

## Concept Note for Webinar Review of UDA Research & Innovation Activities by MRC's Research Advisory Board (RAB) on 22 Aug 2023 at 10:30 am IST

### Background

**Introduction:** Over the past 75 years since independence, India has laid a strong foundation, and now is the time to take bold strides into the future, especially when India plans to host the upcoming G20 Summit in September 2023. ***In the 21st century, India is emerging as a maritime nation with a significant strategic push for maritime capacity and capability building.*** There has been a significant shift towards the maritime domain in the areas of strategic security and sustainable growth, and the government is placing a high priority on the blue economy and maritime security. Therefore, India stands at the brink of a remarkable transformation today, with both global and domestic cues highly favourable and we as a nation seem to be in a sweet spot. The country is perfectly poised to embark on a new phase of growth, owing to favourable political, economic, demographic, socio-cultural, and other circumstances.

**About the UDA Framework:** The Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) Framework, in a more specific sense describes the desire to know what is happening in the underwater parts of both marine and freshwater systems. The UDA framework, which was initiated and is driven by the Maritime Research Centre (MRC) in collaboration with M/S NirDhwani Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (NDT), has received widespread recognition for promoting safe, secure, and sustainable growth in the tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific region. ***It encourages the pooling of resources and synergizing of efforts across the stakeholders and has devised technology tools to support livelihood for the coastal & riverine communities.***

**Significance of the Indo-Pacific space:** The Indo-Pacific strategic space has gained substantial relevance in the last five years due to multiple reasons ranging from political, socio-economic, military, and more. The geopolitical and geo-strategic developments have a significant bearing on the maritime interaction between the nations in the region and also the extra-regional powers. ***The political and socio-economic realities of the region encourage non-state actors to be active in the region and also the state using these non-state actors as regular instruments of state power.***

**Significance of UDA to combat climate change:** The events caused due to climate change are not only impacting what you see on land but they also impact lives that remain underwater, in deep seas, rivers, and oceans. The developments underwater have also contributed immensely towards causing extreme events on land. Thus, there is a requirement for climate change studies that can be undertaken as part of the UDA Framework. ***This decade has been declared the "Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development" by the United Nations.*** It is crucial for local communities to be actively involved in the development process in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a true sense.

### Proposal

The UDA framework transcends the security discourse and integrates all key stakeholders including the security apparatus, blue economic entities, environmental regulators & disaster management authorities, and science & technology providers, to facilitate the pooling of resources and synergizing efforts for ensuring safe, secure, sustainable growth for all in the region. ***With that in focus, the Maritime Research Centre (MRC) proposes to initiate setting up a***

**Research Advisory Board (RAB) as an initiative to integrate all key stakeholders and create a platform for discussions on key issues related to underwater domain awareness and its key critical aspects.** The objective of this effort will be to construct a holistic livelihood enhancement ecosystem, fostering a well-structured environment that will empower communities to harness the water ecosystem sustainably and create strategic security framework that will ensure peace & harmony.

With this initiative, MRC intends to bring together a diverse group of decision-makers from various ministries, regulators, policy advocacy groups, environmentalists, disaster management authorities, and more. Sensitization of governance mechanisms is critical and will add value to the overall policy-making process.

### **Programme Schedule:**

**Date:** 22 August 2023 (Monday)

**Time:** 10:30 am IST onwards

**Mode:** Online webinar

### **Key details**

- **10: 30- 10: 40 am IST: Welcome address by Amb Anup Mudgal**, Former Indian Ambassador to Mauritius and currently Co-chairing FICCI's Blue Economy Task Force
- **10: 40- 10: 50 am IST: Remarks by Dr (Cdr) Arnab Das**, Founder, and Director- MRC and NDT
- **10: 50- 11:00 am IST: Address by Shridhar Praburaman**, Dy Director at MRC on 'Research and Innovations at MRC and NDT'
- **11: 00- 11: 10 am IST: Remarks by J. Catherine**, MRC Research Coordinator on 'Research Publications'
- **11:10-11: 20 am IST: Remarks by Divya Rai**, MRC International Coordinator on 'Multilateral and Bilateral Collaborations'
- **11: 20- 11: 30 am IST: Remarks by Nishtha Vishwakarma**, Communications and Advocacy Lead on 'UDA Digest- Digital Platform that Showcases the Body of Work'
- **11: 30- 12: 00 noon IST: Remarks by Dignitaries.**
- **12: 00- 12: 30 pm IST: Closing remarks by Research Advisory Board**
- **12: 30- 12: 35 pm IST: Vote of Thanks by Shri Praful Talera**