

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Bristol		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19) Politics and International Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> SafeSeas: Building Effective Capacities for Maritime Security		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2016 - 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Timothy Edmunds	Professor of International Studies	09/2003 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 - 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		

### 1. Summary of the impact

Tackling maritime security is a major global challenge. The University of Bristol's SafeSeas research programme has provided essential guidelines and recommendations for strengthening both maritime security governance and capacity building. In the UK, SafeSeas research has informed maritime security spending and policy decisions, including a commitment by the UK Government to increase spending on maritime security by GBP9 million, as well as the formation of the UK Joint Maritime Operations and Coordination Centre. SafeSeas Best Practice Toolkit recommendations are endorsed by both UK and US governments and have been incorporated into US and Gulf of Guinea maritime security recommendations. The research has also shaped the practice of capacity building in these regions as well as the Western Indian Ocean and South East Asia.

### 2. Underpinning research

Maritime security is a growing field of international policy activity and governmental interest. Safeguarding international transport by sea; preventing accidents and disasters; fighting transnational crimes such as piracy and trafficking, addressing fishery crimes and preventing environmental crimes are vital for international security and realising the prospects of the blue economy. Addressing these challenges requires effective national and international maritime security governance, but also external capacity building to assist countries in developing their maritime capacities and coordination arrangements with other regional partners.

The SafeSeas research programme [3.1-6], is the first to systematically examine how maritime security challenges can be addressed through capacity building. Led by the Universities of Bristol (Edmunds) and Cardiff/Copenhagen (Bueger) and supported by grants from the British Academy [ii], University of Bristol (UoB) [iv, v], the European Union [i, iii], and ESRC [vi], SafeSeas applied empirical insights from case studies, semi-structured interviews, in-country fieldwork, and co-production work with policy makers and practitioners, to the issue of maritime security capacity building. Over the course of the programme, 118 interviews were conducted, with four in-country research assistants commissioned in Djibouti, Kenya, Pakistan and Seychelles, and fieldwork conducted in five research sites (Seychelles, Kenya, Somalia, Singapore and South Africa).

Drawing on co-production work and original research, SafeSeas consolidates insights from practice theory and empirical evidence, to recommend best practices to organise maritime security and devise ways in which it can be effectively supported by donors. The SafeSeas

### Impact case study (REF3)

research programme makes three significant contributions to understanding practices of maritime security governance and capacity building:

**A) From seapower and law to maritime security and blue crime.** The SafeSeas research programme is the first to conceptualise maritime security as an international practice, distinct for the traditional concerns of maritime agencies on seapower and the law of the sea [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6]. It presents maritime security as an interconnected, transnational problem, comprising themes of national security, the marine environment, economic development, human security and criminalisation. It identifies, analyses and compares lessons learned in maritime security governance, coordination and knowledge production [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6]. The research examines how best and promising practices can most effectively be promulgated through capacity building activities [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6].

**B) Bottom-up approaches for effective capacity building.** The research programme examines and evaluates the current proliferation of activities in the maritime capacity building field. These aim to strengthen the ability of governments and communities to better manage the challenge of maritime security and law enforcement they face [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6]. Such approaches are characterised by their use of externally derived models and planning guidelines. The research demonstrates that while these approaches sometimes have value, they are often inflexible and can struggle to engage with the complexities of local circumstance. It shows that participative, interactionist and incremental approaches can lead to more effective, legitimate and sustainable capacity building outcomes.

**C) Strengthening cooperation through capacity building.** Drawing on empirical data from the Western Indian Ocean region in particular [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6], the SafeSeas research programme identifies strategies to facilitate effective cooperation and coordination at sea and considers how these can be strengthened through capacity building. These strategies include: the use of informal mechanisms to encourage participation; problem-orientated approaches to coordination; and the use of nodal activities, including maritime domain awareness to facilitate information sharing and trust building between actors.

SafeSeas engaged stakeholders by producing a Best Practice Toolkit for maritime security capacity builders [5.9]; producing or hosting 95 blogs and policy commentaries on the SafeSeas website; organising seven knowledge exchange events with senior policy makers and practitioners held in Kenya, Denmark, the UK and remotely; and establishing formal research co-production relationships with policy organisations (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Global Maritime Crime Programme and the OEF Foundation Stable Seas programme). SafeSeas is registered with the UN Division of Sustainable Development as a voluntary commitment to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14 [Ocean Action 14234].

### 3. References to the research

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- [3.1] Bueger C, Edmunds T, McCabe R. (eds.) (2020), *Understanding Capacity Building: Maritime Security and the Western Indian Ocean Experience* (Basingstoke: Palgrave). ISBN 978-3-030-50064-1
- [3.2] Bueger C, Edmunds T. (2020), Blue Crime: Conceptualising Transnational Organised Crime at Sea, *Marine Policy*, 119. DOI:[10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104067](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104067)
- [3.3] Bueger C, Edmunds T, McCabe R. (2020), Into the sea: capacity building innovations and the maritime security challenge, *Third World Quarterly*. 41(2), 228-246. DOI:[10.1080/01436597.2019.1660632](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1660632)

## Impact case study (REF3)

- [3.4] Bueger C, **Edmunds T**, Ryan B. (2019), Maritime security: the uncharted politics of the global sea, *International Affairs*. 95(5), DOI:[10.1093/ia/iiz145](https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz145)
- [3.5] **Edmunds T**, Juncos AE. (2019), Constructing the capable state: contested discourses and practices in EU capacity building, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 55(1), 3-21. DOI:[10.1177/0010836719860885](https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836719860885)
- [3.6] Bueger C & **Edmunds T**. (2017), Beyond seablindness: a new agenda for maritime security studies, *International Affairs*, 93(6), 1293-1311. DOI:[10.1093/ia/iix174](https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix174)

Research grants

- [i] **Edmunds** (PI), Ejodus F (University of Belgrade, Fellow), Local Ownership in EU Security Sector Reform Missions, EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship, 2015-2017, EUR183,455
- [ii] Bueger C (Cardiff University, PI), **Edmunds** (CI), Safe Seas: A Study of Maritime Capacity Building in the Western Indian Ocean, British Academy, 2016-2018, GBP264,414
- [iii] Juncos A (UoB, PI), **Edmunds** (CI), Developing EU Civilian Capabilities for a Sustainable Peace (EU-CIVCAP), EU Horizon 2020, 2015-2018, EUR1,714,976
- [iv] **Edmunds** (PI) Capacity Building for Maritime Security Symposium, PolicyBristol Impact Award, 2018, GBP3,764
- [v] **Edmunds** (PI) Maritime Security after Brexit, PolicyBristol Impact Award, 2019, GBP2,770
- [vi] **Edmunds** (PI), Transnational Organised Crime at Sea: new Evidence for Better Responses, ESRC, 2019-2021, GBP433,336

**4. Details of the impact**

Through iterative knowledge exchange processes, which have engaged senior policy makers and practitioners, the Safeseas research programme has delivered impact in; 1) framing policy and setting the operational agenda, and 2) shaping the content and practice of maritime security capacity building.

**1) Framing policy and setting the operational agenda**

UoB research has played a key role in framing policy and setting the operational agenda for maritime security and maritime security capacity building, for national governments (UK, US, Nigeria, Seychelles), and international organisations (UNODC, EU's Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean (EU CRIMARIO), Djibouti Code of Conduct, Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and Indian Ocean Commission) engaged in these activities. As a relatively new field of activity, maritime security policy makers often struggle to articulate the concept in ways that make sense to non-specialists. The research enabled policy makers to make sense of the complexities, challenges and interlinkages of the maritime security challenge and gave a firm evidence base on which policy responses could be premised.

**In the UK**, the research directly informed maritime security spending and policy. Then Director of the UK Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC), the UK cross-governmental body for coordinating maritime security, wrote that the research and its associated policy outputs **[3.6, 5.9a]** '*proved to be extremely useful in informing future cross-government maritime security strategy development, as well as strengthening the evidence base for future investment in the JMSC*' **[5.2]**. The work informed the JMSC's submission to the 2019 Spending Review in a successful bid to increase government spending on maritime security to GBP9 million. Edmunds gave oral evidence to the Parliamentary Defence Select Committee on the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) (11.10.16) which was cited in the final report **[5.3b (para.77)]** and led into a specific recommendation that 'defence engagement' (including capacity building) should remain a core

## Impact case study (REF3)

task and be funded sufficiently. Edmunds also advised the Cabinet Office for their first report on the SDSR, published on 7 December 2016, where he emphasised the importance of maritime security, maritime diplomacy and maritime security coordination with partners. This recommendation was incorporated into the report itself [5.3c (para.2.4)], which called for the creation of a Joint Maritime Operations Centre, implemented in 2017 as the Joint Maritime Operations and Coordination Centre. Director SDSR and Defence, UK National Security Secretariat, reported that a meeting with Edmunds had been *'incredibly useful in both framing the 2016 Annual Report and more broadly'* [5.3a]. SafeSeas held a Blue IdeasLab at UoB in 2020 on UK Maritime Security after Brexit, at which senior policy makers from the JMSC, Department for Transport (DfT), Home Office, Border Force, Marine Scotland, Marine Management Organisation and Maritime and Coastguard Agency participated. The workshop resulted in a PolicyBristol report [5.4b], and Edmunds being invited to act as an external consultant and contributor to the DfT submission to the Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review of security across all aspects of the UK government in July 2020 [5.4a, 5.4c]. This is the largest such review carried out by the UK government since the Cold War and will be published in early 2021.

**Beyond the UK**, Senior Maritime Advisor to the **US** State Department noted that she was using [3.6] *'as a primer for new arrivals as we develop our strategy for the [Western Indian Ocean] region'* [5.5a]. The SafeSeas Best Practice Toolkit [5.9a] was later recommended in the 2019 US State Department's Africa Maritime Security and Law Enforcement Primer [5.5b (p.112)]. The **Nigerian** government drew on the work of SafeSeas [3.5, 3.6] and the Best Practice Toolkit [5.9a] in its Abuja Declaration of 2019. This document was the final communique of the Global Maritime Security Conference 2019 organised by the Nigerian Government to draw together maritime security responses in the Gulf of Guinea, and at which Edmunds was a keynote speaker. This event was the first of its kind with 3,000 participants from 80 countries including high level government representatives. The declaration recognised the need for capacity building and recommended that *'States of the Gulf of Guinea and [their] international partners should give priority attention to... capacity building for relevant stakeholders involved in maritime security'* [5.6].

The research programme has also informed the operational agenda of **international organisations** involved in maritime capacity building with third countries [3.2, 3.3, 3.6]. The Director of the UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme wrote that the results of the research *'have a major impact in the regional discussion to raise more awareness for maritime crime, how it can be addressed and what forms of capacity building are available'* and have *'provided very useful ideas and guidance for our work'* [5.1].

## 2) Shaping the content and practice of capacity building

UoB research [3.3, 3.5, 3.6] shaped the content and practice of capacity building activities conducted by national governments and international organisations. As a relatively novel area of international activity, maritime security capacity builders such as the UNODC and EU CRIMARIO have a limited evidence base on which to develop their activities. To address this problem, SafeSeas held co-production events and conducted original research to develop a Best Practice Toolkit (BPT) to present essential guidelines for the planning, programming and implementation of maritime security capacity building and influence stakeholders in conducting these activities [5.9a].

The SafeSeas BPT (freely available online, 1,000 hard copies distributed globally) is in widespread use in national and international maritime security capacity building programmes. A Project

### Impact case study (REF3)

Manager at EU CRIMARIO noted that ‘*recommendations provided in [the BPT] have been instrumental in the process of supporting Mauritius when drafting their maritime security strategy*’ [5.7a]. EU CRIMARIO also endorsed the BPT on its website, noting that it ‘*provides an essential guide for the planning, programming and implementation of capacity building for maritime security*’ [5.7b].

The International Maritime Organisation’s Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) – the main regional counterpiracy and maritime security body for the Western Indian Ocean – drew on SafeSeas research in the conclusions and recommendations of its 2018 implementation meeting in relation to national priorities, regional information sharing and maritime domain awareness, and regional coordination [5.8 (para.8)]. At the DCoC meeting in Jeddah on 7-9 May 2019, a representative of the Maritime Security Team, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, welcomed the work of SafeSeas stating that the ‘*UK endorses [the BPT]*’, particularly ‘*the importance of [local] ownership*’ and had integrated these principles into its own programmes [5.9b]. The Special Envoy for the Oceans of the UN Secretary General noted that ‘*the [SafeSeas] best practice tool kit [...is] an important step forward to the sharing of experiences in capacity building in consideration of the best practices*’ [5.9c]. The UNODC and EU CRIMARIO have integrated the BPT and SafeSeas expertise into their own maritime security training programmes, as has the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) [5.1, 5.7ab, 5.10].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

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- [5.1] UNODC (2018). Correspondence - Head, Global Maritime Crime Programme
- [5.2] JMSC (2019). Correspondence - Director
- [5.3] a) UK National Security Secretariat (2016). Correspondence – Director, SDSR and Defence; b) House of Commons Defence Committee (2017). HC 108 [SDSR 2015 and the Army, cited para.77](#); c) HM Government (2016). National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, [First Annual Report 2016 cited para.2.4](#).
- [5.4] a) DfT (2020). Correspondence - Policy Advisor, Maritime Security Division; b) UoB (2020). Policy Report 57: [Delivering UK maritime security after Brexit: time for a joined-up approach](#); c) GOV.UK (2020). [PM outlines new review to define Britain’s place in the world](#)
- [5.5] a) US Department of State (2017). Correspondence - Senior Maritime Advisor; b) US State Department (2019). [Africa Maritime Security and Law Enforcement Primer, SafeSeas Toolkit cited p.112](#).
- [5.6] OnePageAfrica (2020). [The Abuja Declaration: Communique from the Global Maritime Security Conference 2019](#)
- [5.7] a) EU CRIMARIO (2018). Correspondence - Project Manager; b) EU CRIMARIO (2018). [Maritime Security and Capacity Building in the Indian Ocean](#)
- [5.8] International Maritime Organisation (2020). Taking action to enhance regional maritime security - Conclusions & Recommendations of the High-Level Workshop on the Implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and the 2017 Jeddah Amendments to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 7-9 May 2018. *See esp. para 8*.
- [5.9] SafeSeas (2018). a) [Best Practice Toolkit](#), b) News: [UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Endorses Best Practice Toolkit](#) and Presentation *See slide 8*; c) [United Nations Special Envoy Opens SafeSeas Symposium](#),
- [5.10] DCAF (2019). Correspondence - Head, Asia-Pacific Unit