

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
CREW CHANGES THROUGH AN OFFSHORE TRANSIT HUB
OFF SRI LANKA

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) has approved crew changes of international seafarers to be carried out off the Port of Galle in Sri Lanka, and in order to assure sustainability, a passenger ship will be positioned offshore functioning as an Offshore Transit Hub (OTH).
- 1.2 The operation will be managed by a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) monitored by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Ministry of Health (MoH).
- 1.3 The PPP is between a Government Owned Business Undertaking (GOBU) of Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Ltd (RALL), which is directly under the Ministry of Defence, and Avant Garde Maritime Services (AGMS).

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 The purpose is to serve the high demand of vessel owners/crewing agents to overcome the dire straits faced by seafarers unable to sign off and hopelessness of relief crew seeking employment. The project will also resolve the grave predicament faced by ship owners, technical managers, charterers, and crewing agents. These are matters of grave concern to the United Nations (UN), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and other stakeholders of the shipping industry.
- 2.2 According to the United Nations (UN) and ICS, there are about 400,000 seafarers worldwide waiting to be relieved at sea.
- 2.3 Understanding the situation of Seafarers in this Covid19 epidemic context requires minimizing contact with land and preventing virus spread to the society whilst carrying out uninterrupted sustained crew change operation, the PPP has designed and modified further to the existing bulk crew changes to achieve the objective.

3. OVERVIEW

- 3.1 Seafarers are allowed to arrive only at Mattala International Airport (MRIA) in Sri Lanka only in chartered flights carrying exclusively seafarers. Seafarers are not permitted to arrive in commercial airlines at MRJA.
 - 3.2 The Republic of Maldives permits seafarers to arrive in passenger flights and many major passenger flights from all over the world operate in Maldives. Stakeholders who are unable to gather adequate number of seafarers for chartered flights to arrive directly to Sri Lanka, are able to send seafarers to Male International Airport in Republic of Maldives in passenger flights to be shuttled across in scheduled chartered flights arranged by the PPP exclusively to Mattala MRJA in Sri Lanka. In order to boost the economy of the country as well as improving the sustainability of the national carrier, PPP will charter flights only from Sri Lankan Airlines for this purpose.
 - 3.3 Seafarers arriving in either Sri Lanka or Maldives are required to have a negative PCR report on a test carried out 72 hours prior to departure from last airport.
 - 3.4 Whilst in Maldives, seafarers will be attended to by a representative of PPP, and during the short time of transit, will be accommodated at a star class hotel in Male if the time of transit in Maldives is more than 12 hours. PPP representative will also attend to immigration and emigration formalities in Male as required.
 - 3.5 If any seafarer fall sick will be transferred to a Hospital in Male, which will be coordinated by the representative of the PPP. (Cost has to be borne by the agent).
 - 3.6 PPP will charter shuttle flights between Male in Maldives and Mattala in Sri Lanka. PPP will employ air marshals in these chartered flights to ensure that the seafarers adhere to the health protocols whilst boarding and during the flight.
 - 3.7 On arrival at Mattala International airport, seafarers will be attended to by a designated Agent to carry out immigration formalities (PPP will arrange online and automated formalities in due course and details will be informed on separate letter).
 - 3.8 Once the immigration formalities are completed, Seafarers will be directly transferred to the Port of Galle in dedicated buses organised by the PPP conforming to international and local health protocols whilst minimising any interaction with the society. These buses will be obtained from Agents on payment basis. These persons have to be in our IC and drivers have
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to follow proper health regulations and procedures antigen test will be done for them before they go to the society on leave. They have to get a PCR test before they join back.

- 3.9 All vehicles of seafarers will be escorted by Sri Lanka Navy assisted by RALL to fulfil MOD directions.
 - 3.10 At Galle Seaport, agents should assist the emigration and custom formalities of seafarers.
 - 3.11 Transfer of seafarers between the Port of Galle and Offshore Transits Hub (OTH) to be arranged by the Agents, strictly conforming to health protocols. No crew member of these boats should get on board the OTH or have any interaction with those on the OTH. This will be monitored by Sri Lanka Navy assisted by RALL. This boat crew members are not permitted to interact with the society until properly relieved after quarantine in accordance with health protocols
 - 3.12 Transfer of seafarers between OTH and respective parent ships will be carried out by the PPP in specially designated boats that would remain alongside the OTH for specific long periods without returning to port. That will prevent any cross infection. These boats and crew will be quarantined immediately before and after deployment at the OTH.
 - 3.13 Boats for this purpose will be selected on a rotation basis to provide equal opportunities to all boat operators.
 - 3.14 Off signing seafarers requiring negative PCR reports at destination country will be subjected to PCR tests whilst on OTH at the request of the agent at a cost of approx. USD 75 per PCR. Seafarers are permitted to leave the OTH only on negative reports.
 - 3.15 Seafarers with positive reports will be transferred to a dedicated hospital ship managed by a leading private hospital in Sri Lanka manned by qualified doctors, nurses and other medical staff, and permitted to leave only on full recovery. Full cost of hospitalisation in the dedicated Hospital Ship and any further tests relevant to COVID-19 shall be borne by the PPP. Any other sicknesses of seafarers also could be treated at the hospital facility available at OTH on payment basis.
 - 3.16 Operations rooms of the PPP will operate round the clock (24/7), one each at AGMS head office (Kotte), Galle, Mattala and another on board at the OTH. Contact details are indicated
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at the end of this document. Ops Room on board the OTH is contactable on International Marine VHF Channel 16 for calling and on Channel 8 for calling and communications.

- 3.17 Agents are requested to check all documents of seafarers properly to avoid shortcomings before being forwarded for approval. PPP will not be liable for any shortcomings due to incomplete submission of details.

4 PROCESS

4.1 Sign-on (via Mattala, Sri Lanka)

- 4.1.1 Agents submit details of charter flight and passenger seafarers to PPP Operations Room at least 72 hours in advance in the arrival request as per the format available online, with personal details of seafarer attaching copies of Passport, CDC, and Negative PCR report of a test carried out 72 hours before boarding the flight.
- 4.1.2 PPP obtains approval from Sri Lanka approving authority for the charter flight with landing permission for passengers.
- 4.1.3 PPP notifies the Agent on receipt of approval.
- .1.4 Agent to obtain copy of the negative PCR report of the seafarer of a test taken 72 hours prior to boarding the flight and submit it to Port Health Officer (PHO) prior to landing of flight. Agent to obtain any other approval from relevant authorities e.g. PHO/Harbour Master, etc.
- 4.1.5 Arriving seafarer to carry original copy of negative PCR report of a test taken 72 hours before boarding the flight.
- 4.1.6 Agent receives respective seafarers and attend to immigration and customs formalities. (As requested by the agents, an online automated system is being pursued. The details will be promulgated in due course).
- 4.1.7 Seafarers to be dressed in full Personal Protective Equipment's (PPE) during movements from airport to Galle Port, onwards to OTH as well as from OTH to respective parent ship and vice versa. PPE for the seafarers will be provided by the PPP.
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- 4.1.8 PPP will transport seafarer to Galle Port in vehicles conforming to health protocols in liaison with Sri Lanka Navy. These vehicles will be obtained from shipping agents on payment basis.
- 4.1.9 On arrival at the Port of Galle, Agent arranges emigration and customs formalities and a suitable crew boat to transfer seafarer to the Offshore Transit Hub (OTH) in liaison with relevant authorities.
- 4.1.10 On arrival at the OTH, all seafarers will be disinfected, checked in, and provided comfortable accommodation on full board basis until arrival of respective parent ships. No member of the boats crew of the transfer boat should get on to the OTH whilst alongside.
- 4.1.11 Agent to inform arrival of respective parent ship to PPP Ops Room at least 12 hours ahead and the PPP will arrange seafarers to be transferred to respective ships from the Offshore Transit Hub in dedicated boats designated and available at the OTH.
- 4.1.12 PPP will inform respective Agents once the crew transfer is completed.

4.2 Sign-Off (for repatriation via Mattala, Sri Lanka)

- 4.2.1 Agents inform details of the off signers to the PPP Operations Room 36 hours in advance and update the ETA as required.
 - 4.2.2 PPP arranges seafarers to be transferred from respective ships to Offshore Transit Hub as required.
 - 4.2.3 Agents to arrange repatriation flights as required for those Indian Seafarers who are travelling directly to India.
 - 4.2.4 PPP will arrange antigen tests at OTH for seafarers not requiring PCR tests to return to home country.
 - 4.2.5 For those seafarers requiring PCR tests to return to home country, PCR tests will be conducted on board the Offshore Transit Hub at approx. USD 75.
 - 4.2.6 Those who are with negative PCR reports will be free to leave.
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- 4.2.7 Seafarers with COVID-19 positive reports will be subjected to treatment at the dedicated hospital ship, discharged only when fully recovered, and transferred from the hospital ship to the Offshore Transit Hub for onward repatriation as arranged by the agent.
- 4.2.8 PPP will inform the Agent about the recovery of the seafarer to arrange repatriation formalities.
- 4.2.9 Agent to arrange boat movement from Offshore Transit Hub to Galle Port, immigration and custom formalities. Crew of boats used for the transfer to be in full PPE and the boat operators conform to relevant health protocols before, during and after transfer to prevent any possibility of spread of virus ashore.
- 4.2.10 PPP provides land transport for onward movement to the airport with SLN escort supervised by the RALL. Vehicles used for this will be obtained from agents on payment basis.
- 4.2.11 Agents to arrange emigration and custom formalities at the airport. (Online automated system will be introduced in due course).

4.3 Sign-on (via Male, Maldives)

- 4.3.1 Agents inform the PPP 72 hrs prior to the arrival of seafarers in order to obtain necessary approvals from Maldives and inform PPP representative in Male to arrange formalities and follow up action. Mandatory documents required are at paragraph 7.
- 4.3.2 In the unlikely event of the seafarer proving Covid -19 positive, he will be transferred to a designated hospital in Male until recovery (cost to be borne by respective agent).
- 4.3.3 Agents to ensure Seafarers carry a negative PCR report taken 72 hours prior boarding to the flight.

- 4.3.4 PPP representative will receive the seafarers at Male International Airport, attend to Immigration formalities and transfer to a designated Hotel until the onward flight to Mattala in Sri Lanka.
- 4.3.5 PPP will arrange the charter flight from Male to Mattala. PPP will charter only Sri Lankan Flights in view of boosting the economy of the state as well as sustainability of the national carrier. All seafarers will be provided with PPE by the PPP. All flights movements will be under strict supervision of air marshals in order to ensure that the Seafarers adhere to the proper health protocol during the flight.
- 4.3.6 PPP representative will coordinate the departure formalities at Male International Airport for onward flight to Mattala International Airport.
- 4.3.7 Once seafarer arrives at Mattala International Airport, the procedure to follow will be the same as from 4.1.7 to 4.1.12.

4.4 SIGN OFF (for repatriation via Male, Maldives)

- 4.4.1 Attend to the sign off procedure from para 4.2.1 to 4.2.10 above.
- 4.4.2 PPP will arrange the repatriation flight from Mattala International Airport to Male International Airport for those with negative PCR test reports.
- 4.4.3 PPP representative will attend to the immigration formalities of the seafarers on arrival at Male International Airport, Maldives.
- 4.4.4 PPP will provide comfortable dedicated and isolated hotel accommodation on full board basis at Male for the seafarers for one day free.

5. PACKAGES

5.1 Package 1 _Arriving directly at Mattala International Airport

- 5.1.1 Land Transport between Mattala International Airport and Galle Sea Port.
- 5.1.2 Two days stay on board OTH. Any additional stay will be charged extra US \$ 60 p/p.
- 5.1.3 Transfer between OTH and respective parent ship
- 5.1.4 All payments to the Navy.

5.2 Package 2 — Arriving at MRIA through Male

- 5.2.1 Visa fee at Male International Airport.
- 5.2.2 Male agency fees in attending to seafarer at the airport.
- 5.2.3 Hotel accommodation at Male only for 01 day. Additional day 125 US \$ p/p.
- 5.2.4 Taxi fee at Male.
- 5.2.5 Charter flight cost between Male and Mattala.
- 5.2.6 Land Transport between Mattala International Airport and Galle Sea Port.
- 5.2.7 Two days stay on board OTH. Any additional stay will be charged extra US \$ 60.
- 5.2.8 Transfer between OTH and respective parent ship.
- 5.2.9 All payments to the Navy.

5.3 Tariff for each package will be indicated direct to the agent separately.

6. MANDATORY DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

- 6.1 Passport Copy
- 6.2 CDC
- 6.3 Negative PCR test report
- 6.4 Air ticket

Any updates /changes /progress of the operation will be notified time to time as the situation changes/develops.
