SAR Platform Survey - Community Input

November 26, 2025

Purpose: Gather feedback from SAR teams, agencies, and coordinators to prioritize features and modules for the SAR Platform Core System.

Time to Complete: 10-15 minutes | **Deadline:** December 10, 2025

SECTION 1: Your SAR Discipline & Organization

Q1.1: What is your primary SAR discipline? (Select all that apply)

- ■ Water Search & Rescue (boats, sonar, divers)
- ■ Land Search & Rescue (K9, volunteers, terrain)
- ■ Aerial Search (drones, helicopters, fixed-wing)
- ■ Dive/Underwater Operations
- ■ Equine/Horse teams
- ■ Incident Command/Coordination
- ■ Dispatch/911 Integration
- ■ Other: _____

Q1.2: Organization type

- ■ County/Municipal SAR
- ■ State/Provincial Agency
- ■ Federal Agency (USCG, NPS, etc)
- ■ Volunteer Organization
- ■ Private contractor
- ■ University/Research
- ■ Other: _____

Q1.3: Team size

- ■ Solo operator
- ■ 2-5 people
- ■ 6-15 people
- ■ 16-50 people
- ■ 50+ people

Q1.4: Years of SAR experience

- ■ Less than 1 year
- ■ 1-3 years
- ■ 4-10 years
- ■ 10+ years

SECTION 2: Current Pain Points

Q2.1: What is your biggest operational challenge right now?
(Rank top 3: 1=biggest, 3=third biggest)

■ Coordinating multiple teams during incident
■ Tracking assets and personnel in real-time
■ Managing overlapping search zones
■ Integrating data from multiple sources
■ Documenting findings and evidence
■ Communication with field teams
■ Resource allocation/availability tracking
■ Case documentation after incident
■ Incident debriefing and lessons learned
■ Cost tracking and budgeting
■ Other: _____

Q2.2: What systems/tools do you currently use?
(Check all that apply)

Incident Management:

■ Paper logs
■ Email/text coordination
■ Google Sheets/Docs
■ Specialized SAR software (specify): _____
■ ICS/NIMS forms
■ Radio dispatch system
■ Other: _____

Data Collection:

■ GPS devices (handheld)
■ Smartphone GPS
■ Survey-grade GPS (RTK)
■ Drone mapping
■ Sonar systems (specify): _____
■ Thermal imaging
■ Photos/video (manual)
■ Other: _____

Communication:

■ Marine VHF radio
■ Land mobile radio (DMR/P25)
■ Satellite phone
■ Cell phone/SMS
■ Mesh radio (LoRa, etc)
■ WhatsApp/Telegram
■ Other: _____

Q2.3: What integration would help most?
(Rank top 3)

■ Weather data integration
■ Drift/current prediction (CESAROPS)
■ Sonar target detection (SonarSniffer)
■ Real-time GPS tracking
■ Radio gateway (VHF/DMR)
■ Satellite imagery
■ Public/social media monitoring
■ Medical/health records lookup
■ Multi-agency dispatch
■ Other: _____

SECTION 3: Case Management & Intake

Q3.1: How many incidents per year does your team handle?

■ 0-5
■ 6-15
■ 16-50
■ 50+

Q3.2: What information MUST be captured immediately at intake? *(Rank top 5)*

■ Subject details (name, age, appearance)
■ Last known position & time
■ Environmental conditions (weather, water state)
■ Medical conditions / medications
■ Equipment/survival gear with subject
■ Communication capability (cell, radio, etc)
■ Family contact information
■ Incident type (missing, stranded, lost hiker, etc)
■ Caller information
■ Witnesses / last seen information
■ Subject's travel plans / destination
■ Vehicle/vessel details
■ Other: _____

Q3.3: What format works best for intake in field?

■ Web form (like provided intake.html)
■ Mobile app (iOS/Android)
■ SMS/text-based
■ Radio/voice via dispatcher
■ Paper form then digital entry
■ Combination of above

Q3.4: After case closure, what reports do you need?

■ Timeline of all events
■ Resource utilization (hours, costs)
■ Search area coverage map
■ All findings/evidence summary
■ Photos/video from searches
■ Lessons learned document
■ Gaps analysis (what worked, what didn't)
■ Cost breakdown by discipline/asset
■ Personnel fatigue tracking
■ Post-incident analysis (accuracy of predictions)
■ Other: _____

SECTION 4: Task & Resource Management

Q4.1: How do you typically assign search tasks?

■ Incident commander verbally assigns
■ Radio dispatch system
■ Smartphone message/app
■ In-person briefing
■ Combination approach
■ Other: _____

Q4.2: What asset information is critical to track?
(Rank top 5)

■ Current location (GPS)
■ Availability status (deployed, returning, fatigued, etc)
■ Fuel/battery level
■ Capabilities (what they can search)
■ Hours deployed today (fatigue tracking)
■ Personnel assigned
■ Radio channel/callsign
■ Equipment condition/maintenance
■ Operator certifications
■ Cost per hour
■ Other: _____

Q4.3: How do you prefer to receive task updates from field?

■ Voice radio (VHF/DMR)
■ SMS/text message
■ Smartphone app
■ Automated GPS tracking (no message needed)
■ Combination approach
■ Other: _____

Q4.4: Do you need offline capability?
(Field teams with no cell/radio coverage)

■ Yes, essential
■ Nice to have
■ Not needed
■ Unsure

SECTION 5: Findings & Evidence

Q5.1: How do you currently log findings in field?

■ Voice radio report to coordinator
■ Smartphone camera + notes
■ Paper log with photos
■ Specialized evidence form
■ Video/audio recording
■ Other: _____

Q5.2: What metadata is critical for findings?
(Rank top 5)

■ GPS location (with accuracy radius)
■ Time found
■ Photos/video
■ Description & measurements
■ Confidence it matches subject
■ Evidence collected (yes/no)
■ Chain of custody
■ Detailed location description (e.g., '50m SW of marker')
■ Environmental context (weather, water depth, etc)
■ Who found it & contact info
■ Other: _____

Q5.3: Do you need automatic confidence scoring?

e.g., "Pink fabric" = 75% confidence it's from subject

■ Yes, very helpful
■ Somewhat helpful
■ Not needed
■ Unsure

SECTION 6: Multi-Discipline Modules

Q6.1: Which modules would you use?

(Rank by priority: 1=highest, 0=not needed)

Water Search (boat routing, sonar zones, diver deployment)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Land Search (grid search, K9 containment, volunteer management)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Aerial Search (drone mission planning, flight safety zones)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Dive Operations (dive site details, depth/current data)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Equine Teams (terrain routing, rider fatigue tracking)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Multi-Agency Coordination (incident command, SOG liaison)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Family Liaison (updates, media relations, donations)
Priority (0-5): _____ Notes: _____

Q6.2: What's missing from the above list?

_____

_____

SECTION 7: Technical Requirements

Q7.1: Internet/Network capability during incident

■ Reliable broadband at incident commander post
■ Mobile hotspot sometimes available
■ Limited to field radio only
■ Varies greatly by incident
■ Other: _____

Q7.2: Do you have existing databases/data we should integrate?

(e.g., subject medical records, asset registry, personnel credentials)

■ Yes: _____
■ No
■ Unsure

Q7.3: Data privacy concerns

■ Family information must not be public
■ Medical details restricted to medical personnel only
■ Subject location only for team leads
■ All incident data confidential until closure
■ All of above
■ Other: _____

Q7.4: Platform preference

■ Web-based (accessible anywhere)
■ Desktop application (Windows/Mac)
■ Mobile app (iOS/Android) - primary
■ Combination (web for coordination, mobile for field)
■ No preference

Q7.5: Would offline sync be valuable?

(Field app works without network, syncs when reconnected)

■ Essential for our operations
■ Very valuable
■ Somewhat valuable
■ Not needed
■ Unsure

SECTION 8: Integration Priorities

Q8.1: Rank these integrations by importance
(1=critical, 5=not needed)

Weather data (wind, current, wave height) **Priority:** _____
Drift prediction (CESAROPS) **Priority:** _____
Sonar target detection (SonarSniffer) **Priority:** _____
Real-time GPS tracking (all assets) **Priority:** _____
Radio gateway (VHF/DMR to computer) **Priority:** _____
Satellite/drone imagery **Priority:** _____
Public social media monitoring **Priority:** _____
Multi-agency incident command system **Priority:** _____
Medical/health records lookup **Priority:** _____
Cost accounting/budgeting system **Priority:** _____

Q8.2: Do you currently use CESAROPS?

■ Yes, actively
■ Yes, occasionally
■ No, never heard of it
■ No, tried but didn't work well
■ Other: _____

Q8.3: Do you use sonar systems?

■ Yes, side-scan sonar
■ Yes, forward-looking sonar
■ Yes, multibeam
■ Yes, other type: _____
■ No sonar capability

If yes: What's your biggest sonar challenge?

_____

Q8.4: Do you use drones?

■ Yes, regularly
■ Yes, occasionally
■ No, but interested
■ No, not interested
■ Limited by regulations/expertise

If yes: What would improve drone coordination?

_____

SECTION 9: Timeline & Training

Q9.1: How quickly do you need to be operational after system introduction?

■ Immediately (days)
■ Weeks
■ Months (with phased rollout)
■ Flexible, depends on features

Q9.2: Training approach preferred

■ Online videos/documentation
■ Live webinar training
■ In-person workshop at your location
■ One-on-one consultation
■ Combination approach

Q9.3: What's your team's tech skill level?

■ High (developers, GIS specialists)
■ Moderate (comfortable with software)
■ Mixed (some tech-savvy, some not)
■ Low (prefers simplicity, uses radio mostly)

SECTION 10: Success Metrics

Q10.1: How would you measure success of this platform? *(Rank top 5)*

■ Faster case resolution time
■ Better coordination between teams
■ Fewer overlapping searches
■ Improved evidence chain of custody
■ Better cost tracking
■ Easier post-incident analysis
■ Faster asset deployment
■ Better communication during incident
■ Reduced fatigue/safety incidents
■ Better family updates/communication
■ Other: _____

Q10.2: What would cause you to NOT use this platform?

■ Too complicated for field use
■ Requires internet we don't have
■ Too expensive
■ Doesn't integrate with our existing tools
■ Data privacy concerns
■ No mobile app
■ Requires specific hardware we can't support
■ Training burden too high
■ Already have a working solution
■ Other: _____

SECTION 11: Final Thoughts

Q11.1: What feature would make the biggest difference to your team?

_____
_____
_____

Q11.2: What SAR scenario would you like to simulate/test first?
(Example: "Multi-day land search with K9, drones, and volunteers")

_____
_____

Q11.3: Any other feedback or suggestions?

_____
_____
_____

SECTION 12: Contact & Next Steps

Q12.1: Can we contact you for follow-up questions?

■ Yes
■ No

Q12.2: Contact information (if yes)

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Role/Title: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
Best way to reach you: [ ] Email [ ] Phone [ ] Text [ ] Radio

Q12.3: Would you be willing to participate in:

■ Beta testing specific features
■ Design feedback sessions (1-2 hours monthly)
■ Platform working group (monthly calls)
■ On-site training/implementation
■ Case study/testimonial
■ None, survey response only

Q12.4: When would pilot testing timeline work for your team?

■ January 2026
■ February 2026
■ March 2026
■ April 2026+
■ Unsure

Submission Instructions
Please return this survey by December 10, 2025 via:

1. Email: [your-email@domain.com]
2. Online Form: [link to Google Forms version]
3. Hard copy: Mail to [address]

Questions about the survey? Contact [coordinator name] at [contact info]

Thank You!
Your feedback directly shapes platform development. Whether you're a small volunteer team or a major SAR organization, your operational insights are invaluable.
Together, we're building tools that save lives.

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