

BALTIC EXCHANGE FILLS FREIGHT ASSESSMENTS GAP

The Baltic Exchange has launched a new series of chemical and agricultural oil assessments to meet the evolving needs of the maritime freight market and bring its expertise and benchmarking data to the chemical and agri-oil shipping sectors.

The Baltic Chemical and Agricultural Oil Assessments (BCAA) will be produced on a weekly basis as of February 2025. The assessments are designed to serve a segment of the freight market – across owners, charterers, brokers and trading companies – that is increasingly demanding key freight data and sector benchmarks on a more regular basis to make more informed financial decisions.

Known for its knowledge in the dry bulk, tanker and gas freight sectors, alongside providing container and air freight data, the Baltic Exchange is now set to engage with a broader spectrum of stakeholders, including shipowners, charterers and industrial producers across the whole chemical, vegetable/agri-oil, and biofuel supply chains. These industries provide vital products and uses to everyday life, from cleaning/hygiene products to food and cooking, construction materials, transportation, agriculture, clothing, and electronics.

Filling a gap in existing freight assessments, the BCAA will offer insights into a series of trade routes covering 'easy-chemicals' such as benzene, biofuels and caustic soda, as well as vegetable oils. The indices, priced in US\$ per metric ton and basis 5,000mt or 10,000mt shipments (and 40,000mt for vegetable oils), reflect the unique nature of chemical tankers, which carry multiple cargo types and require specialised handling beyond a traditional oil products carrier.

The trade routes covered by BCAA include:

- EC11: Northwest Europe to US Gulf
- EC22: Middle East Gulf to West Coast India
- EC23: Middle East Gulf to China
- EC34: US Gulf to Far East
- EC35: US Gulf to Northwest Europe
- EC36: US Gulf to Brazil
- EC43: Singapore to China
- EC52: Korea to West Coast India
- EC57: Korea to Singapore
- PO45: Singapore Straits to Northwest Europe
- VG62: EC South America to West Coast India

"Unlike traditional freight indices, chemical tanker operations are highly complex, involving multiple unrelated cargoes with very specific but diverse stowage and handling requirements. However, the chartering market has now become sufficiently mature for us to develop a reference price for these key trade lanes," says Mark Jackson, CEO of the Baltic Exchange.

WEST P&I CAUTIONS ON TURKISH POLLUTION

West P&I Club has drawn members' attention to a concerning trend of pollution incidents involving vessels operating within Turkish waters and calling at Turkish ports.

The club has reminded members of the need to strictly adhere to all relevant national and international requirements relating to pollution and the importance of implementing appropriate operational precautions.

This comes at a time when fines by the Turkish authorities for pollution events have been increasing over the past 12 months, [as previously communicated by the Club](#).

A member's vessel recently called into a Turkish port to conduct a transfer of slops from the vessel's slop tank to an adjacent barge. Due to a lapse from the barge and the vessel, a quantity of slops were discharged into the sea because of a leakage that wasn't immediately noticed. The de-slopping operation was halted soon after and the local Turkish Coast Guard was notified. This resulted in a significant fine.

The club highlights some key recommendations for vessels transiting Turkish waters when engaging in any operations where there is a risk of pollution. While the list of recommendations is not exhaustive, it is imperative to comply with all relevant anti-pollution procedures within Member's Safety Management Systems and ensure crews are fully familiar with these procedures.

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“The launch of the BCAA underscores our commitment to broadening our services and providing critical transparency in underrepresented markets. By expanding into the chemical and agri-oil sectors, we are offering the freight market much-needed benchmarks for these specialised

industries. This latest set of benchmarks reflects our dedication to supporting the diverse needs of the global shipping community, and we look forward to continuing to innovate and collaborate with stakeholders across shipping’s most important sectors.”

SEAFARER HAPPINESS SHIFTS DOWNWARDS

The Mission to Seafarers has published the results of the latest **Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI)**, which reveal a fall in happiness in several areas of seafaring life to 6.91 in Q4 2024, from 7.16 in Q3 of last year. This marks the first downturn for four quarters, with restrictive port policies highlighted as a significant impediment to seafarer welfare.

The SHI is a quarterly survey conducted by the Mission to Seafarers, in partnership with Idwal and NorthStandard, and supported by Inmarsat. It provides vital insights into the experiences of the men and women who serve at sea, highlighting the areas most in need of attention and action. These findings underscore the critical importance of prioritising seafarer welfare to ensure a sustainable and thriving maritime workforce.

The results of the latest survey show that dissatisfaction is partly due to some ports not actively facilitating shore access. There is a growing perception that if a port is not proactive in supporting shore leave then it is acting as a barrier to it. Many seafarers report feeling isolated and frustrated due to limited shore access, poorly maintained facilities, and inconvenient transport options. These challenges make it difficult for crew members to leave their vessels to rest and recharge, contributing to heightened mental strain.

These findings also highlight that while some improvements have been made in terms of interpersonal relationships and professional development, critical areas continue to undermine overall satisfaction and well-being.

Connectivity issues remain a major source of discontent. Although free Wi-Fi is often promised onboard, inadequate infrastructure means that connectivity is frequently unreliable or unusable. This paradox leaves seafarers struggling to stay connected with family and friends, further intensifying feelings of isolation and negatively affecting morale.

Seafarers shared their concerns over stagnant wages amid rising living costs. With many seafarers feeling that their wages have not kept pace with inflation, or the increasing demands of the job, leading to growing dissatisfaction.

The results have also shown that training can present seafarers with both a positive and negative experience. On the positive side, many seafarers have reported access to quality mentorship opportunities, and professional development programmes, helping seafarers enhance their skills and stay up to date with industry standards. However, the negative aspects of training are equally prominent, with many crew members expressing frustration with redundant training requirements, feeling that they are asked to complete the same courses repeatedly without gaining new insights.

Workload and fatigue remain significant issues, driven by long hours, inadequate staffing, and a rise in administrative burdens. Despite efforts to streamline processes through digitalisation, persistent paperwork continues to drain time and energy. This combination of factors is increasing fatigue levels, jeopardising both safety and well-being.

Social interaction on board is another area in need of attention, with high workloads often restricting opportunities for social interaction. This isolation is often compounded by departmental segregation, where crew members from different departments interact less frequently, further adding to the sense of disconnection. Addressing these issues could significantly enhance morale, foster teamwork, and contribute to safer, more efficient operations.

Ben Bailey, Director of Programme, The Mission to Seafarers, says: “Shore leave is not a luxury, but is a vital opportunity for rest and mental recovery for seafarers. The decline this quarter highlights the critical need to sustain efforts to improve seafarer welfare and avoid complacency in addressing the challenges they face. We are committed to working closely with the shipping industry, including the ports sector, to overcome these challenges and enhance the well-being of seafarers. The Seafarers Happiness Index is a vital tool in this mission, and we extend our gratitude to all the seafarers who contributed to the survey.”

Thom Herbert, Idwal Crew Welfare Advocate, comments: “The Q4 2024 report is again a stark reminder of the persistent challenges facing seafarers today. Despite pockets of progress, the decline in overall happiness, especially related to shore leave and connectivity, underscores the urgent need for industry-wide reforms. We must listen to the voices of those at sea and address their concerns, from stagnant wages to isolation caused by inadequate port access. At Idwal, we believe improving these conditions should be the cornerstone for sustaining a thriving maritime industry.”

Yves Vandeborn, Head of Loss Prevention Asia-Pacific, NorthStandard, adds: “Once again, the Seafarers Happiness Index has offered powerful insights into the way shipping’s key workers think and feel about their lives at sea, and areas of potential improvement. With a change from 7.16/10 in Q3 to 6.91 in Q4 of 2024, this reflects the first decline in happiness levels since Q1 of 2024. The report reflects positively on onboard relationships, mentorship and professional growth opportunities. It is critical that we pay full attention to the views of those at the sharp end of shipping to recognise the positives and respond decisively to their areas of concern.”

BIFA BRINGS OUT BITESIZE TRAINING

The British International Freight Association (BIFA) has a new development in its programme of training: all-inclusive access to a range of bitesize e-learning courses.

This initiative is designed to provide full trading members with unlimited access to e-learning, giving opportunities for them to upskill their teams, and is all part of the membership fee.

BIFA Bitesize is a suite of e-learning that has been developed as part of BIFA's ongoing commitment to provide a variety of training options, aimed at enhancing knowledge in areas critical to freight forwarding, customs compliance, and international trade.

The first rendition of BIFA Bitesize content features extracts from the existing BIFA Freight Forwarding and Customs Essentials courses.

Some of the key topics include: Preparing to Trade; Incoterms 2020; Inward and Outward Processing; Customs Warehousing; Classification; Returned Goods Relief; Paying HMRC, and Procedure Codes.

Additionally, a brand new Customs Declaration Service (CDS) Compliance course will be added to the platform very soon. The initial mandatory module, centred around

an import home-use declaration, outlines potential consequences of compliance errors. Subsequent modules, which cover a range of regimes, will follow.

These courses have been carefully curated to support both newcomers and experienced professionals in the industry, ensuring that all staff of all members have access to up-to-date and relevant basic training to further support their professional development. It also helps BIFA members to stay ahead in the fast-paced world of international trade and customs compliance, which is evolving constantly.

Carl Hobbs, member services director at BIFA, who has management responsibility for the trade association's training and development services says: "We believe the inclusion of this e-learning platform as part of the standard membership subscription of full members is a game changing move for a trade association in the sector.

"BIFA Bitesize is accessible via the BIFA member portal at bifa.org, which provides full details on how to navigate the platform and access the courses.

"There are no limits on the number of learners per member that can be enrolled, enabling companies of all sizes to provide high-quality, flexible training to their entire teams.

LEARNING FOR AGGREGATES

Superior Industries, a US-based manufacturer and global supplier of bulk material processing and handling systems, announces the launch of OptimizeU, an on-demand learning platform for the construction aggregates industry.

Designed to bridge the knowledge gap for a new generation of producers, OptimizeU delivers flexible, cost-effective training, empowering operators to study real-world challenges and drive greater production.

With courses in crushing, screening, washing, conveying and more, the platform offers 24/7 access to industry expertise, enabling producers to enhance their technical skills, expand product knowledge, and master best practices – all at their own pace.

Key features of OptimizeU include:

On-demand access: Learn on your schedule, whether during a break, in the office, or from home. Short, focused courses fit seamlessly into busy workdays.

Practical knowledge: Courses address real-world challenges, from troubleshooting to understanding applications, with options for beginners and advanced users.

Cost-effective training: OptimizeU reduces the need for travel and classroom-based workshops, providing a convenient and affordable way to stay up to date.

"OptimizeU was created to meet the needs of today's aggregate producers," says Kristen Randall, Training Coordinator at Superior Industries. "We understand the value of flexible learning in an industry where time and resources are precious, and our goal is to equip producers with the tools they need to succeed at any experience level."

At launch, Superior has a catalogue of 60 courses with plans to expand by about 50 new sessions a year, including:

Cyclone fundamentals: understand why cyclones are used, how the technology works, explore models, and gain tips for optimal performance.

Conveying vs trucking: compare pros, cons and cost differences of these material handling methods to understand the best fit for your operation.

Understanding gradations: explore how gradations impact equipment performance, their role in equipment sizing and selection, and techniques for testing and analysis.

THE WOLFSON CENTRE FOR BULK SOLIDS HANDLING TECHNOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH, MEDWAY.

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CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Some of our Consultancy services include advising on:

- » Storage and Discharge of bulk materials
- » Pneumatic Conveying of bulk solids
- » Spoiling of materials in storage and in transit
- » Plant and Equipment design/redesign
- » Ship Unloading/ quayside operations
- » Control of plant wear
- » Dust control
- » Bulk Materials characterisation
- » ATEX/DSEAR compliance
- » Expert Witness services

SHORT COURSES FOR INDUSTRY

We also provide a range of short courses to help delegates identify potential bulk materials handling problems and advise on how to avoid and/or overcome these issues. They fall under 4 main categories

Pneumatic Conveying:

- » Pneumatic Conveying of Bulk Materials
- » Pneumatic Conveying System Design
- » Rotary Valves; Design, Selection and Operational Issues
- » Commissioning and Troubleshooting 'Hand's On' Pneumatic Conveying Systems

Storage of Bulk Materials:

- » Storage and Discharge of Powders and Bulk Solids
- » Design of Equipment for Storing and Handling Bulk Materials
- » Biomass Handling, Feeding and Storage (can be adapted to other materials such as waste, recycled goods, pellets)

General bulk materials handling:

- » Overview of Particulate Handling Technology
- » Port and Terminal Operations for Bulk Cargoes
- » Measurement of the Properties and Bulk Behaviour of Particulate Materials
- » Dust Control in Processes

Specialist areas of concern:

- » Caking and Lump Formation in Powders and Bulk Solids
- » Undesired De-blending and Separation in Processes and Equipment
- » Electrostatics in Powder Handling
- » Numerical Modelling of Solids Handling and Processing
- » Powder Handling and Flow for Additive Manufacturing

STEELPAINT CAUTIONS ON CORROSION

Germany-based protective coatings innovator Steelpaint is encouraging shipyards and port authorities with steel assets to prioritise surface preparation, advising that skimping on this critical step in the application process is leading to premature coating failures, costly repairs and increased safety risks.

The advisory follows a recent request to apply its single-component, moisture-cure Stelcatec to a steel structure that had not been properly prepared, with high levels of rust and contamination still present.

“We made it clear that without proper surface preparation tools to remove rust and corrosion, and subsequent freshwater washing to disperse salts and other contaminants, there was no point in applying the paint,” says Dmitry Gromilin, Steelpaint’s Chief Technical Supervisor.

“We have seen too many cases where companies have invested in advanced coating systems, only to have them fail prematurely due to inadequate surface preparation. Not only does this lead to accelerated corrosion, and the need for costly reapplication, but any investment in advanced corrosion protection is wasted.”

Gromilin says: “One of the most common misconceptions is that a quick wipe-down or solvent wash is sufficient. In reality, contaminants such as rust, grease, salt, and moisture create an invisible barrier between the steel and the coating. Without thorough surface preparation, adhesion is compromised, and the coating will inevitably fail. When this happens, it is not just the paint that deteriorates – steel structures will suffer rapid corrosion, leading to structural weaknesses, safety risks, and costs.”

Steelpaint also reports incidents where asset owners have used low pressure water jet washing to prepare areas prior to coating applications.

“We have seen operators using 300-400bar low pressure water jets to prepare larger, heavily corroded areas, such as tank tops. At the very minimum, 2000bar ultra high-pressure water blasting should be carried out.

Anything less means any corrosion protection will be ineffective. Surfaces must be properly prepared,” Gromilin says.

Preparation challenges are compounded by environmental conditions, he says, such as saltwater environments, high humidity, fluctuating temperatures, and condensation, which can impact application.

This is especially the case when traditional two-component systems are used, which require precise application windows. In tropical climates, for example, dew point restrictions often mean that conventional coatings can only be applied during specific hours of the day.

Steelpaint Director Frank Mueller says that by highlighting the importance of this critical preparatory step, steel asset owners can get the most out of their corrosion protection spend.

“The best coating system in the world will not perform if applied to contaminated, rusty or inadequately prepared steel surfaces,” he says. “Cutting corners in preparation only leads to greater costs down the line. By adopting best practice in steel preparation and selecting coatings that offer greater flexibility in real-world conditions, steel assets can remain protected for longer, reducing operational and maintenance costs in the long term.”

While acknowledging that the perfect surface preparation is seldom achieved, Steelpaint’s Stelcatec system has been developed to be applied to the minimum SSPC SP2 standard using non-powered hand tools such as wire brushes, scrapers, and sandpaper. This is the minimal standard.

The one-component Stelcatec coating can also tolerate light flash rust and can be applied on damp surfaces, significantly reducing downtime for critical infrastructure such as cargo tanks, ship-to-shore cranes, and other steel assets operating where extended maintenance shutdowns are not an option. It also provides longer corrosion protection at a lower film thickness, and can be applied at 98% relative humidity at temperatures ranging -5°C to 50°C.

DNV GUIDE EXPLORES EU CYBER LEGISLATION

Strengthened cyber-security legislation is coming into force in the EU, following the adoption of the Network and Information Security 2 (NIS2) Directive in January 2023. This builds on the EU’s existing NIS directive and requires Member States to enact stricter cyber security regulation backed by tougher enforcement.

For operators of critical industrial infrastructure, the legislation presents an opportunity to assess capabilities and operations against strengthened cyber security requirements. But for organisations that haven’t upgraded their cyber capabilities, it’s also a wake-up call on the need to act to better address cyber-security threats to their infrastructure, and to make sure that their operations comply with the NIS2 legislation.

DNV’s guide to NIS2 explores what the legislation means for industrial companies in Europe and provides a three-step approach to compliance. Download the guide at [dnv.com](https://www.dnv.com)

WISING UP TO WELLBEING

WiseStella, the Singapore-based maritime learning provider, has unveiled a pioneering crew wellbeing assessment tool that aims to change the way in which shipping companies address the increasing mental and physical health issues faced by seafarers.

Amid growing concern about workplace harassment, bullying, stress and fatigue, the Wise Well-Being module has been developed in collaboration with HR experts and psychologists to identify and address a number of important issues, ultimately enhancing seafarer safety, contentment and retention.

“Seafarers often operate in isolated environments with limited access to mental health support,” says WiseStella’s Chief Executive Officer Ferhat Abul.

“Many seafarers are reluctant to speak out about their struggles, particularly in cases of bullying and harassment. They need a voice under a cloak of anonymity that helps them, and their employers, take appropriate action. It’s about creating a proactive approach to seafarer wellbeing.”

The new Wise Well-Being module is unlike existing seafarer happiness or wellbeing indices in that it has been designed for direct use by shipping companies, rather than third parties, delivering more precise data that reflects their specific workplace conditions.

Through an interactive digital survey, with questions based on input from leading psychologists and health specialists, Wise Well-Being measures the physical, mental, social, and intellectual health of a company’s workforce.

“Responses enable HR teams to better identify problem areas and implement more targeted training and resources to foster a safer and more supportive, inclusive working environment. It provides shipping companies with an easy-to-use and anonymous platform to better understand the physical and mental wellbeing of their crews,” said Abul.

WiseStella Board Advisor Dr Rafet Emek Kurt, an expert in maritime safety and risk, specialising in the role of human factors in shipping, adds: “Bullying and harassment at sea are more common than many realise, but the hierarchical nature of the maritime sector makes it difficult for victims to report misconduct,” he says, referring to a case where a qualified and competent female crew member was refused permission to board her ship simply because of her gender.

A 2022 WISTA Survey found that 60% of female respondents experienced gender-based discrimination onboard ship, two thirds said that they had experienced

harassment and intimidation from male co-workers, and one-in-four reported that physical and sexual harassment was common, involving intrusions on their privacy.

“There are many cases where seafarers, male and female, experience verbal, psychological, sexual and physical abuse,” says Kurt. “This leads directly to poor mental health, potential lawsuits and reputational damage, and significantly increases the risk of accidents at sea.

“We need a safer, more inclusive industry and have to address these problems head-on by integrating anonymous well-being assessments and anonymous reporting procedures into the overall safety management system. Shipowners have a duty of care to improve the wellbeing of their seafarers.”

Yaren Cemre Gulcek, Clinical Psychologist at Parla Consultancy, emphasises the importance of addressing psychological distress at sea: “Through my work with seafarers, I have witnessed firsthand how prolonged stress, isolation, and workplace harassment take a toll on mental health and overall performance. Psychological distress at sea doesn’t just affect individuals, it weakens team dynamics, increases the likelihood of human error, and compromises safety.”

Gulcek said the Wise Well-Being module is a “crucial step towards addressing these challenges” empowering shipping companies with the tools they need to create a “culture of trust and psychological safety”.

Tineke Zoet, a certified transformational coach specialising in maritime workplaces, adds that effective leadership is paramount if the industry is to foster a safer, productive working environment. “In my experience as a seafarer and now working closely with ships’ crews, I have seen how unmanaged conflict, cultural differences, and lack of psychological safety lead to frustration, stress, and even dangerous working conditions. It takes intentional human-centred leadership, clear communication, proactive listening, and support to create a more positive, inclusive environment where people can thrive. This will ultimately make shipping safer and more attractive to new entrants.”

Future developments will include direct access to mental health professionals, awareness training programmes, and personalised wellbeing recommendations based on survey responses. The company is also working with academic institutions to ensure that the platform is continuously updated and improved to meet seafarer and industry needs.

NEXTWAVE INITIATIVE ADDRESSES SEAFARER SHORTAGE

A new initiative led by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) aims to address the global seafarer shortage while creating career opportunities for aspiring seafarers from developing nations.

The NextWave Seafarers Project was formally launched with the signing of a Letter of Agreement between Kamal M Al Junaidi, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the IMO, and Jose Matheickal, Director of the Technical Cooperation and Implementation Division of IMO.

The signing was witnessed by IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, with senior representatives from the Transport General Authority of KSA and Bahri Shipping Line in attendance.

Running from 2025 to 2026, the NextWave Seafarers Project will provide 20 cadets from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with one year of onboard training through Bahri Shipping Line, one of Saudi Arabia's leading maritime companies. The goal is to develop a scalable training model that can be adopted globally, encouraging more countries and shipping lines to participate.

The project aims to:

Establish a sustainable, onboard cadet-training framework to develop, upskill, and retain future seafarers;

Address key barriers preventing LDCs and SIDS cadets from entering the industry, including access to training placements and financial support;

Promote gender diversity by actively encouraging women cadets to join the programme; and

Showcase the initiative as a pilot model that can be expanded and replicated worldwide.

With 1.9 million seafarers ensuring the movement of over 80% of global trade, the maritime industry faces an urgent workforce challenge, particularly a shortage of officers, as demands on maritime transport grow.

Through its cooperative framework between IMO, member states and shipping companies, the NextWave Seafarers initiative provides a proactive solution by creating a structured talent pipeline and a steady influx of skilled professionals into the sector.

IMO's Dominguez stresses the importance of strengthening the maritime workforce: "The future of the global shipping industry depends on its people, and this initiative has the potential to transform maritime careers for young seafarers worldwide."

Junaidi highlights the Project's broader vision: "Through this initiative, we aim not only to train the next generation of seafarers but also to lead and inspire other nations and shipping companies to adopt similar programmes."

The NextWave Seafarers Project invites IMO Member States, training institutions, and shipping companies to collaborate in expanding this initiative and building a skilled, diverse, and resilient maritime workforce.

Designed as a proof of concept, the project's outcomes will be shared with IMO Member States to shape future policy recommendations, enhance global seafarer training frameworks, and contribute to long-term maritime workforce planning.

IMO will issue a circular letter in due course requesting nominations of cadets from LDCs and SIDS through their respective maritime administrations. The circular letter will explain the criteria for selection and mode of participation in the training programme.

SLOT CHARTERERS LIMITATION

A recent edition of **TT Talk** considers the issue of slot charterers limiting liability. A container ship caught fire and sank near Colombo in Sri Lanka resulting in a total loss. The owner and bareboat charterer successfully claimed limitation of liability in the English Admiralty Court. The three slot charterers also argued for limitation on the basis they could be considered as shipowners too.

TT Club says "This judgment provides useful confirmation of the MSC Napoli case and applies the earlier judgment to agreements with different names but with basically the same substance. The result is that parties should not be discouraged from part-chartering a ship by the risk that they might be unable to limit under the Convention."

GREEN CORRIDORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Under current and prospective policies from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), EU and US, the business case for green shipping corridors could improve markedly – but not sufficiently – according to a new report published by maritime consultancy UMAS, UCL and the Global Maritime Forum (GMF).

Titled **Building a Business Case for Green Shipping Corridors**, the report looks at the significant commercial challenges associated with green shipping corridors, how these could change under future regulation, and what additional support may be needed to ensure the viability of such projects.

Green shipping corridor projects – which focus on initiating the maritime value chain for scalable and sustainable fuels such as hydrogen-derived e-ammonia and e-methanol – have thus far faced an insurmountable cost gap. Against the backdrop of an evolving global and regional policy landscape, the business case for such first mover initiatives will begin to improve, but targeted support will be needed to ensure uptake of e-fuels.

The report emphasises the important role of regulation in enabling shipping's energy transition and the wider implications for the industry operating under a future compliance regime where fleet and bunkering strategies will need to become more sophisticated. Policies such as the IMO's new global fuel standard, the EU's Emissions Trading System and the US Inflation Reduction Act will play a critical role in reducing costs for green shipping corridors, but fall short of fully bridging the gap between the cost of e-fuels and the cheapest solution to meet compliance.

The report explores the potential opportunities and options that could be available for green shipping corridors in three different shipping sectors – gas carriers, container ships and bulk carriers – to highlight how public and private efforts could accelerate early adoption of e-fuels. The scenarios explored reveal that while biofuels and blue ammonia are the lowest cost options over the near term, scalable e-fuels such as e-ammonia are expected to become increasingly competitive as production costs fall and compliance requirements tighten, indicating that targeted support would only be required over the short term.

With 62 green shipping corridors initiatives already announced, support for these early mover projects could enable significant strides to be made in the development of sustainable fuel production and in investment in the storage, bunkering and port infrastructure required to decarbonise the wider shipping industry later in the transition.

Deniz Aymer, Senior Consultant at UMAS, comments: "Upcoming regulation will shift the business case for green shipping corridors – as well as shaping how the wider shipping industry approaches compliance. To fully bridge the cost gap, however, targeted support for e-fuels is needed. But this short-term support will pay future dividends by ensuring that scalable and sustainable fuels are available to the wider industry when needed."

Dr Nishatabbas Rehmatulla, Principal Research Fellow at the UCL Energy Institute, states: "The findings of this study make it very clear that without clear demand signals and additional public support over the near term, closing the cost gap on e-fuels will be challenging. Without this support and guardrails on fuels, some of the announced green shipping corridors are at risk of failing to fulfil their crucial role as first movers, and stalling before implementation or gravitating towards least-cost compliance options."

Jesse Fahnestock, Director of Decarbonisation at the Global Maritime Forum, says: "The most important role green corridors can play is to coordinate and kick-start the value chain for tomorrow's shipping fuels. Participants in corridors will need to be creative in how they leverage a range of regulations, but it's clear from this work that the scale of their impact will depend on policymakers delivering targeted support for e-fuels."

To accelerate progress, the report outlines actionable solutions for industry and policymakers. It highlights how business models will need to adapt under incoming regulation and how long-term commitments from cargo owners and ship owners and operators can help de-risk investment and drive e-fuel adoption. Strategic partnerships across the value chain will be essential for sharing risks and rewards, ensuring a more equitable cost distribution while advancing green shipping corridor projects.

Despite this, the business case for green shipping corridors will remain challenging without targeted measures to support the uptake of e-fuels. Mechanisms such as Contracts for Difference, e-fuel auctions and/or multipliers for overcompliance with e-fuels will be crucial to the short-term viability of these initiatives. Economic support could be underwritten by the IMO through revenues raised by a levy on shipping industry emissions. In the absence of a global levy, however, national governments may need to step in to directly support corridor projects.

AGREEMENT CONFIRMS COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

A collaboration agreement has been signed between classification society ClassNK and maritime data and technology firm OceanScore to link the latter's integrated solution for ClassNK ZETA (zero emissions transition accelerator) that enables users and related stakeholders to access visualised MRV/DCS data.

Shipping companies using the ClassNK ZETA service will gain seamless access to OceanScore's market-leading Compliance Manager under the agreement, which was signed on 20 January at ClassNK's head office in Tokyo, Japan.

Compliance Manager helps to efficiently manage the commercial processes around the European emissions regulations and enhances risk management by providing comprehensive transparency.

Through this collaboration, data that has been submitted to ClassNK for verification will be transferred from ClassNK ZETA to OceanScore's Compliance Manager. The data transfer will, once permitted by the customer, be automated and customised to secure real-time, appropriate and reliable processes.

"We are thrilled to further expand our network with a highly esteemed partner and global leader like ClassNK," says Albrecht Grell, Managing Director of OceanScore. "This collaboration will provide further efficiency and transparency benefits to our growing customer base whenever they use verification services with ClassNK."

COUNTRIES COMMIT TO GHG CURBS

International efforts to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping took a step forward as the IMO's Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 18) recently concluded its latest round of discussions.

The IMO's **2023 GHG Reduction Strategy** commits member states to adopting mid-term measures to reduce GHG emissions from ships in late 2025, including:

a technical element, namely a goal-based marine fuel standard regulating the phased reduction of a marine fuel's GHG intensity; and an economic element, on the basis of a maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism.

The Intersessional Working Group continued discussions on proposals for these measures, using the draft text for an "**IMO net-zero framework**" agreed at the last meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee **MEPC 82**, as the basis.

This draft text integrates inputs and proposals from member states and international organisations on possible amendments to be made to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (**MARPOL**, Annex VI). These amendments, if adopted, would incorporate the proposed mid-term measures into the treaty, which has 107 parties representing 97% of world merchant shipping tonnage.

The aim of this week's discussions was to further develop and streamline the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI.

Key topics covered include global marine fuel intensity regulations, the economic mechanism's structure, organisational and operational aspects of the proposed 'IMO Net-Zero Fund', revenue disbursement and potential food security impacts.

The Working Group agreed to keep all proposals for an economic element (GHG emissions pricing mechanism) under consideration and acknowledged potential "bridging options" suggested by some member states. Efforts will continue toward defining amendments to MARPOL Annex VI that could achieve consensus approval at the next session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 83) on 7-11 April 2025.

Delegations reaffirmed their commitment to continue exploring possible ways to converge their positions and find common ground.

After reviewing the draft IMO net-zero framework an updated version of the proposed MARPOL Annex VI amendments was prepared. This version consolidates areas of agreement and introduces new possible bridging options for further discussion. It will be annexed to the Group's report to MEPC 83 as a "work-in-progress", without pre-empting future changes and will be further considered at the 19th meeting of the Intersessional Working Group (1-4 April 2025), ahead of MEPC 83.

CALL FOR GOVERNMENT CLARITY ON DECARBONISATION

The UK Chamber has responded to the publication of the government's response to the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) Report on Net Zero and UK Shipping, echoing calls by the Chair of the EAC, Toby Perkins MP, for the government to release its decarbonisation strategy without delay.

The EAC recently published the government's response to its predecessor Committee's report on 'Net zero and UK shipping'.

Alongside the response, Perkins has written to the Transport Secretary, calling for clarity from the government on the publication of the successor to the 2019 Clean Maritime Plan, and warning that continued delays may put at risk the UK's leadership on maritime decarbonisation.

Commenting on the government's response, Peter Aylott, Director of Policy says: "We welcome the government's response and the EAC's continued focus on the pathway to Net Zero for UK Shipping. We are proud to have led the way in calling on decarbonisation, and the UK Chamber was the first national shipping association to publicly call for the global shipping industry to reach net zero emissions by 2050, prior to the UK government and International Maritime Organization (IMO) commitments.

"We echo the Committee Chair's calls for clarity from government on their strategic direction towards a net-zero future for the UK domestic and international shipping sectors and will continue to work with government to deliver our shared goal of a green, thriving UK shipping sector. Key to this, we look forward to the

publication of the government's maritime decarbonisation strategy, as a much-needed successor to the 2019 Clean Maritime Plan.

"Alongside a decarbonisation strategy, placing the net zero shipping at the heart of considerations in the upcoming Spending Review, will be essential in securing the green transition, and ensuring that the UK maritime sector does not fall behind in reducing emissions. This should include a focus on investing in sustainable fuels, in parallel with other sectors such as aviation, and infrastructure investment in the grid, to ensure adequate capacity for shore power.

"It is vital to provide the industry and investors with confidence to aid the sector in its drive to reach net zero. To achieve this, we need a multi-year plan, which creates a framework for public and private sector collaboration and a pathway for emissions reduction. With the right support, the UK could become a leading hub for green innovation and technology, creating increased opportunities for growth and employment within a green fuels supply chain."

On the recommendations regarding international efforts to reduce maritime emissions led by the IMO, Aylott adds: "We welcome the focus from the Committee on the international nature of the shipping industry and support the government engagement in shaping the global agenda at the IMO.

"As the IMO develops economic and technical measures for international shipping, the global primacy of these measures must be recognised, ensuring a clear and harmonised regulatory environment that supports both UK and global decarbonisation efforts."

IMOTO'S INNOVATIVE DESIGN MAKES WAVES

Japanese shipping company Imoto Lines has revolutionised cargo ship design with a fleet of feeder vessels featuring a hemispherical bow, resembling the nose of a passenger jet.

The design delivers real-world performance benefits that have earned it widespread recognition.

In 2015, Kyokuyo shipyard in Yamaguchi, Japan, built the first SSS-feeder (semi-spherically shaped feeder) for Imoto Lines. Named Natori, this 600 TEU vessel was one of Japan's largest feeder ships and the first to adopt the curved nose design.

As reported by the OC news channel, the innovative bow reduced air resistance by up to 50%, improving fuel efficiency and cutting harmful emissions.

Regardless of load conditions, fuel consumption was lowered by about 5%, making it an eco-friendly breakthrough in maritime transport.

Beyond fuel savings, Natori's design doubled its carrying capacity, compared with similar-sized feeder vessels. It could transport 548 TEU, or around 500 fully loaded 20-ton containers – a massive efficiency boost in shipping logistics.

Imoto Lines quickly expanded the concept, commissioning two more airplane-nose vessels. In 2018, Nagara joined the fleet, followed by the larger S-562 Nogami in 2022, with an even greater 670 TEU capacity.

The aerodynamic bow of these ships earned Natori the prestigious Ship of the Year award from the Japan Society of Naval Architects and Oceanographers.

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