



United States Department of Defense  
**Executive Agent for  
 Maritime Domain Awareness**

# Maritime Safety and Security Information System (MSSIS)

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## Background

In 2004, the International Maritime Organization established the safety requirement for ships over 300 gross weight tonnage to broadcast its automatic identification system (AIS) data. Soon after, Governments started to collect AIS information to enhance vessel tracking and monitoring. Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, in an effort to enhance its AIS collection and sharing as well as enhance Theater Security Cooperation, established MSSIS. With technical development by the Volpe Center, a part of the Department of Transportation (DoT), and the support of the U.S. Coast Guard, MSSIS became the model for international maritime information sharing.

## Current State

To date, there is no a formal governance, within the U.S or its international partners, to manage the administrative and technical support of MSSIS. Membership, funding, technology, administration, and expansion of the system are accomplished on an ad hoc basis by informal agreements among DoD, DoT, DHS and NATO. Presently, over 56 nations participate in MSSIS as a method of sharing AIS data.

The MSSIS network consists of servers supported and located at the following locations:

- NATO, Allied Maritime Component Command – Naples, Italy
- USN, Commander Sixth Fleet – Capodichino, Italy
- USN, Commander Second Fleet – Norfolk, Virginia
- Maritime Administration, Volpe Center – Cambridge, MA.

## Moving Forward

Without governance, legal sharing agreements or recourse for non-compliance, the future of MSSIS is uncertain.

The path to sustaining MSSIS can only be achieved with clear and prompt action. The governance of MSSIS should be established by:

- First, institute a U.S. Government (USG) body for management, administration, and promotion of MSSIS for and within the USG, and
- Second, establish an international body for the management, administration and promotion of MSSIS internationally.

Through the completion of the second step, the USG shall determine if the U.S. will lead or become a member of an internationally lead governance body.

We agree MSSIS and its AIS maritime information sharing capability is a valuable and necessary system.

The Office of the DoD EA for MDA is dedicated to promoting MSSIS and will continue working to build a sustainable and internationally governed capability.

