a maritime mass arrival	MBIE (INZ)	DPMC, MOD, NZDF, MFAT, NZ Customs, NZIC, Police, MOH	MBIE	NZIC, MFAT, NZ Police, NZ Customs, NZDF, GNZ, NMCC, MOH	MBIE (INZ)	MFAT, NZDF, NZ Customs, NZ Police, NMCC, RCCNZ, MNZ
	Response to a maritime mass arrival in New Zealand	MBIE (INZ)	DPMC, MOD, NZDF, MFAT, NZ Customs, NZIC, MOH	MBIE	NZIC, MFAT, NZ Police, NZ Customs, NZDF, GNZ, NMCC, MOH	MBIE (INZ)	NZDF, NZ Customs, NZ Police, NMCC, RCCNZ, MOD; Health, MPI, MOJ, Corrections, MSD, Oranga Tamariki, MFAT, MNZ
	Biosecurity	MPI	DPMC, MOD, MFAT, MFE, MNZ	MPI	NZIC, NZ Police, NZ Customs, NZDF, GNZ, NMCC, MNZ	MPI	NZDF, NZ Police, EPA, MNZ, NMCC, MNZ
	Illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing	MPI	DPMC, MOD, MFAT, MFE	MPI	NZIC, NZ Police, NZ Customs, NZDF, GNZ	MPI	NZDF, MNZ, NMCC
	Illegal or poorly regulated exploitation of non-living resources	MFE	MBIE, MFAT, MOD, EPA, NZ Police, MNZ	EPA	NMCC, MFAT, MBIE, GNZ, NZ Police	EPA	NMCC, NZ Police, NZDF, MNZ, local authorities
	Threats to protected species	DOC	NZ Police, MFAT, MFE, MOD	DOC	NMCC, MFAT, NZ Police, MPI	DOC	NMCC, NZ Police, NZDF
	Illegal activity in protected areas	DOC	NZ Police, MFAT, MFE, MOD, MPI, MOT	DOC	NMCC, MFAT, NZ Police, MPI, MNZ	DOC	NMCC, NZDF, NZ Police, MPI, MNZ
	Illegal interference of maritime infrastructure	MBIE	NZ Police, MFE, MFAT, DPMC, MOD, MNZ	NZ Police	NMCC, NZIC, MNZ, MBIE	NZ Police	NMCC, NZDF, NZ Police, MNZ, NZ Customs
	Piracy, robbery, violence in international waters	MOT	MFAT, NZ Police, NZDF, MOD, MNZ	NZIC	NZ Police, DPMC, NZ Customs, NZDF, MPI	NZDF	NZ Police, NMCC
	Maritime crime	MOJ	NZDF, DPMC, MFAT, MOD, MNZ, NZ Police	NZ Police	NZ Police, DPMC, NZ Customs, MPI	NZ Police	NZDF, NZ Customs, NMCC
	Security threats to ports or NZ flagged vessels	MOT	MNZ, NZ Police, NZDF, NZIC, DPMC, MOD	MNZ	NZ Police, NZIC, NZDF, NZ Police, NMCC	MNZ	NZDF, NZ Police, NZ Customs, NMCC
	Illegal marine pollution	MOT	MNZ, MBIE, DOC, MPI, NZ Police, MFE	MNZ	EPA, NMCC, NZ Police, NZDF, DOC, MPI	MNZ	EPA, NMCC, NZ Police, NZDF, DOC, MPI, local authorities
	Maritime safety and emergencies (including oil response)	MOT	DPMC, NEMA, MOD, NZDF, MFAT, MFE, FENZ, MBIE	MNZ	MPI, MBIE, EPA, RCCNZ, NMCC, GNZ, FENZ	MNZ	NZDF, EPA, RCCNZ, MPI, NEMA, Emergency Task-Force (MFAT), local authorities, FENZ
	Maritime search and rescue	MOT	NZSAR Secretariat, MNZ, NZ SAR Council, NZDF, MFAT, MFE, NZ Police, MOD	MNZ	RCCNZ, NMCC, NZDF	RCCNZ	NZDF, NZ Police, MNZ, NMCC, local authorities
	Defence of New Zealand's sovereignty and territorial integrity	MOD	NZ Police, NZDF, NZIC, DPMC, MFAT, MOD	NZDF	NZIC, DPMC, MFAT, GNZ	NZDF	NZ Customs, NMCC, NZ Police
	Promotion and support of the maritime rules based order	MFAT	DPMC, MOD, MFE, MPI, NZ Customs, MNZ	NZIC	NZDF, MFAT, DPMC, NZ Customs, MNZ, NMCC	Maritime Security Agencies	NMCC, HQJFNZ
	South Pacific	MFAT	DPMC, MOD, MFE, MPI, NZ Customs, NZ Police, MOT	NZIC	NZDF, NZ Police, DPMC, MPI, NZ Customs, NMCC	Maritime Security Agencies	RCCNZ, HQJFNZ, Emergency Task-Force (MFAT), NMCC
Southern Ocean	MFAT	DPMC, MOD, MFE, MPI, NZ Customs, Antarctic NZ, NZ Police	NZIC	MPI, NZDF, Antarctic NZ, NMCC	Maritime Security Agencies	RCCNZ, HQJFNZ, NMCC	

**POLICY LEAD**  
The Agency responsible for administering the most relevant legislation and providing policy advice to the Executive Branch.

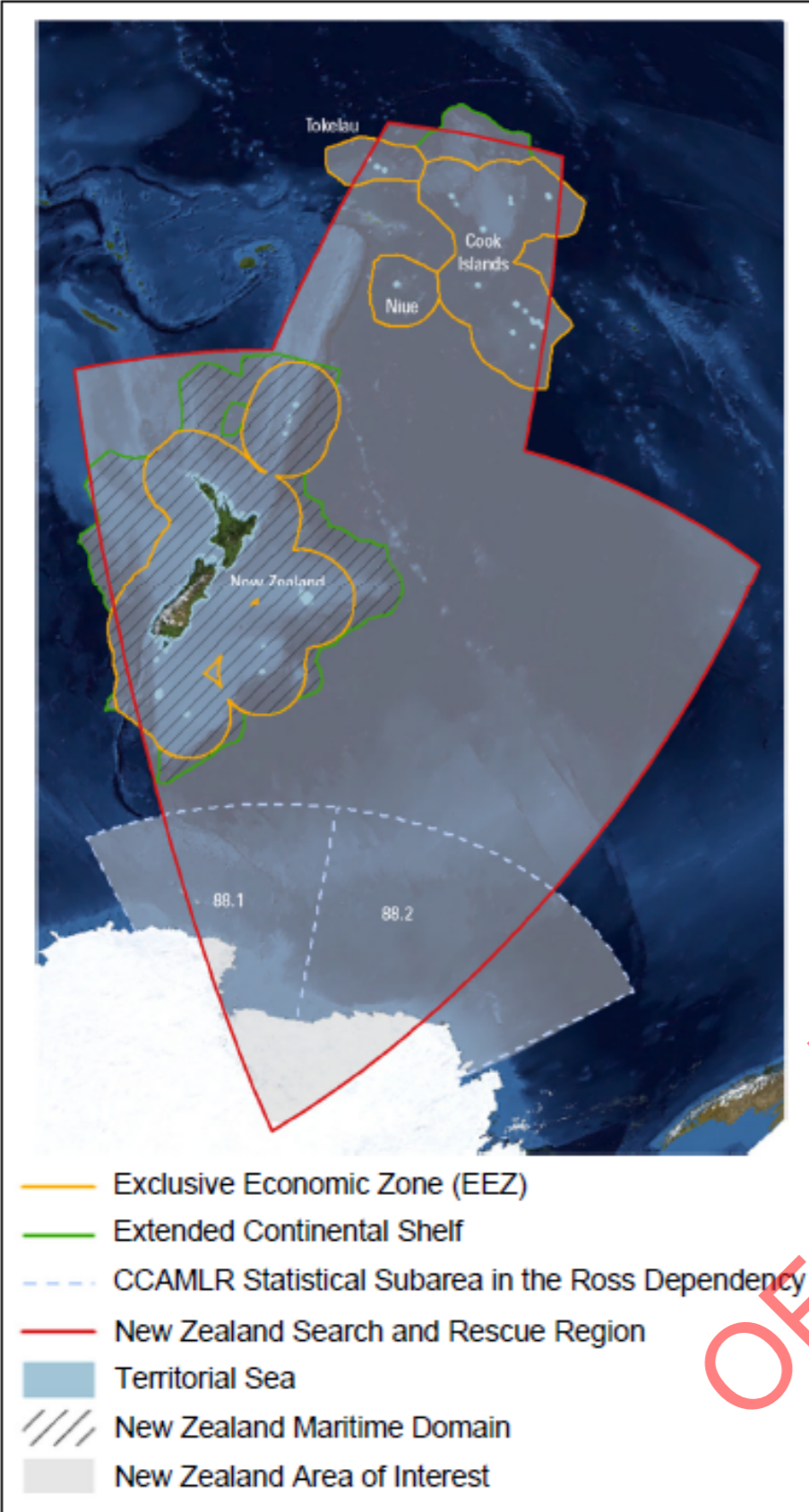
**INTELLIGENCE LEAD**  
The Agency responsible for ensuring that the National Security System and lead policy agency is across relevant threats, hazards and levels of risk.

**OPERATIONAL LEAD**  
The main agency responsible for leading and coordinating the operational (on the ground action) response.

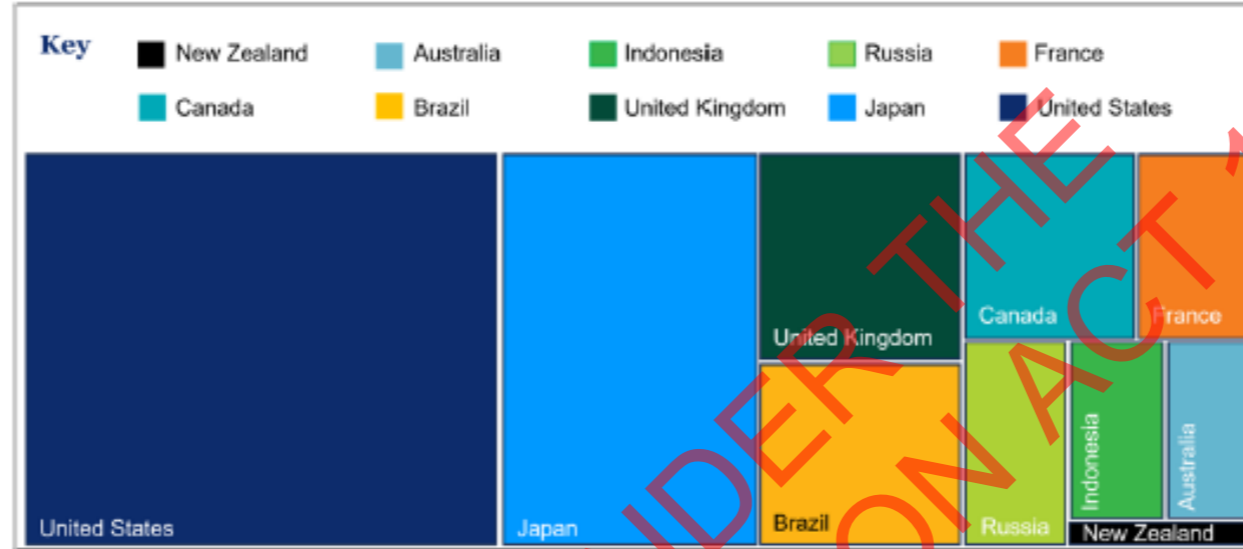
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## Annex 3 - Understanding the New Zealand Maritime Domain and Area of Interest

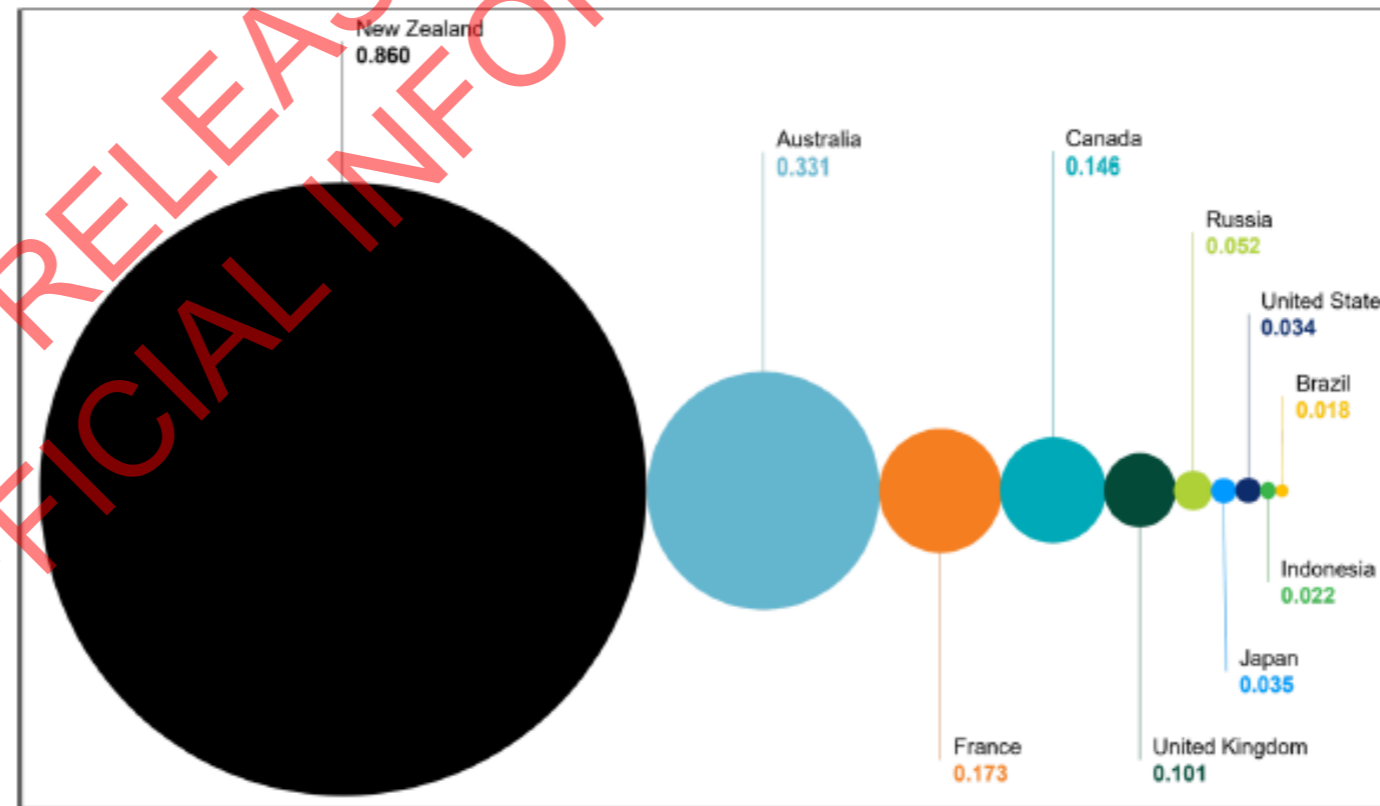
Our area of interest covers over 40,000,000km<sup>2</sup>. This is the equivalent of 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the globe and is 10 times the size of the South China Sea.



When considering other significant global players with large maritime areas, compared to these nations, we have the lowest GDP per square kilometre of EEZ.



In addition to the above, using the same significant global players, we also have the lowest population density per square kilometre of EEZ, where there is one New Zealander per 0.860km<sup>2</sup>.



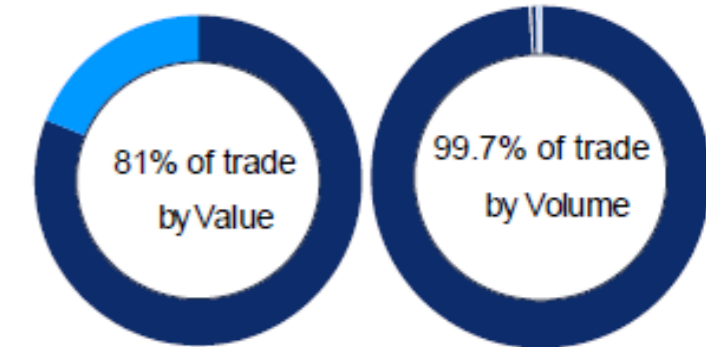
Total Maritime Economic value = \$7 Billion



- This includes 38,546 wage and salary earners.
- \$2.8 billion is indirectly contributed to the New Zealand Economy

- Shipping (\$2.08B – 49.6%)
- Fisheries and Aquaculture (\$1.02B – 24.2%)
- Offshore Minerals (\$660M – 15.8%)
- Marine Services (\$300M – 7.2%)
- Marine Tourism and Recreation (\$120M – 2.9%)
- Government and Defence (\$12.6M – 0.3%)

New Zealand relies on the sea to trade and communicate



NZ Exports by Sea

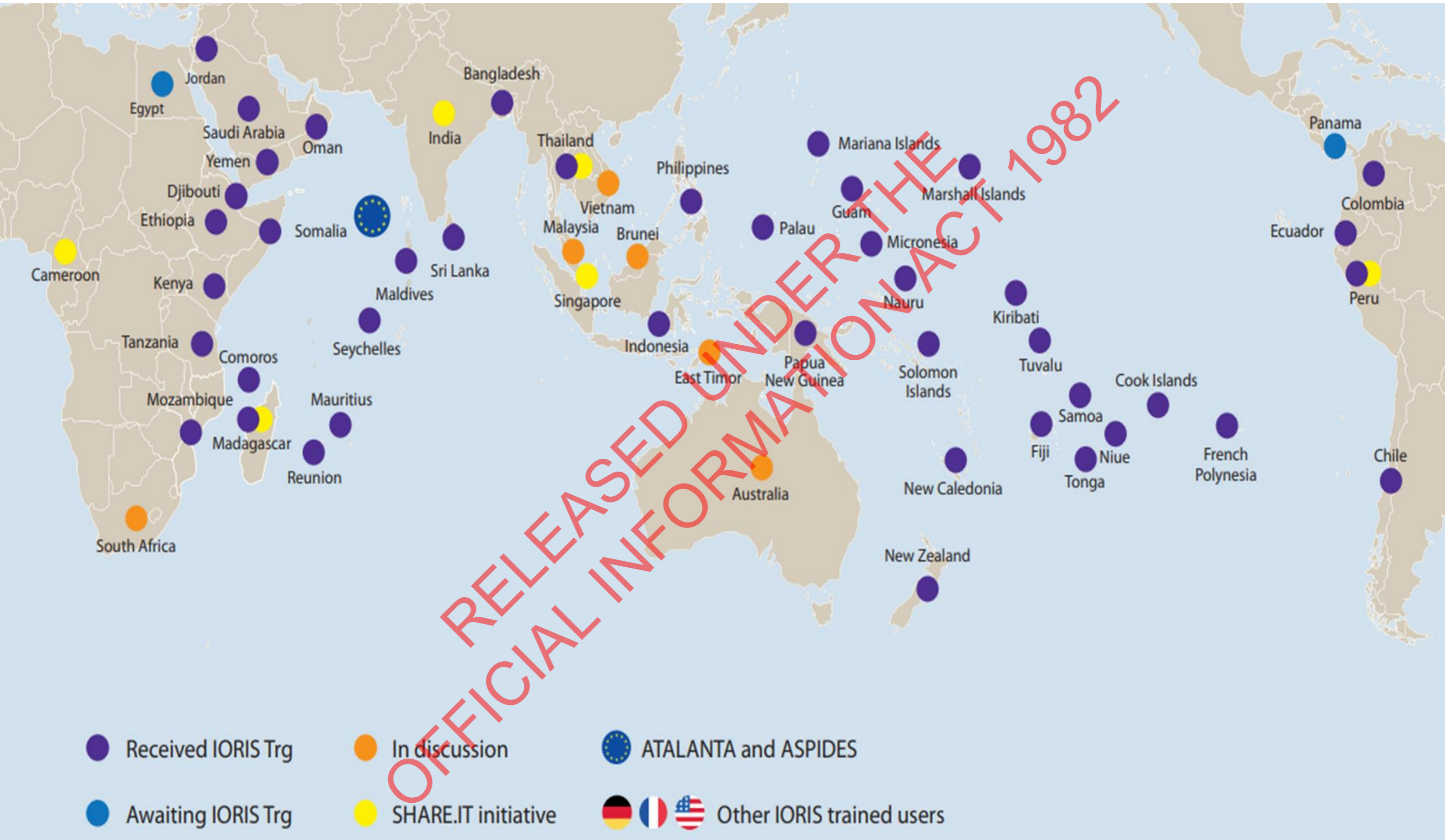
\$65.7 billion 39.4 million tonnes

NZ Imports by Sea

\$70.7 billion 22.7 million tonnes

99.8% of NZ International Internet Data transported by submarine cable

### Annex 4 – Countries Using IORIS



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7 October 2025

OC250895

Hon James Meager

Action required by:

Associate Minister of Transport

Tuesday, 21 October 2025

## RESILIENCE AND SECURITY OF NEW ZEALAND'S CRITICAL UNDERWATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

Withheld in full under s 9(2)(f)(iv), Further information withheld under s 6(a) and 6(c)

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**AIDE MEMOIRE**

30 April 2025

OC250358

**Hon James Meager****Associate Minister of Transport (Lead Minister Maritime Security)**

## **AIDE MEMOIRE: OBSERVING THE INDO-PACIFIC REGIONAL INFORMATION SHARING PLATFORM REGIONAL EXERCISE**

**Purpose**

- 1 Provide background information to support your observation of a maritime security-based regional exercise in your office on Wednesday 7 May 12:30pm - 1:00pm.

### **New Zealand uses the European Union's (EU) information sharing platform for maritime security**

- 2 In June 2024 the Ministry of Transport, representing the 11 agencies of the Maritime Security Oversight Committee (MSOC), joined the EU-funded project Critical Maritime Routes (CRIMARIO) to gain access to their Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing (IORIS) platform (fact sheets on CRIMARIO and IORIS are enclosed). This is a non-aligned, secure, web-based maritime coordination and information sharing tool. Over 90 agencies from 25 countries in the Indo-Pacific already use this platform. Users are shown in Annex 1.

3 s 6(a), s 6(c)

4

### **What is the regional exercise programme (REGEX)?**

- 5 REGEX is a virtual tabletop exercise with CRIMARIO staff preparing multiple scenarios that regional maritime countries use to improve regional maritime safety and security cooperation. Scenarios could include a search and rescue mission occurring on or near a territorial boundary (shown overleaf) or suspected criminal activity transiting from one country to another.

### **What is your involvement in the REGEX?**

- 6 The REGEX will be displayed on your TV screen and officials in attendance will explain how the scenario works and can answer any questions you have about the IORIS platform and how maritime security agencies benefit from using it. Officials attending will be:

- 6.1 Gavin Birrell, National Strategic Coordinator Maritime Security, MSOC Secretariat.
- 6.2 Karl Shearsby, Senior Maritime Operations Officer, National Maritime Coordination Centre.

**His Excellency Lawrence Meredith, EU Ambassador to New Zealand, will also be attending as CRIMARIO is an EU-led initiative**

7 Ambassador Meredith’s biography is provided in Annex 2.

**We propose preparing a social media update for you to consider posting, and to be shared by the EU delegation and CRIMARIO team on their social media pages**

8 This post could include a picture of you observing the REGEX with the Ambassador and be captioned "As Lead Minister Maritime Security it was great to witness the Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing (IORIS) platform in use by our maritime safety and security agencies today for Pacific Trident – a regional exercise practising multiple maritime scenarios with our neighbours, [insert countries involved that day]. This collaboration improves our ability to monitor and coordinate, to bring safer, more secure seas".

**What does New Zealand get out of it?**

- 9 In bringing all regional maritime countries together, CRIMARIO has presented us an opportunity to interact with partners and practice managing incidents together so that if a real event happens, we will know:
- how to communicate with each other
  - who to communicate with
  - what to do, and
  - what each of us can contribute to a regional response.

**Is this New Zealand’s first time joining a CRIMARIO-led REGEX?**

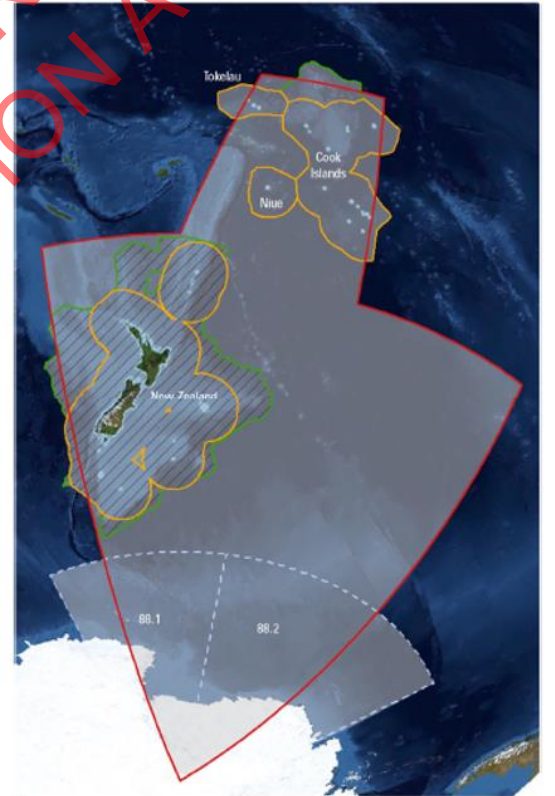
10 No, we joined two in 2024 and will join another that is planned for later in 2025.

**Are there any other activities organised by CRIMARIO?**

11 Yes, they also run a series called Exercise Sisyphus, which is designed for internal country use. We have used this series to increase our own agencies’ use of IORIS.

**Other IORIS developments**

12 CRIMARIO is preparing for the release of Version 4 of IORIS. This will include “IORIS Lite” which will give easy access on mobile phones, with very little training required. This will be particularly helpful for overseas deployed New Zealand staff (eg, Immigration Liaison Officers working with regional maritime countries to lower the likelihood of a mass arrival to New Zealand).



- Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
- Extended Continental Shelf
- - - CCAMLR Statistical Subarea in the Ross Dependency
- New Zealand Search and Rescue Region
- Territorial Sea
- /// New Zealand Maritime Domain
- New Zealand Area of Interest

13 s 9(2)(f)(iv)



14 s 6(a), s 6(c)

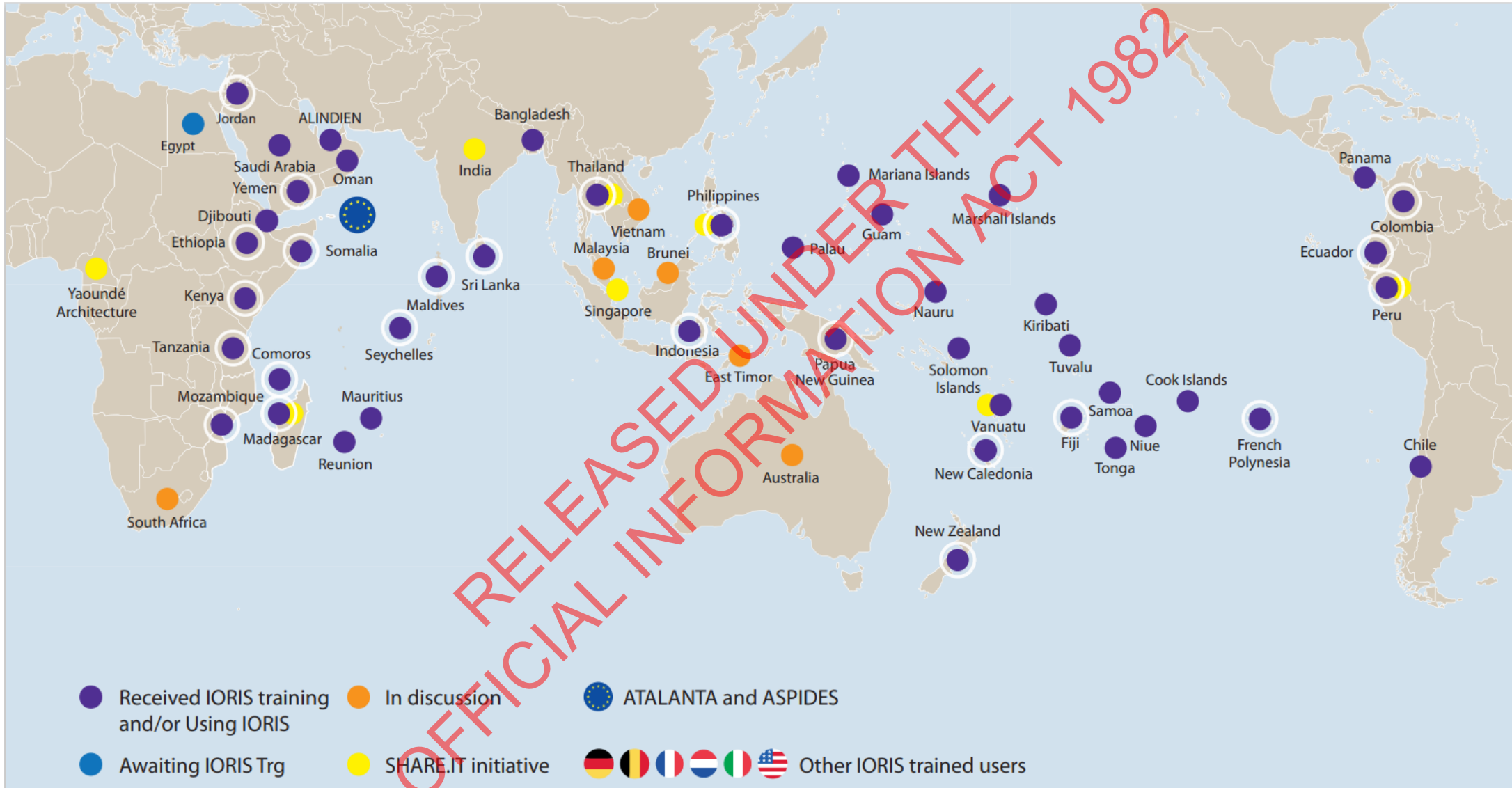


**Contacts**

Name	Telephone	First contact
Gavin Birrell, National Strategic Coordinator for Maritime Security	s 9(2)(a)	
Josh Bullivant, Policy Lead Maritime Security		✓

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### ANNEX 1: Partner nations using IORIS



## Annex 2: Ambassador Lawrence Meredith Biography

H.E. Mr Lawrence Meredith arrived in New Zealand in January 2023 as the European Union Ambassador. He has built a career in international relations and development cooperation. With a strong foundation in modern languages, holding a First Class Honours B.A. in Russian and French from The Queen's College, Oxford, Meredith is multilingual with proficiency in English, French, Russian, Spanish, German, and Italian.

Starting his career in 1993, Lawrence Meredith focused on economic and development cooperation with nations formerly part of the Soviet Union. He was involved in technical assistance programmes aimed at supporting independent media, human rights, and rural development, fostering democratic values and social progress.

In 2000, Lawrence shifted his focus to the European Union's external relations sector, focusing on global partnerships and program management within the former USSR & Balkans Directorate and subsequently for Training & Youth within the DG Education.

His trajectory within the European Commission is marked by leadership positions, including serving as Assistant to the Director-General of DG Enlargement. As Head of Unit for Policy & Strategy, he led efforts in shaping the EU's enlargement strategy.

From 2015 to 2023, Lawrence Meredith served as the Director for Neighbourhood East & Institution Building at DG NEAR, managing relations and cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries. He also initiated the Young European Ambassadors programme, significantly enhancing the EU's engagement with youth across the region. Lawrence enjoys biking, birdwatching, and supporting Bradford City.



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**Enclosures:**

CRIMARIO Factsheet  
IORIS Factsheet

Please note these were not provided to the Minister as part of OC260021, and are therefore not in scope of this request.

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**AIDE MEMOIRE**

5 June 2025

OC250490

**Hon James Meager**  
**Associate Minister of Transport (Lead Minister Maritime Security)**

**AIDE MEMOIRE: VISIT TO RESTORE LAB****Summary**

- 1 You were briefed on your Maritime Security responsibilities on 7 April 2025 (OC250201 refers). You indicated an interest in visiting some of the New Zealand companies delivering world-class solutions to our maritime security problems. Wānaka-based Restore Lab is one such company. This aide memoire provides information to support your visit to Restore Lab on Wednesday 9 June.
- 2 The visit will have two parts: first, a visit to Lake Wānaka, where the Takahē Mission Concept<sup>1</sup> will be demonstrated, and, second, a visit to Wānaka Airport, where you will be shown Project Rongowai<sup>2</sup> and an airborne search and rescue capability flying on a Merlin Labs NZ aircraft. A run-sheet for your visit is at Enclosure 1.

3 s 6(a), s 6(c)

**Restore Lab – key facts**

- 4 Restore Lab is a Wānaka-based research company focused on the development of new, advanced remote sensing methods and systems for terrestrial and maritime applications.

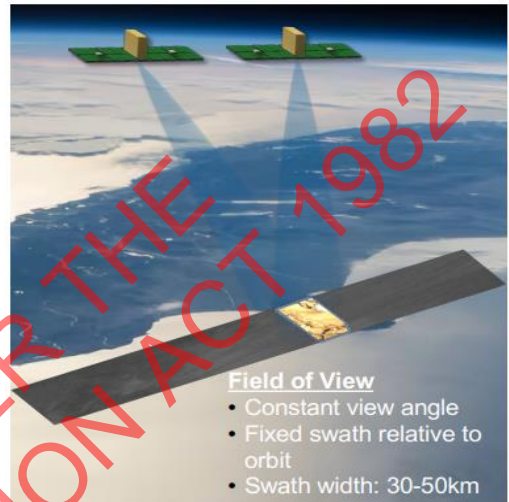
<sup>1</sup> Formation-flying spacecraft to detect very small vessels at sea.

<sup>2</sup> A partnership with NASA to collect climate data from commercial Air New Zealand aircraft.

- 5 The Director and CEO is Dr. Delwyn Moller who presented on the two offerings at our triennial maritime security symposium last year.
- 6 In 2018 Restore Lab was selected and funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to collaborate with the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) on mutual areas of research interest and it is from this that their two offerings have grown. They were given additional funding in 2024 to further their research in collaboration with Australian companies.

**Takahē Mission Concept**

7 The Takahē Mission concept involves formation-flying spacecraft to detect very small vessels at sea. This capability cancels the uniquely high false detection rate in New Zealand’s waters, whereby wave-caps are mistaken for small craft. *Figure 1* at right depicts the concept of these platforms in action.



*Fig. 1: Takahē Mission Concept spacecraft in formation flight*

8 This capability would improve maritime domain awareness which impacts all aspects of our maritime security and safety. Relevant to your search and rescue responsibilities, Coastguard has used its regular sessions on Lake Wānaka to support this trial.

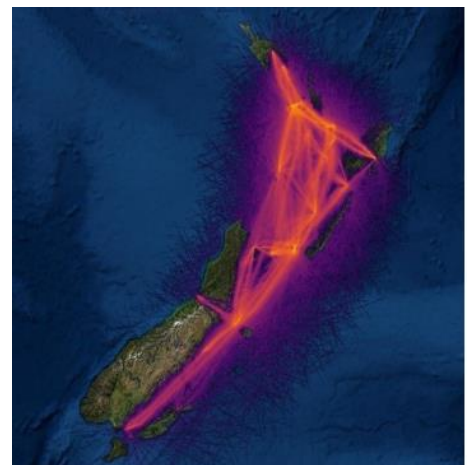
9 The Takahē Mission has been proven as a cost-effective solution that reduces the false alarm rate problem. This is a world-first.

**Project Rongowai**

10 Project Rongowai’s benefits go beyond maritime security, as it supports scientific and environmental research, is a potential global export opportunity, and could support our foreign relations.

*Research*

11 Restore Lab is partnering with the United States’ National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Air New Zealand to fit monitoring equipment on regular Air New Zealand Q300 flights under Project Rongowai (meaning ‘sensing water’). This equipment gathers data in-flight (using NASA’s Global Navigation Satellite System and GPS signals), which can be used to predict severe storms, unusual coastal conditions, and monitor climate change indicators such as drought, flooding, and coastline erosion. *Figure 2* shows the areas monitored by routine flights.



*Fig. 1: Areas monitored by Project Rongowai sensors*

12 The data captured so far is being used in research. You may wish to discuss with Restore Lab how Government can support

integration of this data into government forecasting and response systems.

- 13 Whilst at Wānaka Airport to view Project Rongowai there is an opportunity to view a Merlin Labs plane which uses a Restore Lab integrated imaging radar fitted to a Cessna 206. This capability can support rapid response relief efforts by delivering all weather day/night imagery in near real time.

s 6(a), s 6(c)

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- 15 This capability is also a potential export opportunity because it uses globally available transportation to house the sensors, meaning it can be repeated worldwide.

*Restore Lab offers benefits across your Youth portfolio*

- 16 Relevant to your Youth portfolio, Restore Lab supports an advanced physics project for high school students to build low-cost sensors for environmental monitoring. Last year one participant placed in the top four of the Prime Minister's Space Prize, and this year the project was expanded to include 12 students from Mount Aspiring College.

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

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**Contacts**

Name	Telephone	First contact
Gavin Birrell, National Strategic Coordinator for Maritime Security	s 9(2)(a)	
Josh Bullivant, Policy Lead Maritime Security		✓

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**AIDE MEMOIRE**

6 November 2025

OC250991

**Hon James Meager**  
**Associate Minister of Transport****AIDE MEMOIRE: STARBOARD MARITIME INTELLIGENCE OFFICE OPENING****Summary**

- 1 You are attending Starboard Maritime Intelligence's new Wellington office opening on 13 November as the Lead Minister for Maritime Security and as the Minister responsible for the Data Fusion System (DFS) contract with Starboard.
- 2 The Minister for Customs and Associate Minister of Defence will also be in attendance. Only the Prime Minister will speak, and he will conduct the opening. 'If asked' talking points are in Annex A.
- 3 A list of attendees is in Annex B and the biographies of key Starboard staff and directors are in Annex C.

**Background**

- 4 Starboard Maritime Intelligence (Starboard) is a New Zealand private sector maritime intelligence company delivering a cloud-based Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) product. Their product is world class, with our European Union maritime security partners judging it to be the best vessel anomaly detection platform currently available in the world.
- 5 Starboard was successfully commercialised in 2022 as an offshoot of the MBIE created Regional Research Institution Xerra (Xerra was created under Stephen Joyce in 2017).
- 6 Its second capital raise was in September 2025 which was oversubscribed, raising \$23M to drive their next global growth stage.
- 7 Starboard has been named Wellington's *Fastest Growing Tech Business* in the Deloitte Fast 50.
- 8 Starboard won the New Zealand All of Government DFS contract in 2024, outbidding 24 global offerings. This was funded by Budget 24 and is managed by the Ministry of Transport on behalf of all eleven MSOC agencies. This comprises:
  - 8.1 A user-friendly front end that provides 'analytical smarts' focused on detecting anomalous vessel behaviour.

8.2 A classified data lake: ‘the Government Data Store’ where all maritime security agencies put their correctly tagged classified data for rapid, future access by all agencies. Having our data separate to Starboard’s proprietary system means that should we ever change providers; our data will not be ‘trapped.’

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s 9(2)(f)(iv)

**Starboard key facts**

10 Starboard employs 60 staff across New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. The company recorded \$6.2 million annual recurring revenue in FY25 (a 240% year-on-year increase).

**Starboard helps deliver New Zealand’s maritime security**

11 Prior to the Budget 2024 investment in the Data Fusion System (DFS), a lack of adequate MDA (for example, our previous inability to track unalerted people, cargo, and pest movements) impacted multiple national security core issues beyond Maritime Security, including Border Security, TSOC, and Pacific Resilience and Security.

12 The DFS project was led by the Ministry of Defence on behalf of MSOC and reached full operational release in June 2025 (three months early and under budget), giving the maritime security sector a better understanding of our maritime area. Agencies now have access to common resources for hundreds of analysts and experts across government and receive automated analysis and 24x7 alerts of anomalous or unwelcome activity.

**New Zealand Government Partnering with Starboard**

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*Its New Zealand context makes it well suited to the Pacific*

14 This New Zealand context to Starboard’s creation means that it is particularly suited to countries with a similar large maritime area low population problem such as Pacific countries. This is why the United States and Australia selected it as the primary MDA system for the Forum Fisheries Agency and for all Pacific Islands Forum countries fisheries agencies in 2023.

15 MSOC is working to adapt that fisheries model to support Pacific countries counter TSOC, including arranging funding for Starboard subscriptions and training for the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre and seven Pacific Island Countries. This will allow

Customs to leverage Starboard with our Pacific partners to target TSOC as part of Operation KIWA<sup>1</sup>.

s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(f)(iv)

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s 6(a), s 6(c)

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*Further opportunities*

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s 6(a), s 6(c), s 9(2)(f)(iv)

**Order of proceedings**

20 The office opening ceremony will run in the following order:

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<sup>1</sup> A Customs / NZDF created operation to improve counter-TSOC patrolling in the South Pacific.

Time	Action
7:30 am	Guests arrive
7:45 am	PM arrives, greeted by Trent Fulcher, CEO Starboard
7:50 am	Escorted inside. Standing room only.
8:00 am	MC: Welcome and karakia. Acknowledge Prime Minister, Ministers, Board Chair, dignitaries, partners, and staff. Brief outline of programme
8:10 am	Remarks: Jonty Kelt - Board Chair
8:15 am	Remarks: Trent Fulcher – CEO Introduces PM
8:20 am	Remarks: PM
8:30 am	Formal opening: plaque unveiling. Photo opportunity
8:35 am	Product demo
8:45 am	Media: Stand-up
9:15 am	PM departs

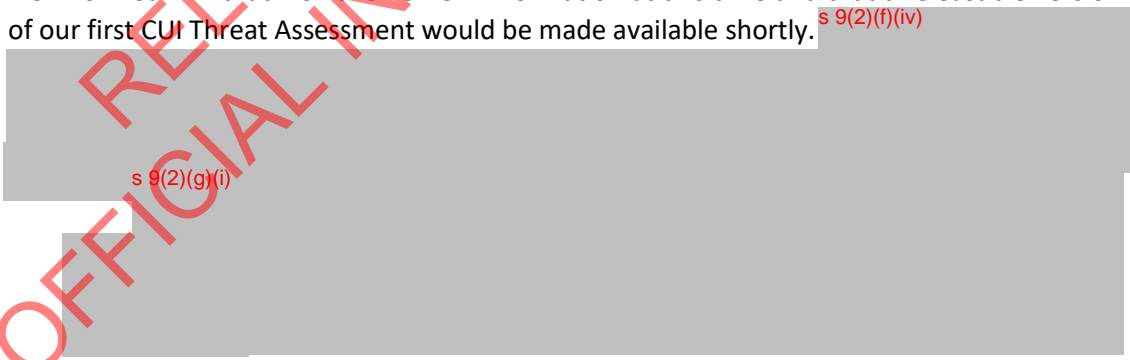
**Contacts**

Name	Telephone	First contact
Natasha Rave, Manager, Resilience and Security Team	s 9(2)(a)	
Gavin Birrell, National Strategic Coordinator Maritime Security, Maritime Security Oversight Committee Secretariat		✓

**Annex A – If asked talking points**

- Starboard is turning the dial on maritime security threats in New Zealand and globally by using cutting-edge technology to alert enforcement agencies to harms that would otherwise impact New Zealanders.
- With 99.7% of our overseas internet coming by submarine cable and 30% of the North Island's power at times coming through the Cook Strait power cable, using Starboard is a great improvement to New Zealand's security.
- Starboard is the backbone of the Maritime Security Strategy's system investment – its world-leading vessel anomaly detection technology is allowing multiple efficiencies to be identified by agencies almost daily.

**Media**

- Stuff NZME and RNZ have been invited to cover the opening.
- On 10 October 2025, NBR reported that venture capital firm Soul Capital exited its funding of Starboard because their values were no longer aligned. If asked about this, we suggest using the following lines:
  - *I am aware of the story in NBR*
  - *This is a contractual matter between Soul Capital and Starboard. Soul's exit was a decision for them to make.*
  - *The Government is not reconsidering its contract with Starboard.*
- RNZ reporter Phil Pennington has also been reporting on New Zealand's subsea cable security. He recently agreed to withdraw an OIA request on what we are doing to protect our CUI, as we informed him that we have no new information at this time and that a releasable version of our first CUI Threat Assessment would be made available shortly. <sup>s 9(2)(f)(iv)</sup>  
  
<sup>s 9(2)(g)(i)</sup>
- On 4 November 2025 *The Post* reported that Tauranga based drone manufacturer Syos plans to integrate Starboard into its drones. A visit to Syos in Tauranga by you is being explored by your office.

<sup>2</sup> The cost of the capability is \$84K p/a OPEX.

**Annex B – Attendees**

*Diplomatic Corps*

- Daniel Sloper - Australian High Commissioner
- Commander Mike Proudman Royal Navy – UK Defence Adviser


*Public Sector CEOs*

- Ruth Fairhall, Ministry of Transport
- Christine Stevenson, Customs
- Kirstie Hewlett, MNZ (tbc)
- Air Marshall Tony Davies, Chief of Defence Force (tbc)
- Rear Admiral Mat Williams, Deputy Chief of Defence (tbc)

*Other Notable Public Sector Guests*

- Air Commodore Shaun Sexton, Chief of Defence Intelligence (tbc)

s 6(a), s 6(c)



*Wellington City*

- Mayor Andrew Little

*Industry*

- John Campbell, Board Chair NZ Defence Industry Association
- Jude Rushmore, Syos Aerospace
- Kris Crosgrove, Head of Infrastructure Google Cloud NZ

Annex C - Starboard Biographies

Image	Name	Title, Company short Bio
	<p>Trent Fulcher</p>	<p>Trent Fulcher: Trent Fulcher is the CEO &amp; Director of Starboard Maritime Intelligence. Starboard is a real-time maritime intelligence platform used by governments, defence agencies, and commercial infrastructure providers around the world. With a background in international strategy, data, and commercial growth, Trent has led the global expansion of advanced technologies across New Zealand, Europe, and the United States. He brings deep experience at the intersection of trade, security, and innovation, turning data into operational insight. At Starboard, he's leading the company's growth in ocean governance and defence, infrastructure protection, and strategic decision-making at sea.</p>
	<p>Jonty Kelt</p>	<p>Jonty Kelt: Jonty Kelt is the Board Chair of Starboard Maritime Intelligence. He is the Founder of Fantail Ventures, a venture capital business investing in innovative early-stage companies in the digital assets and enterprise software sectors.</p> <p>He currently serves in governance roles with Starboard, digital assets security provider Zenrock Labs, asset management software provider Caruso, and financial data provider Valocity. He is also Chair of the New Zealand Dementia Prevention Trust and on the Board of Governors at Kings College.</p> <p>Previously, he helped lead the global commercial business of Palantir Technologies and worked in executive roles for Google and DoubleClick. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance and Marketing from Otago University.</p>
	<p>Craig Mawdsley</p>	<p>Craig Mawdsley: Craig Mawdsley is a Director at Starboard Maritime Intelligence. He is a partner at Altered Capital, a venture capital and reinvestment stage fund manager focused on private growth companies pursuing strategies in technology, healthcare, and financials.</p> <p>Altered Capital specialises in companies that need capital to support their ambitions for expansion, innovation, and acquisitions. Previously, Craig co-led the Private Investments</p>

		<p>division of the McPike Global Family Office, launching its first fund in 2015, and managing over US\$2B in assets.</p> <p>He held senior positions throughout the MGFO group of companies from 2005 and prior to that practiced as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand. He holds a Bachelor of Laws (First Class Honours) and a Bachelor of Social Sciences from the University of Waikato.</p>
	<p>Dr. Christopher Laing</p>	<p>Christopher Laing: Dr Christopher Laing is Chief Technology and Innovation Officer at Starboard Maritime Intelligence.</p> <p>Christopher has extensive experience leading technology, data, and AI teams at major New Zealand technology companies, including serving as Chief Product and Technology Officer at Qrious and Head of Xero AI. He has also contributed to industry governance as a board member of NZTech and an executive council member of the AI Forum NZ. He holds a degree in law and a PhD in applied mathematics from the University of Otago</p>
	<p>Brendon Wright</p>	<p>Starboard Maritime Intelligence Chief Financial Officer</p>
	<p>Mathew Brown</p>	<p>Starboard Maritime Intelligence Chief Revenue Officer</p> <p>Driving Starboard’s commercial strategy across allied markets – helping government agencies, defence partners, and critical infrastructure providers adopt real-time maritime intelligence at scale.</p> <p>Operating across Five Eyes jurisdictions, our platform uses real-time satellite intelligence to surface risks that matter. Focusing on security around sub-sea cables, critical maritime infrastructure, defence capabilities and maritime security interests.</p>



**AIDE MEMOIRE**

28 November 2025

OC251082

**Hon James Meager**  
**Associate Minister of Transport**

**AIDE MEMOIRE: MEETING WITH DEAN VEVERKA ON CRITICAL UNDERWATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Summary**

- 1 You are meeting Dean Veverka online on Monday, 1 December, to discuss New Zealand's approach to protecting Critical Underwater Infrastructure (CUI).
- 2 Dean is the Chief Technical Officer and Vice President Operations at Southern Cross Cables Ltd (Southern Cross). He is also Chair of the global peak industry body, the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC). Whilst an Australian citizen, Dean is New Zealand-based and works for a New Zealand company, and his position gives us some international influence.
- 3 Background information on Southern Cross Cables Ltd is at appendix 1.

**We recently provided you with CUI advice**

- 4 We briefed you in October on CUI, making eight recommendations to improve New Zealand's CUI regime (OC250895 refers). <sup>s 9(2)(f)(iv)</sup>

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s 9(2)(f)(iv)

**Topics that you may wish to raise**

*Future investments*

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s 9(2)(b)(ii)

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**Topics that will be raised by Dean Veverka**

*Align with ICPC best practice guidelines on submarine cable resilience*

11 Our CUI 'deep dive' used ICPC best practice to guide the development of our recommendations. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

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s 9(2)(f)(iv)

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**Contacts**

Name	Telephone	First contact
Gavin Birrell, National Strategic Coordinator Maritime Security, Maritime Security Oversight Committee Secretariat	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Josh Bullivant, Policy Lead Maritime Security, Maritime Security Oversight Committee Secretariat		

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## Appendix 1: Southern Cross Background Information

### Background

The Southern Cross Cable Network (SCCN) is a trans-Pacific submarine fibre-optic cable system providing international telecommunications connectivity between Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tokelau, Kiribati, Hawaii, and the United States West Coast.

Operational since November 2000, the network comprises approximately 30,500KM of cable, across nine landing stations.

### Ownership

Owned and operated by Bermuda-registered Southern Cross Cables Limited, a consortium historically including major stakeholders such as Spark New Zealand (50%), Singtel Optus (40%), and Verizon Business (10%).

### Upgrades

Successive upgrades, including integration of 40G and higher technologies, have enabled it to handle a substantial share of trans-Pacific internet traffic, underscoring its role as a backbone for data exchange between Oceania and global networks.

Notable achievements include recent demonstrations of cutting-edge transmission capabilities, such as the world's first 1 Tb/s wavelength transmission across the Pacific in collaboration with Ciena, contributing to overall network capacities exceeding 100 Tb/s when accounting for extensions like Southern Cross NEXT.

s 9(2)(b)(i)

### Next Steps

Ongoing expansions, such as the planned SX Tasman Express cable, aim to further bolster intra-regional connectivity.

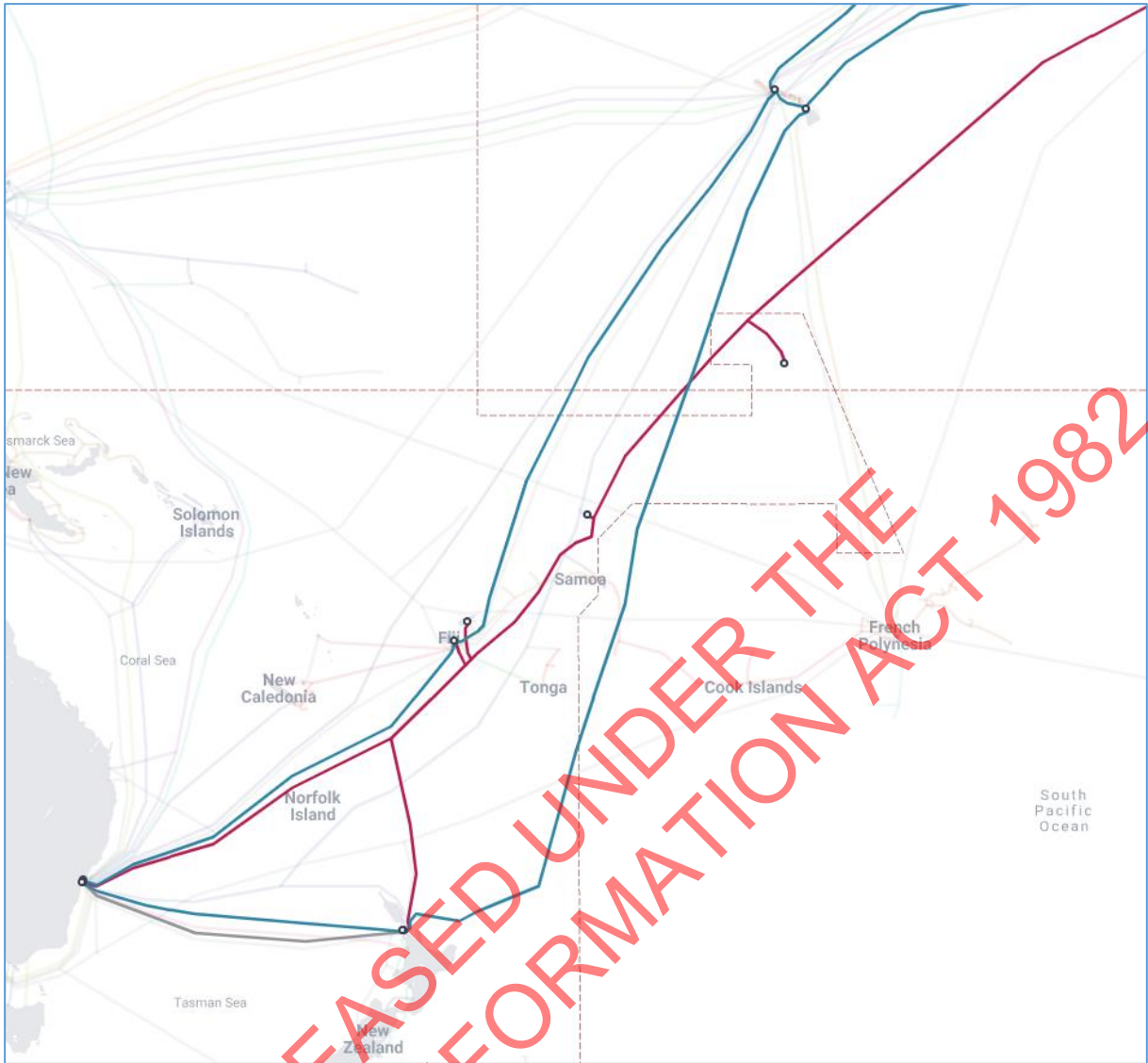
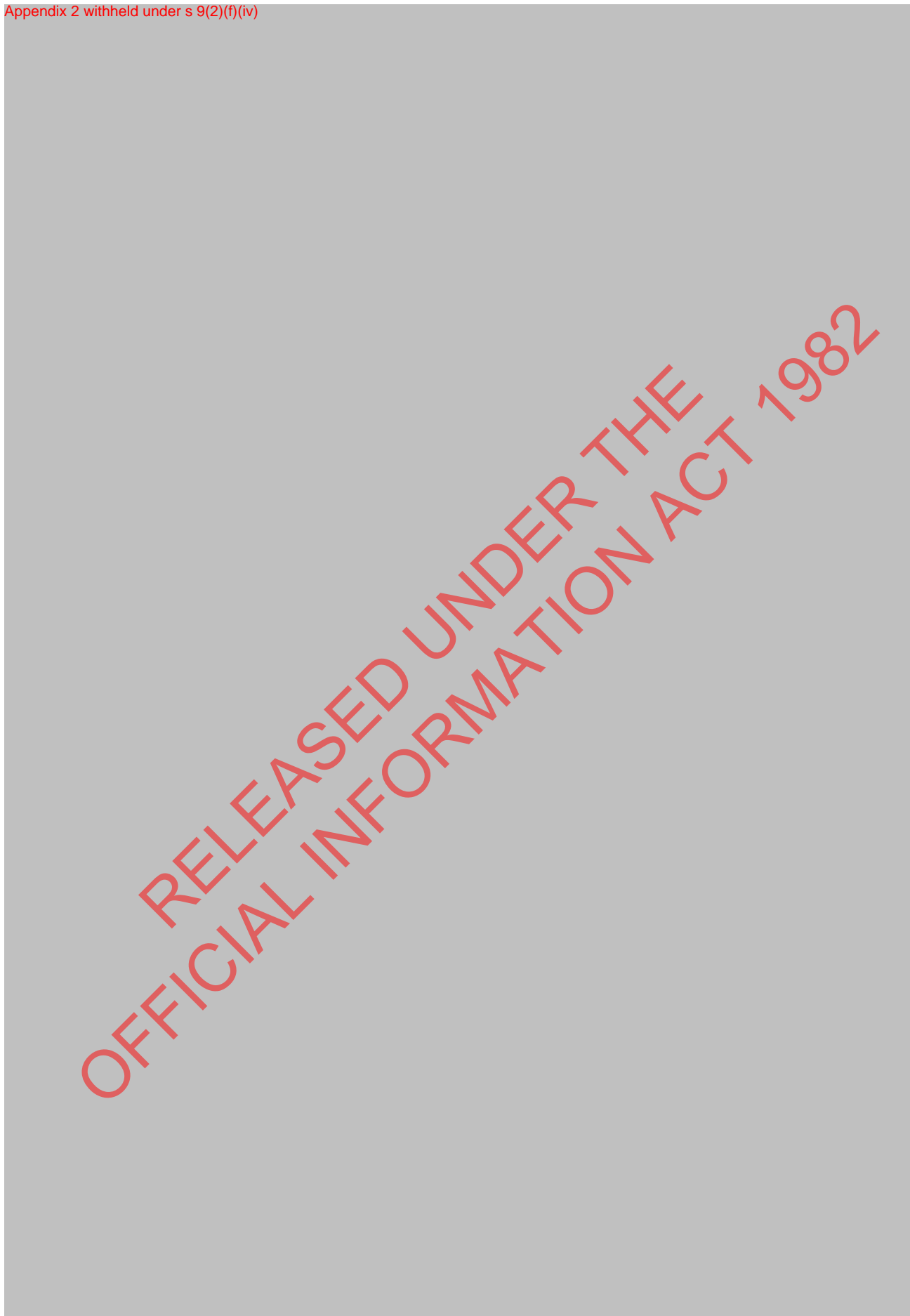


Fig 1: Map showing Southern Cross Cable Network (blue) (original cable), Southern Cross Next (red) and the proposed Southern Cross Tasman Express (grey) proposed cables

Appendix 2 withheld under s 9(2)(f)(iv)



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